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Department of Agriculture,  
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# National Disease Control Centre

## Equine Disease Alert Number 06 of 2020

## Equine Viral Arteritis

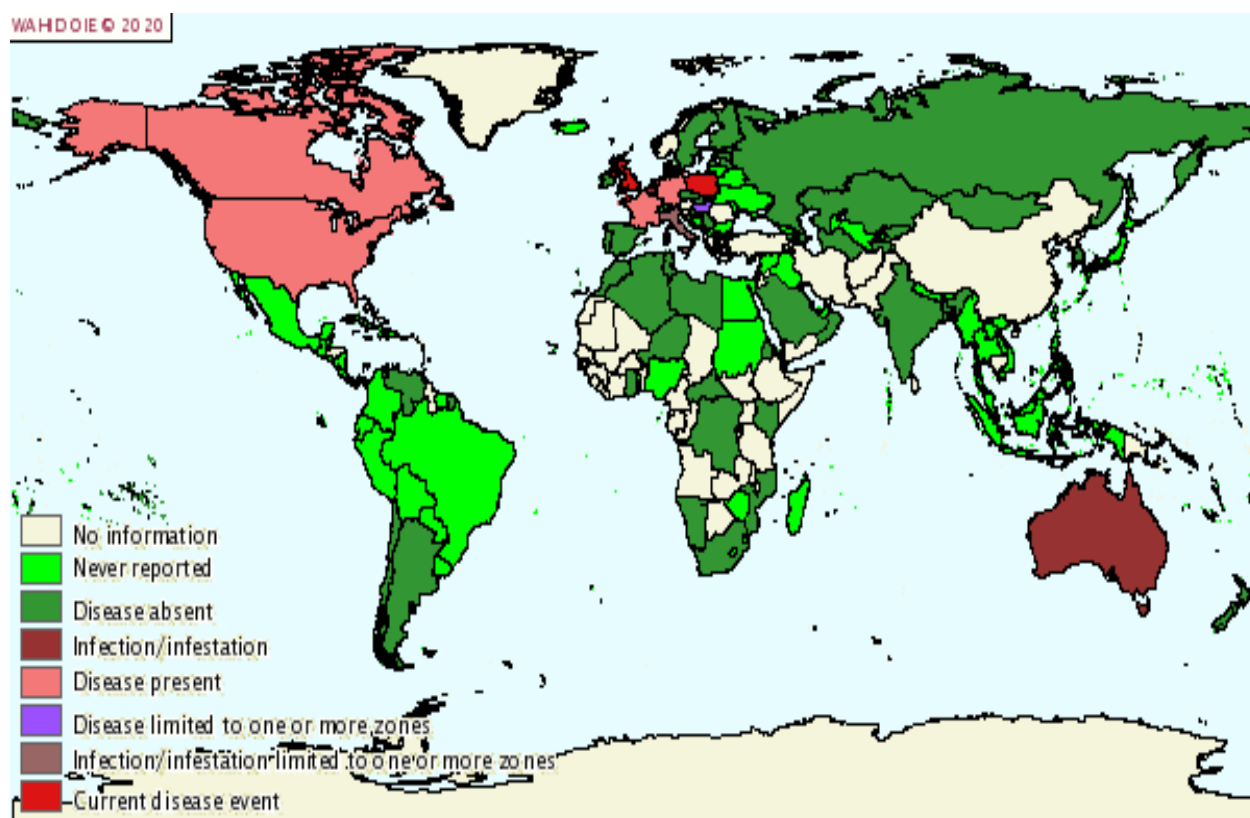
### About Equine Viral Arteritis

- Equine viral arteritis (EVA) is a contagious viral disease that affects all equine animals. It is caused by equine arteritis virus.
- Horses infected with equine arteritis virus may demonstrate few if any clinical signs, which if present are clinically indistinguishable from those of other common equine respiratory diseases including those caused by equine influenza or equine herpes virus.
- Clinical signs, when present, can vary widely in range and severity lasting up to fourteen days.
- Acutely infected animals can show one or more of the following signs:
  - Swelling of testicles, udder, eyes and/or lower legs.
  - Temporary sub infertility in stallions
  - Abortion in pregnant mares
  - Pneumonia and death in young foals
  - Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
  - Skin rash
  - Nasal discharge
  - Fever
  - Depression
- Critically, a large proportion of stallions infected with equine arteritis virus can become long-term carriers of the virus, which can be economically devastating to their breeding worth. There is no treatment for carrier stallions.
- The two most important modes of transmission of the equine arteritis virus are via the respiratory route, involving infective aerosolized respiratory tract secretions of an acutely infected horse, and venereally, by an infected stallion, either by natural cover, or by artificial insemination with fresh, chilled or frozen semen.
- Infection can also be transmitted through contact with aborted fetuses or other products of parturition, and indirect contact with virus-contaminated fomites (e.g. breeding shed equipment, shanks, or twitches) or on the hands or clothes of animal handlers. Mares infected in late pregnancy can also infect foals *in utero*.
- EVA 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 EVA in Ireland was in 2010.
- In April and May 2019, the UK authorities reported four Equine Arteritis infected carrier stallions. These cases occurred in closely linked premises in Dorset and Devon. In July 2019, a further unrelated outbreak of the disease was confirmed in a fifth non-thoroughbred stallion in Shropshire, who was subsequently castrated.
- Fig. 1 is a map showing the distribution of EVA outbreaks worldwide from Jan – Jun 2019.



Map courtesy OIE

## Measures that you can take to protect your animals

- The ITBA codes of practice recommend that mares, stallions and teasers be tested for EVA prior to breeding.
- Ensure all breeding stallions are correctly vaccinated against EVA. Vaccine manufacturers advise that following a primary vaccination course, boosters should be administered every six months.
- Stallions should only breed to mares that have been blood tested prior to mating and are shown to be free from active infection.
- Before importing breeding animals, prospective owners and keepers should consult with their private veterinary practitioner about the appropriate testing requirements.



- As for other diseases, implement good biosecurity on your premises including the disinfection of veterinary and dental equipment before and after use and do not re-use needles and syringes.
- If you are concerned about the health of your horse, seek veterinary advice as soon as possible

## **Further information on Equine Viral Arteritis:**

DAFM website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/c9be9-equine-viral-arteritis-eva/>

Equine Viral Arteritis Factsheet:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/97982/3345a5a4-3d2e-44e3-af99-d9f5585fc235.pdf#page=1>

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)

Contact details for RVOs available at:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cc6cee-regional-veterinary-offices/>

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