

VALENCIA OUTBREAK

Initial Report:

20/02/2020

The VD at the event in Valencia, Vicente Orts, called the FEI Veterinary Manager at 14h36 CET to report the following:

20 horses have fever.

The VD was informed that, from a group of 13 horses that had left the venue the previous Sunday (Feb14), 4 have been sick, 1 developed neurological symptoms and they have confirmed EHV 1 by PCR.

One horse was sent to the Equine Veterinary Hospital in Valencia (CEU) with neurological symptoms.

Following actions were taken:

Competition is over for today. We have based on GRs article 109 advised that the VD, PGJ, TD and OC stop competition from tomorrow and that all movement of horses inside the venue is stopped from today and that the local veterinary authority is informed immediately.

The local veterinary authority may take a decision to hold all horses at the venue. FEI does not have the jurisdiction to do so. We will prepare a letter to all PRs with the EHV fact sheet attached. The OC will be advised to return the equine passport together with this letter and the PR signing receipt of it.

Via Marco we have informed Venancio Garcia of the ESP NF who will contact Goncalo.

The VD will organise the biosecurity work at the venue in accordance with the VRs and the OC contingency plan. Goncalo remain in contact as a resource for advice.

Further to the 13+20 horses we will identify the in-contact horses. Gaspard is informed and prepared to block them in the database.

We will inform Oliva Nova, Sunshine Tour and Vilamoura. Based on VRs article 1029.7 "Horses that show clinical signs of neurological Equine Herpes Virus, or have been in contact with such Horses, will not be allowed access to FEI Events by the VD/VC and GJ. Any affected or in-contact Horse may not be entered in future FEI Events until they have fulfilled health requirements as determined by the FEI Veterinary Department", we will request that no horses arriving from Valencia are allowed access to their venues.

NFs with affected horses will be informed by the Veterinary Department.

21/02/2020

The OC cancelled the event after Göran's email.

The VD communicated 40 horses with fever.

Several horses left the event. Many without a health certificate.

Horses that participated at the event in Valencia since February 1st were blocked in the entry system by the IT department. Horses that left during this period were

traced. Those that had attended other events were identified and the OC/GJ/VD of the events were contacted and asked to put this horses in isolation. NFs and Athletes were informed.

Organization on-site:

The Spanish Veterinary Authorities declared the venue under quarantine on Feb22, but there was only an official protocol on how to handle the horses of different health status on Friday 26th afternoon.

During this period, it seems that the communication wasn't good between the different parties involved. It wasn't clear who was in charge and what actions were to be taken.

The Official Veterinary Authorities declared the venue under quarantine and expected the owner and the veterinarian from the animal exploration to put in place the protocol drafted by the authorities. This would be a regular procedure in an exploration with livestock belonging to the owner of the exploration. In this specific situation, we had the owner of the exploration, the vet of the exploration and several riders whose horses were under quarantine.

In normal quarantine circumstances, the owner of the farm would pay for all expenses regarding property/animals/Veterinary care and other measures to be put in place. There was no plan for a situation like the one in Valencia.

52 symptomatic horses were tested on Monday 22nd by the Official Veterinary Services. On Wednesday 24th 24 horses were positive for EHV-1. The Authorities didn't want to communicate the names of the positive horses because they considered all the symptomatic horses has positives and didn't want the owners to misinterpret the results. This resulted in the riders feeling that something was being hidden from them.

On Sunday the 28th the Veterinary Authorities decided to test all the 60 horses in Zone A. 12 were positive. The results came on March 1st and the Authorities decided to separate these horses. They were only separated on March 3rd after arranging for facilities to stable these asymptomatic positive horses.

In the first week there were several problems of miscommunication because several people would speak on behalf of the different parties involved.

For the OC/owners, people would address – Charo Ortells/Charo Torregrosa/Charo's husband/Eduardo (Stable manager)/Wilson (working for the family)

There wasn't a spokesperson for the riders, with riders reaching for their NFs or other people on-site but without a system in place or communication channels.

The Veterinary Authorities would have people in place during some hours of the day but there were at least 4 different veterinarians on-site at different times or sometimes together. Because most of communication was oral in between the different parties, there was reports of some conflicting messages and different interpretations.

This miscommunication resulted in an incident when the Vet Authorities asked for the positive horses stabled in zone A to be moved to a different Zone that would only have positive asymptomatic horses. Since there wasn't a place available, some riders, in agreement with Charo Ortells (daughter of the owner) and the Stable manager (Eduardo) decided to move the hay and feed from a tent that was being used as a barn, dismantled some of the boxes that were in the larger tent (Zone B) and reassembled them in the smaller tent. When Charo Torregrosa and her husband learned that the boxes were being dismantled without their knowledge, a discussion started between them and the riders. This was filmed.

