



ELKO

Contingency Plan for the Rock Creek HMA Emergency Wild Horse Gather

Due to the possibility of an introduction of Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) into the Rock Creek HMA wild horse population, Two possible scenarios could be experienced during the gather. First, all horses captured and tested could not be infected, and second, horses could be captured that test positive for the disease. The following plan outlines the actions that will be implemented under each scenario:

Scenario #1 Testing is conducted and no horses test positive for EIA

A flight of the HMA will be conducted the day before gather operations will begin in an attempt to locate the four domestic horses. If they can be located, they will be targeted to be captured first.

If the domestic horses cannot be located, begin capture operations in the Burner Hills Pasture of the HMA. Then move east across to Winters Creek, Soldier Field, and Red Cow Pasture until the numbers needed to relieve the emergency situation are achieved.

Target to catch and test four (4) suspect domestic horses lost in HMA. Test all captured horses for presence of EIA antibodies until the four domestic horses are caught, tested, and negative results are obtained.

Tested horses will be held until the adjacent bands are captured the following day and negative test results are obtained.

Mane and hip tags provided by the Nevada Department of Agriculture will be placed on all animals tested and the numbers recorded for identification purposes.

Once a negative report is received on the four domestic horses, all field testing of wild horses will be terminated.

An Animal and Plant Inspection Service (APHIS) veterinarian will be at the sorting corral to draw blood for testing. Testing will be conducted by the Nevada Department of Agriculture laboratory in Elko.

Blood samples will be delivered to the laboratory each afternoon or evening animals are captured and blood drawn.

If the domestic horses are not captured and test negative for EIA, all horses will be held for 45 days in PVC (Palomino Valley Corrals) and tested again for the disease.

Scenario #2 Testing is conducted and positive results are obtained.

Begin capture in the Burner Hills Pasture and follow the same pattern described in scenario 1.

Test all horses captured for presence of EIA antibodies following the same procedures describes in scenario #1.

Euthanize all adult animals that test positive. All euthanized animals will be buried on public lands near the sorting facility using equipment from a local ranch. Immediately quarantine all animals captured with the infected horse(s).

Construct a holding facility using BLM panels on BLM administrated land to hold the quarantined horses. Facility shall be located a minimum of 400 yards from any livestock. BLM shall arrange feed and water for quarantined horses until long term services can be found.

Arrangements will be made to move quarantined horses to a long term facility either constructed with BLM materials on BLM administered land or to a private facility. A long term holding facility will meet criteria defined by the Nevada State Veterinarian to prevent spread of disease.

Foals will be quarantined until a reliable test for the presence of antibodies can be preformed.

If an EIA positive horse is captured, gather operations in the vicinity where a positive test was obtained will be ceased and moved to the opposite side of the HMA. Gather operations will proceed in the direction of the area where the positive test was obtained until another positive horse is captured or gather objectives are met. If a positive result is found in this phase of the operation, all gather operations will be stopped. A new gather will be planned and scheduled to capture all horses in the HMA, and funding will be obtained for the gather, testing, and elimination of the disease from the herd.

All horses shipped from the HMA prior to receiving a positive result will be held in PVC for 45 days and tested at the end of that time for the disease.

EIA Exposure to Rock Creek Wild Horse HMA Incident/June 19, 2001

Deloyd Satterthwaite, manager of Ellison Ranching, is known to have EIA infected horses on his ranch property, specifically the Spanish Ranch. They graze in and around the Rock Creek HMA. At this time they have approximately 500 "domestic" ranch horses.

1) In the early 80's there were approx. 15 domestic horses infected with EIA in the Ellison Ranching operation. When Deloyd's brother in law was leaving the ranch operation (early 80's) it was decided at that point to add the 15 horses to the herd of horses owned by the ranch (remuda, cavy).

Question: Why you would take the chance of infecting your herd is a serious question, why not keep your herd intact and clean rather than introduce known infected horses with the potential of spreading the disease, doesn't make sense.

2) All these years, Deloyd has had a permit from BLM to graze livestock in the Rock Creek HMA, along with the wild horses that reside there. In the course of his operation, he trails domestic ranch horses not only in and out of the HMA, (not in trailers but loose), but also stays camped there throughout their grazing season with those horses in the "cavy". In this instance, Deloyd had brought 50 horses into the HMA.

