

**STOP PIGEON
FEVER BEFORE
IT STARTS**



Pigeon Fever: A regional disease no more.

A serious infection in horses, the bacteria *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* most commonly causes external abscesses frequently found in the ventral and pectoral region of horses. *C. pseudotuberculosis*, commonly known as Pigeon Fever, is a soil-borne organism that is thought to be transferred through open abrasions, lacerations or fly bites. Of major concern is a smaller percentage of horses develop internal abscesses, which can be fatal.

Clinical Diagnosis and Treatment

If a horse presents outward signs of Pigeon Fever, a culture and a sensitivity or PCR test may be performed on abscess drainage material or pus to confirm the diagnosis.

The diagnosis of internal infection, however, can be challenging. The use of serological testing in horses can help aid in diagnosis. Abdominal ultrasound, abdominocentesis, radiographs, and subsequent laboratory analysis may help diagnose an internal abscess.

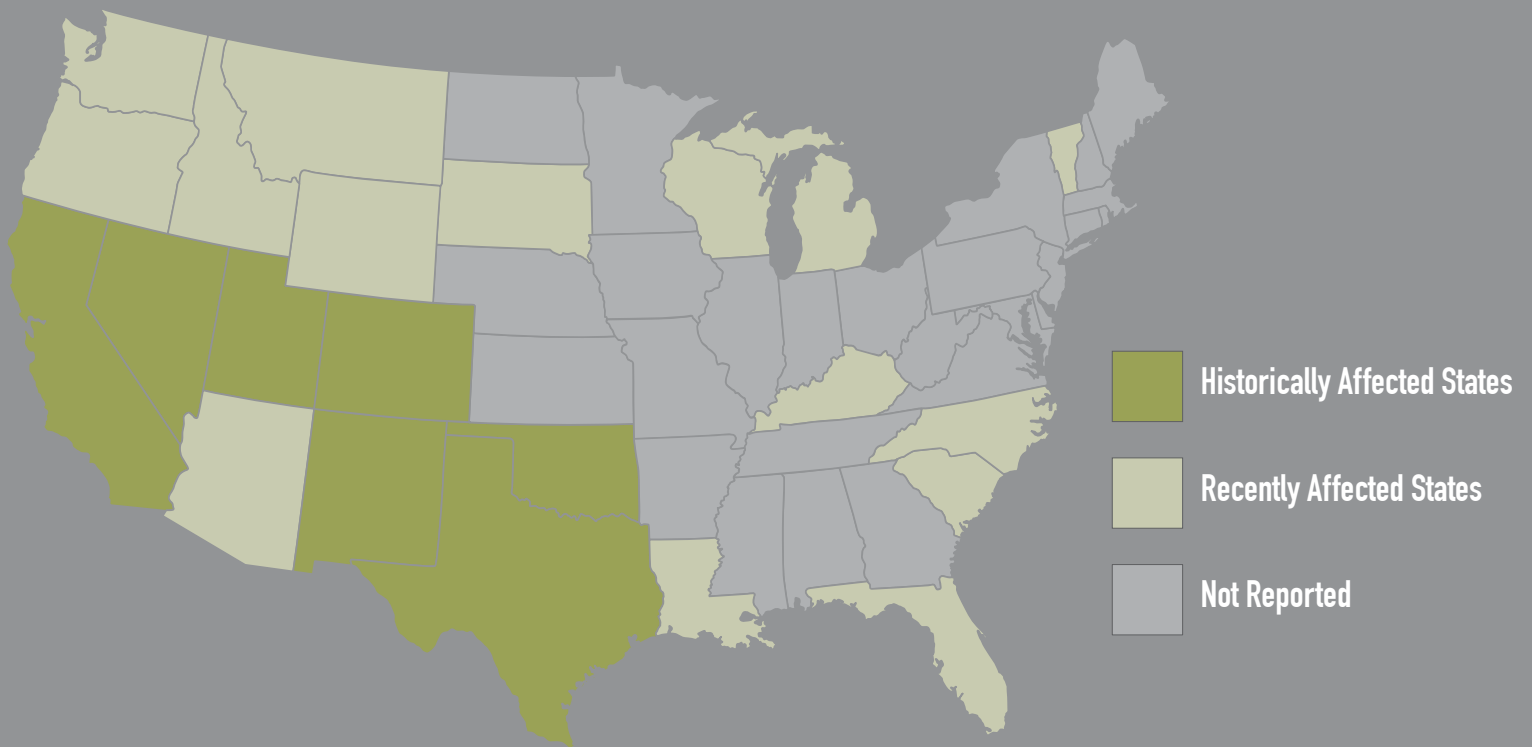
Approximately ninety percent of the time, Pigeon Fever cases will present clinically with external abscessation. These abscesses are typically treated by lancing, draining, and lavaging the abscesses. Certain cases may warrant systemic antibiotics. Internal abscesses, found on the liver, respiratory tract, kidney and spleen, are less common, but more serious. Up to 40 percent mortality has been reported in these cases, even with treatment. Surgery maybe required to encourage drainage, and aggressive long-term antibiotic therapy is usually required.

