



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine

# Equine disease Alert

Number 02 of 2020



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## Equine Infectious Anaemia

### France

- France reported an outbreak of Equine Infectious Anaemia (EIA) in the Gard region of southern France on 15 May 2020 (see map below for location).
- This is the first outbreak of EIA in France this year.
- The case involved a 19 year old mare that was showing clinical signs and there were 10 other equines on the premises.
- The affected animal has been euthanised and disease control measures are in place.
- A number of horses have been imported to Ireland from France since March 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. All originated either in the north of France or in locations too distant from the outbreak in Gard to be deemed at risk.

### Rest of Europe

- There have been 43 outbreaks of EIA in 2020 to date in mainland Europe.
- 39 outbreaks have occurred in Romania and 1 each in Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria and recently France.
- No horses were imported into Ireland so far this year from Bulgaria or Romania.
- 4 horses were imported into Ireland so far this year from Hungary. All of these imports occurred after the outbreak of EIA in Hungary and in accordance with EU legislation.
- 2 horses were imported into Ireland from Greece in January 2020 two weeks before the outbreak of EIA was confirmed by Greek authorities. As part of DAFM's risk assessment, these horses were visited by an official veterinarian, examined and blood tested for EIA. The test results were both negative.



EIA in France:  
Map courtesy of  
Animal Disease  
Notification  
System



## About Equine Infectious Anaemia

- Equine Infectious Anaemia, also known as swamp fever, is a viral disease that occurs worldwide in horses, mules and donkeys.
- Animals may be affected acutely, chronically, or sub-clinically. The incubation period of the disease is variable and can range from a matter of days to a few months, although it is generally thought to be one to three weeks.
- The disease is characterised by recurring fever, anaemia, oedema, emaciation and death. However, many animals show few, if any, signs on first exposure.
- All infected animals, including those that are asymptomatic, become carriers and are infectious for life.
- EIA can be transmitted by large biting flies such as horse flies or stable flies. These flies normally travel no more than 200m to feed and are not likely to be moved long distances by wind. For this reason infected flies will not normally spread far from the point of infection.
- EIA is also spread by blood or blood products including plasma, saliva, nasal secretions, faeces, semen, ova, and embryos. Contaminated surgical equipment and recycled needles and syringes, and contaminated tack can transmit the disease. Mares can transmit the disease to their foals via the placenta.
- There is currently no effective treatment and no vaccine for EIA.
- EIA does not pose any human health risks.
- EIA is a notifiable disease in Ireland. If you suspect the disease you should immediately isolate the affected horse indoors and notify the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine by contacting your local Regional Veterinary office (see below for details).

## Risk to Ireland

- The last case of EIA in Ireland was in 2007.
- Horses are most likely to become infected when travelling abroad to countries, or areas of countries, where the disease is present, or from the use of biological products infected with the EIA virus.
- Given the recent cases being reported across Europe and the current vector season, there is a low risk of incursion of EIA from an affected country through the movement of horses

## Measures that you can take to protect your animals

- The ITBA Code of Practice recommends testing mares, stallions and teasers for EIA each year before breeding.
- As for other diseases, good biosecurity is essential including the disinfection of veterinary and dental equipment before and after use and not re-using needles or syringes.
- Only use licensed biological products.



- If you are concerned about the health of your horse, seek veterinary advice as soon as possible.

## African Horse Sickness

- Further to the NDCC Alert released in April, there have been 3 more outbreaks of African Horse Sickness in Thailand. There are now 6 affected regions - Chan, Hua Hin, Cha-am, Damnoen Saduak, Khon Sawan and Mueang Sa Kaeo.
- The number of reported deaths in horses is 414.
- African Horse Sickness serotype 1 has been confirmed (OIE follow up report of 10/04/2020)- this serotype has not been identified outside Africa before.
- Mass vaccination of horses began in April for all horses in the affected districts, including any horses within 50km of affected farms.
- Many horse owners have surrounded their stables with nets to prevent the entry of midges, while conducting regular temperature and health checks, with sick horses being placed in quarantine.
- There is a continuing ban on the import and export of horses, zebra and other equine animals.

### Risk to Ireland

- There has never been a case of African Horse Sickness in Ireland and Ireland is on the OIE list of countries that are officially free of the disease.
- The import requirements for equines into the EU do not allow the direct movement from countries where African Horse Sickness is present and the EU has suspended the importation of horses and their germinal products from Thailand.
- DAFM will continue to monitor the situation with AHS.

### Further information on Equine Infectious Anaemia:

DAFM website:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/equineinfectiousanaemia/>

Equine Infectious Anaemia Factsheet:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/equineinfectiousanaemia/EquineInfectiousAnaemiaFactSheet020719.docx>

European Commission:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live\\_animals/equine\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/live_animals/equine_en)

ITBA Codes of Practice:

[https://itba.info/Content/2020/3/Codes\\_of\\_Practice\\_2020.pdf](https://itba.info/Content/2020/3/Codes_of_Practice_2020.pdf)



## **Further information on African Horse Sickness:**

DAFM website:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrol/africanhorsesickness/>

Information leaflet for vets:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/africanhorsesickness/AfricanhorsesicknessAHSLeafletVets.pdf>

Information leaflet for horse owners:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/animalhealthwelfare/diseasecontrols/africanhorsesickness/AfricanHorsesicknessLeafletHorseOwners.pdf>

European Commission:

[https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/african-horse-sickness\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/food/animals/animal-diseases/control-measures/african-horse-sickness_en)

Contact details for RVOs available at:

<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/contact/>

**NDCC  
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