

Working for you: Infectious Disease Committee

By Toby Pinn-Woodcock, DVM, DACVIM

Veterinarians and horse owners need timely, trustworthy, science-based information to make decisions about equine infectious disease diagnosis, treatment, biosecurity, vaccination and movement of horses. Helping provide that information is central to the work of the AAEP's Infectious Disease Committee (IDC).

The committee brings together members with an interest in infectious disease and expertise in internal medicine, epidemiology, diagnostic medicine, public health, regulatory veterinary medicine and ambulatory practice.

Keeping disease guidelines current

Expansion of the AAEP's Field Diagnostic Guidelines provides step-by-step approaches for veterinarians evaluating common clinical syndromes potentially caused by infectious disease. Current field guidelines address infectious neurologic disease, acute infectious diarrhea, infectious respiratory disease and infectious abortion. They emphasize appropriate diagnostic sampling and testing using comprehensive flowcharts and incorporate biosecurity considerations from the beginning of the diagnostic process.

Meanwhile, development and maintenance of the AAEP's infectious disease guidelines provide practitioners with current, evidence-based recommendations that can be applied directly to clinical practice. Most recently, the committee published updated guidelines for Equine Infectious Anemia and Salmonellosis.

Responding to emerging threats

Infectious disease threats can change quickly, and traditional guideline-development timelines do not always fit an emerging outbreak. The committee therefore works closely with the AAEP leadership and communications team, regulatory veterinarians, subject-matter experts and organizations such as the EDCC.

This collaborative approach was evident during the emergence of New World Screwworm in South Texas in June, when the AAEP worked with federal officials and its NWS Working Group to provide information to equine veterinarians and the industry. The IDC subsequently supported development of specific NWS disease guidelines. A similar approach was employed during the Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy outbreak caused by EHV-1 in late 2025 and reflected in continued efforts to post seasonally appropriate infectious disease infographics via social media outlets.

Educating through webinars

Webinars illustrate an important strength of the IDC: bringing together specialists from different areas of veterinary medicine to translate rapidly changing infectious disease information into practical guidance for veterinarians and horse owners.



In June, the committee presented a webinar on NWS to practitioners and worked collaboratively with US Equestrian to present a webinar to other equine professionals and horse owners. Webinars have also addressed other timely infectious disease concerns, most notably on EHV-1 in November 2025 (pictured).

Disseminating reliable information quickly

Effective disease communication is particularly important during outbreaks, when incomplete or inaccurate information can spread rapidly. The committee works closely with the EDCC and jointly maintains a social media presence to help deliver outbreak information rapidly to the equine community through disease alerts, educational information and links to reliable resources.

For veterinarians and horse owners, following these social media channels can provide an important early connection to new information, particularly during rapidly evolving situations. Social media should not replace consultation with a veterinarian or state animal health official, but it can help direct owners toward verified information rather than unconfirmed reports.

Looking ahead

The IDC's recent activities demonstrate how these pieces fit together. Updated disease guidelines provide practical clinical resources; field diagnostic guidelines help veterinarians approach suspected infectious cases; webinars provide continuing education; and collaboration with the EDCC and social media platforms helps move reliable information rapidly throughout the horse industry.

In an era when infectious disease threats can emerge or change rapidly, the IDC's work provides an essential link between veterinary science and practical action—helping ensure that the equine community has the information needed to protect horses and the industry they support.

Dr. Pinn-Woodcock is chair of the Infectious Disease Committee.