

# EPM

## EQUINE PROTOZOAL MYELOENCEPHALITIS

### *Industry Review.....*

**EPM** is a progressive and potentially fatal neurological disease caused by a protozoa organism (parasite) that gains entrance to the central nervous system, brain and/or spinal cord.

#### **How do horses get infected?**

Horses are infected by ingesting the organism from contaminated feed, hay, pasture or water, typically contaminated from opossum feces. Researchers now believe skunks, raccoons, armadillos, and even cats can vector or carry the organism.

#### **Common signs of EPM:**

Uncoordinated movement of rear feet/legs, muscle atrophy, especially over the rump or croup area, not standing square, lameness that causes circling, stumbling occasionally, leaning into a stall wall for balance, dribbling or dropping feed, droopy ears, dropping of lip or facial twitching.

#### **Facts:**

- The horse is a dead end host and cannot spread the disease to other horses.
- 60% of horses that contract EPM are 5 years old and younger.
- Horses that become heavily stressed and/or have a compromised immune system are more likely to encounter the disease.
- 70% of the horses properly treated improve.
- 1/3 of all horses treated make a complete recovery, especially if treated early.
- The immune system must be supported to leverage chance of recovery.

#### **Treatment Measures:**

Marquis (Bayer) – Rx needed – Paste – 28 day treatment  
Protazil (Merck) – Rx needed – Pellet for in the feed

*Immune Support!*

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