

## **VSV - The Reasons For Quarantines :**

If your horse travels to an event, and it or other horses are diagnosed with VSV, then every horse must remain at that facility at least until the quarantine is lifted (a minimum of 2 weeks). “We understand that the VSV outbreak and quarantines are impacting the ability for people to bring their horses and livestock to fairs and shows,” said Dr. Keith Roehr, Colorado State Veterinarian. “The quarantines and hold orders must be followed, however, for the health and protection of all equine and livestock in Colorado.”

### **[Centennial Equine Sports Medicine, Professional LLC](#) (via Facebook)**

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So if Vesicular Stomatitis is not that big a deal in horses, WHY is it being quarantined by State Vets/USDA?

VS is generally a minor nuisance (clinically) in horses. And yet when a veterinarian identifies the disease, we are obligated to contact our State Veterinarian's office and report it, after which follows a quarantine period of 14 days after resolution of clinical signs. This is the procedure even though quarantines don't do very much to limit the spread of the disease (since VS is transmitted by flies, who do not obey quarantines very well).

But here is the thing: VS in cows, goats, sheep, and pigs, looks IDENTICAL to Foot-and-Mouth disease, which is not just a nuisance. Remember the major outbreak in the UK in 2001? Heaps of carcasses, devastated producers/farmers ... 6 million sheep and goats were culled to halt the spread of that disease. If Foot-and-mouth disease were to enter the US, this would potentially OBLITERATE our animal food supply, resulting in mandated culling of exposed animals and even those animals within a certain-mile radius of actual cases. So the federal and state governments like to keep track of anything that even possibly resembles foot-and-mouth disease.

Fortunately, horses can't get foot-and-mouth disease, but they are more susceptible to VSV, so VSV is actually easier to track in horse populations. We know the VS virus tends to come up from central America through Mexico and enters the west/midwest usually through Texas or New Mexico before heading north (sometimes all the way to Canada). By quarantining a horse while it is showing clinical signs and for a short period after, the USDA is ensuring your horse doesn't suddenly start an outbreak in Oregon or California (states that don't seem to see VS). This prevents even the slightest chance that a horse might bring VS to a cow in Washington, which would start a MAJOR panic that foot-and-mouth disease had entered the United States. It also allows better tracking of the disease; with quarantines in place, it mostly limits spread of VSV to fly migration patterns.

### **Why won't the State give specific quarantine locations?**

The State Veterinarian's office limits their reporting of quarantine locations for all outbreaks to general listings by county only for confidentiality reasons. If it is felt that nearby neighbors are at a greater risk, the authorities will alert them accordingly. Also, just because an animal has contracted a contagious disease and has to be placed under a quarantine hold, it doesn't mean that it was through any fault of that animal's/property's owner(s).

