



CEM Quarantine Survival Guide

Your guide to getting OUT of CEM Quarantine and
IN the ring faster



About WellGrove Quarantine



Founded by Erin S Newkirk, DVM

Dr. Newkirk is one of the most experienced professionals involved in the testing procedures for CEM Quarantine in the United States. Furthermore, she is the go-to veterinarian for equine reproduction and wellness in all of South Florida. Her insights into the quarantine process have proven invaluable for many equestrians and clients over the years. In order to offer her customers a quality quarantine experience, she opened WellGrove Quarantine in 2019. In this guide, she shares valuable information to help you the next time your horse in in CEM Quarantine.

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What is CEM and why is it important?

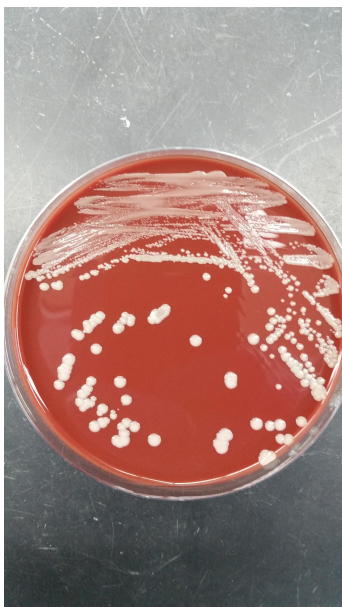
Contagious Equine Metritis, also known as CEM, is a venereal disease caused by the bacteria called *Taylorella equigenitalis*.

It is spread between mares and stallions during breeding, by artificial insemination with contaminated semen and from stallion to stallion through contaminated equipment.

Since the disease doesn't produce many outward signs, horses can be otherwise healthy, silent carriers of the bacteria.

The USDA currently considers all countries of the European Union, and a small number of others, to be affected with CEM.

To protect the U.S. equine industry, horses imported from CEM-affected countries must test negative for the disease before entering the United States.



Ok, BUT why do we have to go through such an elaborate process?

...this is **not a big deal** in the European Union

...my horse **isn't going to be used for breeding**, what's the risk?

...this is an **unnecessary process** that wastes our time and money.



The US is a CEM-free country...and intends to stay that way

The CEM free status of the United States must be maintained and protected to facilitate worldwide travel of horses to and from the country.

The CEM organism is slow to grow on culture and takes multiple samples of multiple sites to reliably prove that a horse is clear.

The US maintains a rigorous testing process, which is proven to reliably detect carriers of the organism.

This protocol is built on recommendations by the OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) based in Paris, France.

Unfortunately, until another testing method is proven superior, the current protocol will remain in place for horses importing from the European Union and other CEM affected countries to the United States.





Know What to Expect

MARES

Each mare is routinely cultured a minimum of 3 times and a blood sample is taken with the first culture. These 3 cultures and blood sample are required to fulfill the requirements for testing. A number of facilities also routinely perform a 4th culture to serve as backup in case of an issue with one of the other cultures.

- It takes 8 days from any given culture to receive the results.
- Cultures must have minimum of 72 hours between sampling
- Cultures are routinely obtained Monday-Friday
- Holidays will impact the testing schedule
- All mares must receive a 5-day topical treatment (aka Clean & Pack) prior to release.

Typical Duration of Stay: 14-21 days

STALLIONS

Stallions are cultured on the first available weekday of their stay. The soonest a stallion can breed is typically 8-10 days after this culture is taken. Once a negative result is obtained, the stallion will live cover 2 test mares.

- It takes 8 days from any given culture to receive the results.
- Test mares are then tested via cultures and blood to determine if the stallion was a carrier and exposed them to the bacteria.
- Cultures can only be obtained Monday-Friday
- Holidays can impact the testing schedule
- All stallions receive a 5-day topical treatment (aka Clean & Pack) after breeding prior to release.
- Stallions can be sedated or teased to perform cultures and treatment procedures.

Typical Duration of Stay: 32-35 days

FAQs

My horse is experiencing troublesome skin issues. What can we do?

First talk with the vet on staff as soon you see early signs of skin issues so they can be monitored. Medications other than antibiotics may be allowed depending on their location and the testing schedule may be able to be manipulated to permit treatment at the earliest possible time. Medications such as antihistamines and steroids can be used without disruption of the testing schedule.