On Tuesday (March 2nd) there was a meeting with the purpose of clarifying the different roles within the Venue and who should be contacted depending on the Situation. There were two representatives of the Spanish Veterinary Official Services (Manuel Lázaro and Vicente Marza), a riders representative (Carl-Walter Fox), the official veterinarian of the exploration (Vicente Orts), the team leader of the FEI Veterinary team (Federico Nieto), the Spanish NHV (Ignasi Casas), the representative of the OC (Charo Torregrosa) and the FEI Veterinary Manager.

Veterinary Care:

Initial Veterinary care was delivered by the 2 Veterinarians that were working at the event, Vicente Orts, who was the Vet Del at the event and also the veterinarian of the exploration, and Raul Botella, who as the VSM at the event.

On Friday 26th, after reports that there was the need for extra veterinary help on-site and that there weren't enough isolation boxes available in the nearest hospitals, in liaison with the Spanish NF and ESP NHV Ignasi Casas, we got in contact with Dr Federico Nieto to organise a team of veterinarians on behalf of the FEI.

Dr Federico Nieto and Dr Ignasi Casas arrived on site on Saturday morning (Feb27). The German NF, in liaison with the FEI sent 2 veterinarians and the French NF sent 1 Veterinarian.

One Veterinarian sent by the IJRC was also on-site from March 2nd until the 6th to draft a report of the situation.

On Saturday the 26th there weren't available isolation boxes in hospitals nearby to take the more severe cases. 3 horses had been sent to Valencia (CES) and 2 to Barcelona (UAB).

The Equine hospital of the University of Valencia (CEU) sent a team of vets, on Saturday 27th to assemble a veterinary intensive care unit on-site. On Sunday 28th they decided to close the Hospital to all other cases and turned the Hospital Unit into a EHV-1 care centre. This allowed to increase the possibility to provide intensive care in a hospital environment. All horses in need for intensive care were transferred to the CES.

The communication between the vets on-site and CEU worked well and some of the University vets kept working on-site (CES) under the guidance of Federico Nieto.

There was also good cooperation between Federico's team and the 2 vets on-site from the beginning.

There were initial reports on media regarding the lack of medical supplies. There was never shortage of medical supplies other than Valocyclovir 1000g. There wasn't enough available in local pharmacies. This anti-viral was purchased by the treating Veterinarians through a national supplier and some boxes came through the riders from their countries. From Saturday the 27th there was enough to be used. The OC vets were worried about the high cost of Valocyclovir, more expensive than Acyclovir, and about not being able to return the unused medication.

Logistics:

Ana Casas arrived on Saturday (Feb27) through the Spanish NF and helped organising the list of horses according to the different health status. She kept updating all the movements of horses in between zones or to/from Hospital.

Sunday 28th temporary boxes were ordered to allow for sub-groups to be formed with horses that were in Zone B but no longer symptomatic. There were doubts from the OC regarding who should take on those costs. The FEI agreed to pay for the boxes. Anna Casas helped the OC to look for boxes that could be delivered urgently. 60 boxes were rented to a French company and delivered on Tuesday, March 2nd.

The boxes were delivered as agreed. The size was 2,70m x 2,80m. These boxes were not considered by most of the riders as up to standards. One French rider used these boxes taking out the partition wall in between 2 boxes, using 8 to his 4 horses. 36 were assembled in CES and the other 24 were assembled in the Hospital (CEU).

That same day, in agreement with the riders (Carl-Walter Fox) and the OC (Charo Torregrosa), 60 boxes were asked to Teresa Blazquez (Montemedio) and the IJRC payed for those.

The 60 boxes 3x3 coming from Montemedio were delivered on Saturday Mar6. 30 boxes were assembled on-site, 12 were kept on-site unassembled and 18 were taken to the Equine Hospital in Valencia upon their request.

From the 30 boxes assembled on-site on March 7th 18 were used by the riders.

There was always hay/feed available. Either to be purchased to the OC (at the same price that she had paid for it, according to Charo Torregrosa) or sent directly to the riders. Two trailers with hay arrived on the weekend (March 7th).

Shavings were also available. There was never lack of potable water, as it was mentioned in social media.

A cafeteria was working from 8 am to 8 pm, with cold and hot meals, beverages and pastry.

A farrier was available on request.