Fact: Deloyd did not have a permit for any of these years to trail horses in and out of the HMA nor did he have a permit for these horses to graze in that area. This is trespass grazing as well as trespass trailing. How many unauthorized AUM's of use that went unpaid over all the years. Elko BLM knew he was bringing in these horses and turned their backs to the situation. How many other situations similar to this are occurring in not only the Elko District but others.

3) The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. has requested that Deloyd do EIA testing of his whole herd. His response is that it would "bankrupt him to have to test the herd".

Fact: The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. does not have the authority to violate their own State laws and allow a person to NOT test.

4) The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. had offered to Deloyd that the State at State expense would test the his herd. He refused.

Question: If the State would bear the expense of testing your herd and you could once and for all clean out your herd, disease free.....why not? Also, where does the State have the authority to do the testing of approx. 500 horses at State expense? Along with the fact that, again, they do not have the authority give somebody the leeway to NOT test.

5) Deloyd has a "hold order" for all the horses at his ranch stating that before a "any horses leaving the Spanish Ranch except as directly for slaughter must have a coggins test". This was done by Dr. Armstrong, State Vet from many years ago. Currently the State Vet Branscomb interprets that to mean that Deloyd can travel all over his ranches, on and off public lands, without a coggins test. That he must only test when he leaves his ranch land. We believe that

order means that the horses must remain on the "ranch proper" and not leave the ranch without testing. That would insure that horses that are EIA positive could never be exposed to other domestic or wild horses especially since Deloyd trails, works, and camps in an HMA. Deloyd takes his horses all over public lands with the blessing of the Dept. of Agriculture.

Question: Even horses that are going for slaughter need to have a coggins test and any horses that are known to be EIA positive are treated much differently going to slaughter. EIA horses must be marked as such, a sealer trailer with Dept of Ag seal, and not opened until at slaughter yard. This is to prevent the disease from spreading to other animals. Apparently the order doesn't even require him to test animals if the intent is to send to slaughter. Not allowed.

6) Deloyd has a permit to graze a "minimal" amount of domestic horses at Willow Creek which is reported to be outside the HMA and that there is a fence separating those horses from wild horses.

Fact: Deloyd is paying to graze a minimal amount of horses but is getting free trespass grazing by taking 50 horses into the Rock Creek HMA every year with his sheep permit. How many AUMs and for how long, how many months annually and for how many years and for how many other allotments?

7) Deloyd's ranch hands trailed 50 horses in trespass into the Rock Creek HMA sometime around June 19, 2001. All of those 50 horses got loose and mingled with wild horses in the HMA. The ranch hands "knew they had a big wreck on their hands" and decided immediately to go out themselves to round up the ranch horses. They had mixed with wild horses therefore when they were "roping" and "rounding up" the horses they had to be chasing wild horses as well. They did this and caught 34 of the 50 horses prior to notifying BLM.

Fact: It is illegal to go roping and chasing domestic horses mingled with wild horses unless approved by BLM or conducted by BLM.

8) June 19, 2001, Deloyd Satterthwaite called BLM Elko Dist Office to ask permission to fly the area to gather horses he had lost while trailing into the area. If he called on the 19th, we wonder when the incident actually occurred. He reported that the 50 had gotten loose, 34 recaptured, and that 9 horses had wandered back in to camp all by themselves 2 days later. This left 5 horses still unaccounted for that were with wild horse herds.

Fact: All 50 horses had never been tested for EIA. The 34 re-captured horses were NOT tested for EIA. Under pressure from BLM and Dept of Ag, the 9 horses were tested for EIA and were negative.

9) Upon the first phone call, BLM, Elko, had immediately asked Deloyd if the 50 horses had been tested for EIA? Deloyd replied "this will bury you and me both. You don't even want to go there, people lose their jobs over this type of thing.....again, this will bury you and me both." BLM asked again, do they even have health records? Deloyd replied "lets just keep this between us."

BLM and Deloyd flew approx. 20 hours looking for his 5 horses to no avail. At this point the BLM personnel involved felt they had better inform their supervisor about the situation. Helen Hankins, the District Manager was informed. She strongly instructed the personnel to work within the District regarding this situation.

