

## KY's 2018 POTOMAC HORSE FEVER (PHF) Cases - Updated: July 24, 2018

The first confirmed case of Potomac horse fever (PHF) diagnosed in KY during calendar year 2018 was reported on June 1, 2018. The diagnosis was confirmed by PCR testing and compatible clinical symptoms observed.

**Historically:** KY's PHF cases are first detected later in the year (mid-July), and our thought is the early detection this year was most probably associated with abundant wet weather in April and record breaking warm temperatures in May.

**Horsemen** are encouraged to review the environment their horses are housed and consult their veterinarians on strategies they may use to mitigate disease risk. Minimizing opportunity for horses to ingest aquatic insects by turning off lights in and around barns and other areas at night, has been suggested.

KY Case Summaries				
Counties	Cases			
Bourbon	7	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	
Bracken	1			
Fayette	2	Female	13	
Harrison	1	Male	5	
Metcalfe	1	<b>Age (yrs)</b>	Deceased 5	
Scott	4			Survived 13
Shelby	1			
Woodford	1	Range	1 - 17	
		Median	4.5	
		<b>Breed</b>		
			Thoroughbred	12
			Standardbred	2
			Amer Saddlebred	1
			Paint	1
		TN Walking Horse	2	

Potomac horse fever (PHF) is described to be an acute enterocolitis syndrome that presents as mild colic, fever, and diarrhea in horses of all ages. The resulting illness can also cause abortion in pregnant mares. The causative agent, *Neorickettsia risticii*, is a gram-negative bacterium. Infection of the large intestine results in an acute colitis, which is one of the principal clinical signs of PHF. While the disease is often associated with pastures bordering creeks or rivers; it is believed most horses contract PHF after inadvertent ingestion of aquatic insects that carry *N risticii* and not the water source.

## Kentucky's 2018 Potomac Horse Fever 18 Confirmed KY Cases

Data Source: KY Office State Veterinarian Updated: 07/27/2018

