

Contagious equine metritis (CEM) is a sexually transmissible disease in mares. The causative bacterium is *Taylorella equigenitalis* (*T. Equigenitalis*). It is spread by sexual contact (including artificial insemination) between stallions and mares and can be passed from dam to foal congenitally. Infected stallions rarely show any visible signs of disease. Infected mares develop inflammation of the uterine lining, are often infertile, or may abort their foals during the first 7 months of pregnancy. Because of the disease's impact on horses and the horse industry, state and federal governments worked to eradicate it from the US. There have been sporadic outbreaks of the disease in recent years though. Sampling mares for *T. equigenitalis* has to be done very carefully and the bacterium is difficult to culture in laboratories.

The current situation involves stallions at DeGraff Stables in KY. It is not yet known how four stallions at Degraff became infected. It is also not known if there is another farm in the US that had infected animals that infected the DeGraff horses. Degraff Stables has a very successful breeding business and as a result horses in 38 states have possibly been exposed to CEM. The first stallion, Potential Investment, was detected at Degraff during routine testing on 10 December 2008.

Since then 3 other stallions: Hot Lopin Sensation, Repeated in Red, and Indian Artifacts have tested positive. Unfortunately 3 more infected stallions have been found in Indiana.

USDA and State Animal Health agencies are working to track down potentially exposed animals and test them. At this time, only one horse in NY is known to be potentially exposed. If any NY Quarter Horse owners are concerned about potential exposure to CEM they are welcome to call my office at 518-457-3502.

David Smith, DVM  
Assistant Director, Division of Animal Industry  
New York State Dept. of Agric. and Markets  
Albany, NY 12235  
518-457-3502