BLM personnel felt uneasy not knowing and not being able to get answers on the ramifications or potential of the spread of this disease from the domestic horses to the wild horses. BLM personnel called the Dept of Ag State Vet Branscomb in Elko for advise. Dr. Branscomb was disrespectful, not willing to answer questions, and in general (they felt) covering for Deloyd.

From not getting answers to very serious questions, BLM personnel called the USDA vet, Katie Blunk. Ms. Blunk happened to get the call while at the Facilities conference in Colorado where Tom Pogacnik, Rich Sanford, DVM, and Sharon Kipping from the National Program Office of the BLM, Terry Woosley from the Nevada State Program, and Robin Lohnes from American Horse Protection Assn (AHPA) all happened to be present. Many conversations took place immediately with above personnel from that one phone call to Katie Blunk.

Tom Pogacnik, Chief, of the National Wild Horse Program, felt that enough people were aware of the situation that it was his responsibility to call Henry Bisson (spelling), in Washington to inform him of the situation. When Helen Hankins found out he did that she immediately was furious sending e-mails to Tom chastising him for his actions.

Fact: Not only many BLM personnel knew of this situation but the USDA Vet Katie Blunk knew and shamefully, Robin Lohnes from AHPA has known and not notified wild horse groups either private or State that oversee wild horses in Nevada. This poses an ethical issue regarding AHPA as well as the above named people.

Much disfunctionality between National Program in Washington and State Program Nevada. Don't believe that BLM National knows all the facts, misinformation from State Office.

Doc,

I've read the fax you had sent me on Rock Creek. I also sent you a fax of "internal notes" I had documented last year as well as questions from those issues. I still have concerns for this gather in that "how can you (BLM) insure blind testing? In light of the seriousness of this situation, it would be strongly beneficial for some to not document any positive horses, especially the domestic horses. Especially after our conversation yesterday what makes you think that any positive domestic horses will be documented and exposed? The financial impacts will be devastating in many ways. In addition, if any of this were to get out, it would be devastating to the adoption program if by chance any of the horses passed through the system and into the adoption program.

- 1) What measures can be put in place to insure blind testing?
- 2) Why was the field testing of horses not taken as an option versus using the Agriculture lab? It creates more opportunity to "lose" the results.
- 3) Is there an option of drawing two vials of blood on the domestic horses (assuming they are found), and one sample going to the AG lab and one to an independant lab of your choice? This would insure testing.
- 4) Assuming that the domestic horses are never found. All horses captured in the field will be tested but if none are positive, will they still be holding the wild horses at PVC for 45 days until they can be re-tested? Maybe its just a typo but on the last sentence of Scenario #1 it states "If the domestic horses are not captured and test negative for EIA....." How can they test negative if they are never caught?????? It should read: "If the domestic horses are not captured and all of the wild horses have tested negative for EIA....."
- 5) Also, on the second to last paragraph on the second page: "If an EIA horse is captured....." The paragraph states that they will then move to the opposite side of the HMA and gather inward toward the location of the positive horses "until another positive horse is captured or GATHER OBJECTIVES ARE MET." It goes on to say that if they find more positive horses then they will shut down and plan an entire gather with mini quarantine facility and obtaining funding.
 What concerns me is that if a positive horse were caught and they started on the opposite side of the HMA working inward.....if they meet their gather objectives (number), prior to finding any new positive horses, they will stop the gather and be done. Not knowing if there are still positive horses out there (after the initial positive horses) the gather should not be stopped but keep going until all horses are tested. If not, then there is the opportunity for the disease to spread more extensively in the wild until "how many years from now" that the BLM gathers again? Just like Deloyd's ranch, if there are positive horses found in the initial gathering, it is the duty of the BLM to do the entire gather and clean this out once and for all. Just as you explained about Deloyd's ranch, its the duty of the Agriculture Dept, to clean this out for good after all these years. If there are positive horses, then ALL of the horses need to be captured and tested.

Please let me know what you think of my concerns/suggestions. I will be in the office tomorrow until I have my budget meeting in Carson at 3pm.

Thanks, Cathy

WHAT ABOUT PVC domestic/private owned h's.