



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Individuals attending Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Aug. 23-31 cautioned that horse has tested positive for rabies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tennessee Department of Health
1-866-355-6129

Alabama Department of Public Health
1-800-338-8374

The Alabama Department of Public Health has received word that a horse stabled on the grounds of the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Aug. 23-31 has tested positive for rabies. Officials with the Tennessee Department of Health are notifying persons who attended the Celebration in Shelbyville, Tenn., of a confirmed case of rabies in the horse. Although the horse was stabled on the grounds during the event, it was not involved in any of the Celebration competitions.

"Rabies is transmitted mainly through bite wounds from an infected animal. In some cases it may be transmitted through fresh open cuts in the skin or onto mucous membranes such as the eyes, mouth or nose from the saliva of a rabid animal," said Public Health Veterinarian John Dunn with the Tennessee Department of Health. "However, attending an event where a rabid animal was present, petting a rabid animal or contact with the blood, urine or feces of a rabid animal does not constitute a risk for transmission."

The Tennessee Department of Health is requesting that persons who attended the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration between Aug. 23 and Aug. 31 call its Public Information Line 1-866-355-6129 if they possibly had contact with this horse and any of the following occurred during their visit to the Celebration.

If an individual:

- was bitten by a horse;
- had contamination of a fresh open wound with saliva from a horse; or
- had saliva from a horse come in contact with eyes, nose, mouth or other mucous membranes.

The horse originated from Missouri and was a 3-year-old gelding (neutered male horse), buckskin (cream to tan) in color with a black mane and tail. The horse was described as "small," standing approximately 14 hands (or 56 inches) at the withers, which is the area near the base of the mane. During the event, the horse was ridden on the grounds by owners and was stabled in barn number 50 on the celebration grounds. Illness was first noted in the horse on Aug. 28. Over the next few days, the horse developed severe neurological signs, and as a result was

euthanized. Persons directly involved in the care of the horse are being contacted and are being assessed for possible rabies exposure and the need for rabies post-exposure treatment.

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