

SEROPREVALENCE OF EQUID HERPESVIRUS IN THE LITHUANIAN HORSE FARMS

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Summary. Equid herpesvirus type 1 and 4 (EHV-1/4) infection is a highly contagious viral disease registered worldwide. EHV-1 can cause abortion, respiratory disease and paralysis. EHV-4 can also cause abortion but usually causes only respiratory disease. Infected foals can pass the infection to healthy mares via inhalation of the virus contaminated respiratory secretions. Once a pregnant mare is infected she may abort from 4 months onwards, but it is usually between the 8th and 11th months. Abortion may take place several months after infection or as little as 2 weeks later.

One hundred forty horses from 9 horse farms, rider clubs and agricultural companies from different Lithuania regions were investigated for EHV-1 and EHV-4. It was estimated that in different horse farms from 33.3% to 100% of horses were seropositive to EHV-1 or EHV-4. These results were approved by isolation of virus in cell cultures and direct fluorescent antibody test. The results from this study indicate that EHV has a high prevalence in Lithuania horse population, which can cause abortions, respiratory diseases and encephalitis.

Key words: Equid herpesvirus, seroprevalence.