



Is it too late to vaccinate my horse?

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Q. Last year, there were lots of reports of mosquito-borne equine diseases. I haven't vaccinated my horse yet this season, is it too late?

A. You're right to be concerned about mosquito-borne diseases. Last year was a record-breaking year, with 627 cases of equine West Nile Virus (WNV)¹ and 209 cases of Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis (EEE).² As of early June 2013, more than 20 EEE cases have been confirmed, six of which are in horses.³ Cases of WNV have also been reported, although none in horses to date.³ Both WNV and EEE pose significant health risks to horses, and the best way to help protect your horse is to vaccinate.

Even if you haven't stayed current with your vaccination schedule, it isn't too late. But be sure to talk to your veterinarian about using a vaccine that is fast-acting.

In the case of WNV in particular, recombinant vaccines such as Merial's RECOMBITEK[®] rWNV-EWT, have been proven to be very effective in providing protection.⁴ If it is your horse's primary vaccination, revaccinate with a second 1 ml dose four to six weeks later. Annual revaccination with a single dose is recommended.⁵

Since the best way to help protect your horse is to vaccinate, do it as quickly as possible. Both WNV and EEE can be life-threatening, with 33 percent of the horses that show

clinical signs of WNV ultimately dying or being euthanized⁶ and 90 percent of those that show clinical signs of EEE dying.⁷

Horse owners should also remain aware of potential threats to equine health present in their communities. Merial's free Outbreak Alert program tracks reported cases of WNV, EEE, Western Equine Encephalomyelitis, Equine Herpesvirus, rabies, equine influenza and Potomac horse fever around the country. Those who have signed up for the service receive texts and/or email messages notifying them of confirmed disease threats in their areas. Owners who travel with their horses can enter multiple ZIP codes in the site's search field to help them stay abreast of disease threats throughout the country. There are also veterinarian-exclusive features available, including printable materials veterinarians can share with their clients.

Now through the end of 2013, in the Exclusive Offers section of outbreak-alert.com, horse owners can download a coupon for up to \$8 off when they have their veterinarians vaccinate their horses.

To learn more about WNV, EEE and other equine diseases and vaccination guidelines, or to sign up for Outbreak Alert, visit outbreak-alert.com.

About Recombitek rWNV-EWT

Recombitek rWNV-EWT vaccine is a combination vaccine labeled to aid in the prevention of disease, viremia and encephalitis caused by Eastern Equine Encephalomyelitis Virus (EEEV) and Western Equine Encephalomyelitis Virus (WEEV) and tetanus caused by the *Clostridium tetani* toxin.⁵

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¹United States Department of Agriculture. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Veterinary Services. 2012 Summary of West Nile Virus Equine Cases in the United States. April 2013. Available at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/wnv/>. Accessed May 29, 2013.

²United States Department of Agriculture. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Veterinary Services. 2012 Summary of Eastern Equine Encephalitis Equine Cases in the United States. Available at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahss/equine/ee/2012_eastern_equine_encephalitis_final.pdf. Accessed May 29, 2013.

³Data on file at Merial.

⁴Siger L, et al. Assessment of the efficacy of a single dose of a recombinant vaccine against West Nile virus in a response to natural challenge with West Nile virus-infected mosquitoes in horses. *Amer Journ Vet Res.* 2004;65(11):1459-1462.

⁵RECOMBITEK rWNV-EWT product label.

⁶Guidelines for the vaccination of horses: West Nile virus. American Association of Equine Practitioners. Available at: <http://www.aaep.org/wnv.htm>. Accessed August 7, 2012.

⁷Eastern/Western equine encephalomyelitis. American Association of Equine Practitioners. Available at: http://www.aaep.org/eee_wee.htm. Accessed August 7, 2012.