

Owners urged to vaccinate horses against West Nile

17 hours 20 minutes ago by **Joe Moeller** (Action News Now 12, 24)

"Horses are very susceptible to West Nile as opposed to dogs, cats, sheep, llamas, and goats." Says Equine Veterinarian Michele Weaver.

With the increasing cases of West Nile in Butte County horse owners need to take extra precautions.

"The peak of West Nile is in September so this is really really important to get your horses vaccinated now." says Weaver.

She says horses are very susceptible to the virus.

"They are very susceptible to encephalitis, or brain diseases, and that is just the species that they are they cannot handle brain diseases very well."

There are ways to identify abnormal behaviors in horses with the virus.

"They have a fever, they don't eat, they start getting ataxic which proves it's a neuralgic disease and they will wobble as if they were drunk and the disease will progress."

Weaver tells us the early the virus is caught in horses the better as horses can die from West Nile. With five cases of it in California in horses she warns now is the time to be careful.

"Make sure that water tanks have mosquito fish in there, don't leave any pools of water without fish or drained any water holes or anything else where mosquito breed."

Weaver says the vaccine is 100% effective. Horses have to have it every year to protect them from the virus. She says she sees too many horses without the vaccine.