



TENNESSEE

Equine Hospital

Equine Infectious Anemia and the Coggin's Test

Christine Cocquyt, DVM

Although Coggin's papers are familiar to most horse owners, the actual Coggin's test and the disease it tests for may be less so. The Coggin's test was developed by Leroy Coggins in the 1970's to detect Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA).

EIA, also known as "swamp fever," is a viral disease transmitted in blood via biting insects or blood-contaminated instruments such as needles. There is no vaccine or cure for this disease. Most horses do not become sick for at least 2 weeks following transmission of the virus. Infected horses usually remain carriers of the virus for life.

Horses, mules and donkeys are susceptible to EIA. The disease is often fatal, and signs may include a high fever, depression, weight loss, anemia, and limb swelling. Horses that do not die early in the disease process may have recurrent bouts of illness or become chronically unthrifty. A few horses, especially young horses, can contract the virus, but show very mild signs of illness. Most infected horses never clear the virus and become carriers for life.

EIA can be hard to identify and there is no prevention or cure, so it is important to test all horses regularly. New horses should be quarantined until a negative test result is obtained. Insect control and proper use and disposal of blood-contaminated materials can help prevent cases of EIA. If a horse tests positive on a Coggin's test, the state veterinarian will repeat the testing and quarantine the horse. The regulations pertaining to EIA-positive horses vary from state-to-state. In general, any horse that is confirmed to have EIA must be euthanized or branded and kept at least 200 yards from negative horses for life.

Negative test results for Equine Infectious Anemia are required for interstate travel and for entry to many parks and show grounds. The standard test is the traditional "Coggin's" test, while another test is used when results are needed in a very short period of time. Both tests are accepted for travel within the United States. Most states will accept a negative result obtained within 12 months of travel, but some states require a more recent one, so check the regulations carefully when planning a trip!