Management Strategies for Reducing the Risk of Equines Contracting Vesicular Stomatitis Virus (VSV) in the Western United States

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The Northern Plains Climate Hub led a new article in the Journal of Equine Veterinary Science about vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV). This insect-borne disease causes painful lesions in equine, cattle, and other hooved animals. VSV affected a record-number of animals in 2019 and is active again this year in several western states. The article makes technical information about insect vectors of VSV more accessible to equine veterinarians and owners. It provides practical, science-based management tips for reducing the risk to equines of VSV. The article is an output of the VSV Grand Challenge project, which involves a multidisciplinary team of scientists from ARS (in Las Cruces, Plum Island, Fort Collins, and Manhattan), APHIS (in Fort Collins), and several university partners.

Fig. Proactive management strategies (labeled “DO”) at the animal, shelter, barnyard/premises, and environment/neighborhood level that should help reduce pressure on equines from biting insects known to transmit vesicular stomatitis virus (VSV). Each “DO” is contrasted against a “DON’T,” to show poorly managed conditions that may increase the risk of equines contracting VSV [graphic art by Victoria Rhodes].
Grass-Cast is a popular tool among grassland managers and ranchers for forecasting how many pounds per acre of rangeland vegetation is expected to grow during the upcoming growing season. The Northern Plains and Southwest Climate Hubs coordinate a large team from multiple Federal departments, USDA agencies, and academic institutions, who expanded Grass-Cast from the Great Plains to the Southwest in spring 2020. The Grass-Cast website has been accessed by ~2,200 users thus far during 2020. Additionally, the team has contributed to 5 press releases, 5 newspaper articles, and 5 virtual workshops/meetings. The virtual workshops reached 200+ stakeholders. Visit https://grasscast.unl.edu for more!