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By NCTA News

## **Horses, livestock restricted at NCTA campus**

CURTIS, Neb. – Horses and other livestock will be restricted from the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture campus and farm premises until after Labor Day, school officials said Tuesday.

The measure is precautionary due to a confirmed case of vesicular stomatitis occurring in a horse in neighboring Lincoln County. The viral disease primarily affects horses and cattle, but can also affect sheep, goats and swine.



*NCTA Professor Joanna Hergenreder teaches equine courses and is coach of the NCTA Ranch Horse Team. (Crawford/NCTA News)*

The agricultural college, which is part of the University of Nebraska system, owns and houses all five species at the campus for teaching purposes in a hands-on setting. Students board their horses or other livestock at private facilities and trailer or ride their horses to campus, as needed, for classes and team workouts.

“We are using an abundance of caution with respect to livestock traffic on campus,” said NCTA interim dean Kelly Bruns. “As Aggie students prepare to travel to NCTA for fall classes, which begin August 26, we are informing those with horses, in particular, of the campus restriction.”

NCTA students in equine classes, and those who compete on the Aggie rodeo or ranch horse teams are those most likely to be affected, said Joanna Hergenreder, animal science division interim chair and ranch horse team coach.

“After consulting with veterinarians and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, we believe it is prudent to minimize any threat to our students’ animals as well as the animals currently on campus,” Hergenreder said.

“A post-Labor Day timeframe would potentially get us past the 14-day quarantine in Lincoln County,” she added. A VS premise quarantine is lifted at least 14 days from the onset of the last affected animal on the premises.

The contagious disease, which can be spread by insects or nose-to-nose contact in animals, causes a fever and blister-like lesions to the animal’s mouth, and other areas of its body. Painful lesions may cause an animal to refuse to eat or drink. There are no USDA-approved vaccines.

Several cases of VS have been confirmed in Colorado, where the NCTA Ranch Horse Team often competes. The Aggie Rodeo Team is uncertain on travel to its first scheduled rodeo in Wisconsin, Hergenreder said. That determination will be made soon.

“I have been contacting our student athletes to report the situation,” Hergenreder said. “Our partners at private boarding facilities are very helpful in understanding this precaution and are communicating with their boarders and our students as well.”

The Nebraska Department of Agriculture confirmed the Lincoln County case on Saturday.

“We want horse and cattle owners to be aware and consider taking precautions, particularly with animals that may be comingling with other animals at events over the next several months, especially now that we know the disease is in Nebraska,” State Veterinarian Dr. Dennis Hughes said Saturday.

The VS virus is primarily transmitted through the bites of infected insects or midges, so treatments to reduce flies and other insects in animal housing is advised. VS also can be spread by nose-to-nose contact between animals.

Nebraska’s last confirmed case was in 2015. VS symptoms generally affect an animal for five to seven days, with recovery an additional seven days, said Hughes.

NCTA has bio-security protocols and guidelines for all animals which enter the campus including public events such as horse shows, judging competitions and NCTA stock dog trials.

For additional information regarding NCTA livestock and animal policies or the VS travel and entrance restriction, contact Hergenreder at 308-367-5291 or [jhergenreder2@unl.edu](mailto:jhergenreder2@unl.edu).

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