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“Breeder’s Invitational Cancelled Due to EHV Threat”

May 14, 2011. Tulsa, OK. Early Saturday evening May 14, the 2011 Breeder’s Invitational (BI) event was officially cancelled due to concern surrounding the recent outbreak of the Equine Herpesvirus (EHV). The event, originally scheduled to take place in Tulsa, Ok May 14-28, 2011, has not been rescheduled at this time. At least two horses in attendance at the National Cutting Horse Association’s Western Nationals in Ogden, Utah, April 29 – May 8 were subsequently diagnosed with EHV. The concern that horses exposed to the virus in Ogden could potentially transport EHV to the BI event in Tulsa and, in doing so, further expose the horse population was of great concern to BI officials. While no horses who arrived in Tulsa for the BI have exhibited any clinical symptoms of EHV at this time, the decision to cancel the event was considered a precautionary measure.

“We did not feel comfortable with the potential of exposing horses arriving in Tulsa to EHV,” said Breeder’s Invitational Board Chairman, Jeffrey Matthews. “An outbreak at an event of this size could be devastating. The Board of Directors decided to take a conservative approach to the situation in the interest of protecting the health of the horses.”

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, EHV can be a serious disease of horses that can cause abortion and death. Clinical signs include high fever, neurological symptoms and nasal discharge. The virus can spread through the air, contaminated equipment, clothing and hands.

Colorado State University Veterinarian, Dr. Jerry Black, who consulted with BI officials, said he was confident the organization made a decision that took into consideration the best interest of the horses involved.

“I commend the BI on the decision they have made to make the welfare of the horse the priority. While I expect the risk in Tulsa may have been minimal, I do believe the decision was a prudent one,” said Black, who urged horse-owners and trainers to quarantine any horses that may have been exposed to EHV. “To be on the absolute safe side, any horses that have attended events where EHV is suspected to have been present should be quarantined separate and apart from un-exposed horses for a minimum of 10-14 days.”

Breeder’s Invitational Executive Director, Bob O’Bannon, stated that attempts will be made to refund entry fees to exhibitors entered in this year’s event. “We will be working the next several days to get this handled,” he said. “We are going to do our best to take care of our exhibitors and owners.” O’Bannon also said the Board of Directors will make a decision on whether to hold the event at a later date this year. “This is an option that we would like to pursue, though no decision has been made at this time.”
