

Latest update on EHV-1 (neurological form) in Valencia (ESP)

We are currently experiencing what is probably the most serious EHV-1 outbreak in Europe for decades and, while the Spanish Veterinary Authorities are in charge onsite in Valencia, the FEI Veterinary Department is driving coordination of both the onsite and wider measures in direct cooperation with the Spanish National Federation.

As many of you will have seen on social media and other online media platforms, there are some very distressing images and footage of extremely sick horses in Valencia. Tragically four horses have now died over the weekend, 84 on-venue horses are showing clinical signs and are being treated, and a further 11 horses are being treated in external clinics (nine in Valencia and two in Barcelona).

The treatment of horses on venue has been vastly improved with additional veterinary support and medical supplies, with a total of 21 veterinarians now onsite.

Over the weekend, the FEI ordered extra stabling so that healthy/recovered horses can be better separated from sick animals on venue to prevent further transmission. A total of 44 temporary stables, which are being transported from the South of France, are due to arrive onsite today and 22 boxes will also be supplied to the Valencia Equine Hospital in order to free up emergency treatment permanent stables.

Additionally, the French National Federation and the FEI have coordinated a supply of inflatable support mats to assist recumbent horses to stand. Rescue nets and emergency slings are being sourced from Switzerland. The French and German National Federations are also supplying extra veterinarians.

A member of the FEI Veterinary Department is onsite in Valencia and establishing improved lines of communication between the authorities, the Valencia Organisers and athletes.

As this strain of EHV-1 is particularly aggressive and there are now confirmed related outbreaks in France, Belgium and Germany, we remain concerned that several sick and in-contact horses left the venue before it was closed for departures and that they may spread the disease.

Although the FEI has blocked all these horses in the FEI Database until the required testing protocols have been fulfilled, the FEI has again directly contacted National Federations with horses that participated in Valencia requesting confirmation that they have contacted all their athletes that were in Valencia, that their national veterinary authorities have been informed about the outbreak and the returning horses, and that the necessary isolation of returning horses and in-contact horses has been put in place and compliance is being controlled.

The FEI is also collating further information about related outbreaks and the measures put in place at local level to handle an outbreak.

The Veterinary Department, supported by leading epidemiologists, is undertaking a constant risk assessment in order to take and advise on correct preventive measures.

While the priority remains the current outbreak and minimising the risk of further transmission, the FEI will be using data gathered from this outbreak to evaluate the effectiveness of the EHV-1 vaccine, seeing which horses in the total group of 752 that participated in Valencia have been vaccinated, which had symptoms or were asymptomatic, and which horses have died.



The FEI will continue to work closely with the affected National Federations and update the wider community as soon as new information becomes available.

At this critical time, we are grateful for the way our community continues to come together to deal with this outbreak. This is a true example of solidarity among our National Federations in Europe working together with the FEI. And we owe a special vote of gratitude to the Spanish, French and German Federations for all their incredible support in this time of need. Thank you!

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