My horse is not eating or drinking well and I worry they may colic.

Talk with the vet on staff and the quarantine manager if it seems your horse is having a hard time adjusting to the new environment. Options such as customizing the grain and hay offered can be arranged. Many owners appreciate offering hay in a slow-feed net, so their horse has 24 hour access to hay.

Can my horse maintain their fitness during the quarantine stay?

Depending on your quarantine facility, this may or may not be possible. WellGrove Quarantine offers 2 large rings, a lunging area, turnout paddocks and handwalking/handgrazing areas to meet these demands. If you're out of town or unable to stop by, riders can be arranged to exercise your horse for you.



FAQs

Why can't I bathe my horse like normal?

The CEM organism is notoriously hard to culture and any disruption of the local flora can invalidate the testing process. As such the state of Florida has requested that baths with soap be restricted until after all cultures have been obtained. Hosing with water and good old-fashioned grooming are allowed.

What happens if my horse is bathed with soap or treated with topical or systemic antimicrobials prior to the last culture?

All of these procedures will invalidate the testing process. You will have to wait 7 days from any systemic antimicrobial given or 21 days from any topical or bath and RESTART the whole testing process. This is a major No-No! In other words, you have to wait A LOT LONGER to depart the facility.

What if my horse has a wound or issue far away from the genitals, can we still treat?

Yes, with notification of both the Quarantine veterinarian and supervising veterinarian, most issues can be safely monitored and treated. Your horse's safety and health are the first priority and will take precedence over the testing schedule.



Things That Will Delay Your Stay

Overgrowth

There are stallions and mares that harbor a larger amount of *Pseudomonas* (a common bacteria), fungal spores or *Proteus* (another bacteria) in the sample sites compared to the rest of the population. This is not indicative of an infection, per se, but these organisms are very efficient at growing in the lab once on the culture plate. Once there, they overgrow the plate rapidly, making it impossible to see if the CEM organism did or did not also grow. This creates an “Invalid Test,” per USDA rules. Having one sample overgrown means there is higher likelihood that others may have the same issue, because this is the horse’s current flora present in the sampling sites. In these situations, there are alternate protocols that will be implemented to try and obtain valid cultures in a timely manner. Unfortunately, however, this will certainly delay your original departure from the facility.

Holidays

The labs that process the samples are subject to Holiday closures throughout the year. Often these closures impact the testing schedule or release of results.

Weather

Mother Nature may impact the shipment of samples to the lab. FedEx and UPS have great track records for usually providing on time delivery, however, there are delays that can keep a box from making it to the lab on time.

Failure to Follow the Rules

If you are found in violation of the rules of testing the State will require you to repeat the entire process over again at your own expense of both money and time to comply with the rules. If this is not an option, return of the horse to the country of origin or euthanasia are the remaining options.



How to Shorten Your Stay

The number one secret to getting out faster is planning ahead and asking if there are any ways to expedite your stay.

First, call both your shipper and quarantine facility well ahead of when you intend to ship. If you need to be out of CEM Quarantine by a certain date, these conversations can map out a testing schedule to meet your needs. Many facilities have relationships with labs and couriers that can facilitate an expedited stay for added fees, as long as they know well ahead of time.



How to avoid CEM Quarantine all together!

5 Ways to Import a Horse from Europe and avoid CEM Quarantine

1. Keep your stay in Europe shorter than 60 days. If you travel to Europe from the US and return in less than 60 days, no repeat CEM testing is required.
2. Looking to import young-stock? Import them before they reach their 2nd birthday (731 days old). If imported prior to their second birthday, no CEM testing is required.
3. Looking to import a stallion, but plan to castrate him shortly after import? Consider castration and time to heal before importing the horse. No CEM testing is required for geldings.
4. If you're a PRE (Pura Raza Espanol) aficionado, certified virgin PRE stallions are not required to undergo CEM testing.
5. A CEM Waiver option is available to compete in sport events without having to go through the testing process. This opportunity has some restrictions, but is available through the USDA.





And now you know!

We hope you have learned something new from this survival guide and have a better understanding of the whys and hows of the process.

We also hope that the next time you need a CEM Quarantine, you choose WellGrove Quarantine to guide you through the process and leave with a horse ready to put their best hoof forward.



www.wellgrovequarantine.com