

Why won't the State Veterinarian's Office release Vesicular Stomatitis animal location information?

As Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) reappears in Colorado in 2015, concerned horse-owners want to know what they can do to protect their horses. The State Veterinarian's office receives many calls requesting the location of horses and premises affected by VS.

The State Veterinarian's Office is prohibited by statute from sharing livestock, including horse, location information (C.R.S. 35-57.9-103)

(2) On the grounds that disclosure would be contrary to the public interest, the commissioner may deny access to the following:

(a) Specific operational details of livestock operations that constitute confidential commercial data pursuant to section 24-72-204 C.R.S. Such operational details include ownership, numbers, locations, and movement of livestock...

(b) Information related to livestock disease or injury:

(I) That would identify a person or location; or

(II) That contains confidential data pursuant to the veterinary-patient-client privilege described in section 24-72-204(3)

Aside from the statutory prohibition, the specific location of horses or livestock affected with VS is not very important. Although the disease *can* be spread between animals, it is not very contagious from animal to animal. **The primary method of spread is through insect vectors – flies.**

From the American Association of Equine Practitioners (see [link](#) below):

Transmission: *Vesicular stomatitis viruses are considered arboviruses because they use insect vectors as their primary means of transmission. Evidence of arthropod transmission of VSV is most compelling for sand flies and black flies.*

For disease control purposes, the prevalence of VS cases within your county, as well as prevalence of cases within your area of the state (Western Slope, Front Range, etc), is more important than the location of specific affected premises. Increasing numbers of cases within a county or state area mean that there are increasing numbers of flies carrying VS in the area. Counties with confirmed cases are listed and mapped on the [USDA website](#), as well as the [CDA website](#).

Because of the risk from VS-affected flies, **strict fly control is the most important factor in inhibiting transmission of VS.** Minimizing the number of flies biting your animals minimizes the risk of contracting VS. While direct transmission is a minimal risk, it is still a risk that can be reduced, by avoiding sharing handling equipment between animals or herds. VS Disease Prevention Tips for Livestock Owners are listed below. No disease prevention methods will prevent all disease from occurring, but following these tips will greatly reduce the risk to your animals.

VS Disease Prevention Tips for Livestock Owners:

- Strict fly control is an important factor to inhibit the transmission of the disease.

- Avoid transferring feeding equipment, cleaning tools or health care equipment from other herds.
- Colorado fairs, livestock exhibitions, and rodeos may institute new entry requirements based on the extent and severity of VS outbreaks. Certificates of Veterinary Inspection issued within 2-5 days prior to an event can be beneficial to reduce risks. Be sure to stay informed of any new livestock event requirements.
- During an event, important VS disease prevention procedures include minimizing the sharing of water and feed/equipment, applying insect repellent daily (especially to the animals' ears), and closely observing animals for signs of VS.

Resources:

- CDA VS website (includes up-to-date disease information and VS show & exhibition guidelines):

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/aganimals/vesicular-stomatitis-virus-vsv>

- USDA VS website (includes situation reports, VS factsheet, and other information):

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/animal_diseases/vsv/Sitrep_070215.pdf

- CDA News Releases:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/agmain/all-news/46786>

- American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) VS Control Guidelines:

<http://www.aaep.org/custdocs/VesicularStomatitisControlGuidelinesFinal091212.pdf>

- Colorado State Veterinarian's Office: (303) 869-9130