

THE COGGINS TEST IN HORSES

ROARING FORK VALLEY HORSE COUNCIL

What is a Coggins?

A Coggins is a blood test for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). This test is named after Leroy Coggins who was the virologist who developed the test for EIA. A Coggins test **MUST** be performed by a veterinarian and official documentation (Coggins form) is filled out with submitted blood.

❖ Why does my horse need a Coggins test?

EIA has significant equine health implications. Therefore, any horse that tests positive is reported to local/state government agencies so that measures can be taken to control further spread of the disease. A current Coggins form/test is also required to cross state lines and to enter many equine facilities. Again, the goal is to reduce the spread of the disease and protect horses.

❖ What is EIA?

EIA is caused by a virus that is transmitted by blood feeding flies such as deer flies or horse flies. The virus can also be transmitted via re-used needles, blood products, or contaminated instruments. Once infected, a horse may not show any clinical signs for up to 60 days. Horses can develop a variety of clinical signs ranging from mild fever and lethargy to severe anemia, spontaneous bleeding, and/or sudden death. If a horse survives the initial illness, they become a carrier of the virus FOR LIFE. Carriers can redevelop clinical signs after periods of stress. EIA is not transmissible to people or other species.

Other names for EIA include Swamp Fever, Coggins Disease, Equine Malarial Disease, or Mountain Fever.

❖ Is EIA treatable?

There is **NO** treatment for EIA and *any horse that tests positive either needs to be isolated for the remainder of his/her life or euthanized*. Isolation of these horses is dictated and strictly monitored by government officials.

❖ Has there ever been EIA in Colorado?

A horse tested positive for EIA in Garfield county in April 2023. This horse was tested due to illegal movement across state lines without a current Coggins test. This highlights the importance in having a current Coggins test. Coggins tests should be performed annually at the least.

CONCLUSIONS – A Coggins test should be performed on every horse annually EVEN if your horse does not travel. This protects the horse population from EIA, a possibly life-threatening disease.