Additional signs include:

- Anorexia
- Fever
- Lethargy
- Weight loss
- Respiratory tract infection
- Abdominal pain
- Abortion in pregnant mares



If you are in areas where Pigeon Fever is endemic, or traveling through those areas, consider vaccinating with the newest vaccine from Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. that is designed to protect your horse against Pigeon Fever.



Pigeon Fever has been most prevalent in the west. These bacteria thrive in hot, dry environmental conditions. However, in 2012, sixty cases were reported in Florida, indicating the disease should no longer be considered restricted to the western United States.¹



It is not uncommon for horse owners to spend thousands of dollars and weeks or months treating a horse affected with Pigeon Fever.²

Don't just treat Pigeon Fever, vaccinate against it

Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica Inc.'s *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* (Pigeon Fever) Vaccine³

Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. has developed a *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* (Pigeon Fever) Vaccine for horses. In the past ten years, Pigeon Fever has expanded in prevalence and geographic distribution. While treatment of external abscesses is usually considered straightforward, considerable time and expense may be incurred before the infection is resolved. It is not uncommon for horse owners to spend thousands of dollars and weeks to months treating a case of Pigeon Fever.²

Furthermore, internal abscessation associated with the disease has been reported to result in up to 40% mortality despite treatment.²

Until this vaccine, protocols used to combat Pigeon Fever were largely focused on treatment, versus immunization. Now you can immunize your horses before you need to treat.

To learn more, talk to your **Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. sales rep today or call 1-800-325-9167.**

“Most people don’t realize how widespread it is. It’s not highly fatal like West Nile virus or tetanus, but it’s a serious disease.”

**– Sharon J. Spier, D.V.M, Ph.D., Dipl. ACVIM,
and professor in the Department of
Medicine and Epidemiology at
UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine**

Preventive measures are the best defense

To help stop the infection, or minimize spread of disease, preventive measures should be implemented, including:

- Biosecurity measures such as wearing examination gloves when working with affected horses, isolating affected horses and meticulous wound care.
- Prevent drainage from the infected abscesses from contaminating the soil. *C. pseudotuberculosis* can live up to 8 months in contaminated soil.
- Fly control measures against stable flies, horn flies and houseflies to help reduce the mechanical transmission.
- Isolate infected horses to eliminate horse-to-horse contact.

References: 1. Kilcoyne, I., et. al. Frequency of *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* infection in horses across the United States during a 10-year period. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2014;245:309-314. 2. Pratt, S., Spier, S., et. al. Evaluation of clinical characteristics, diagnostic test results and outcome in horses with internal infection caused by *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*: 30 cases. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2005;227:441-448. 3. *Equine Infectious Diseases: Second Edition* 2014;pp. 373-392

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EQUINE DIVISION