



OWEC BULLETIN

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Recent Outbreaks of Potomac Horse Fever by Dr. Tena Boyd

Recent cases in and around our area of Potomac Horse Fever have stimulated much discussion of late and this article is to serve as a review. The goal is to bring information to our horse owners and decrease cause for alarm.

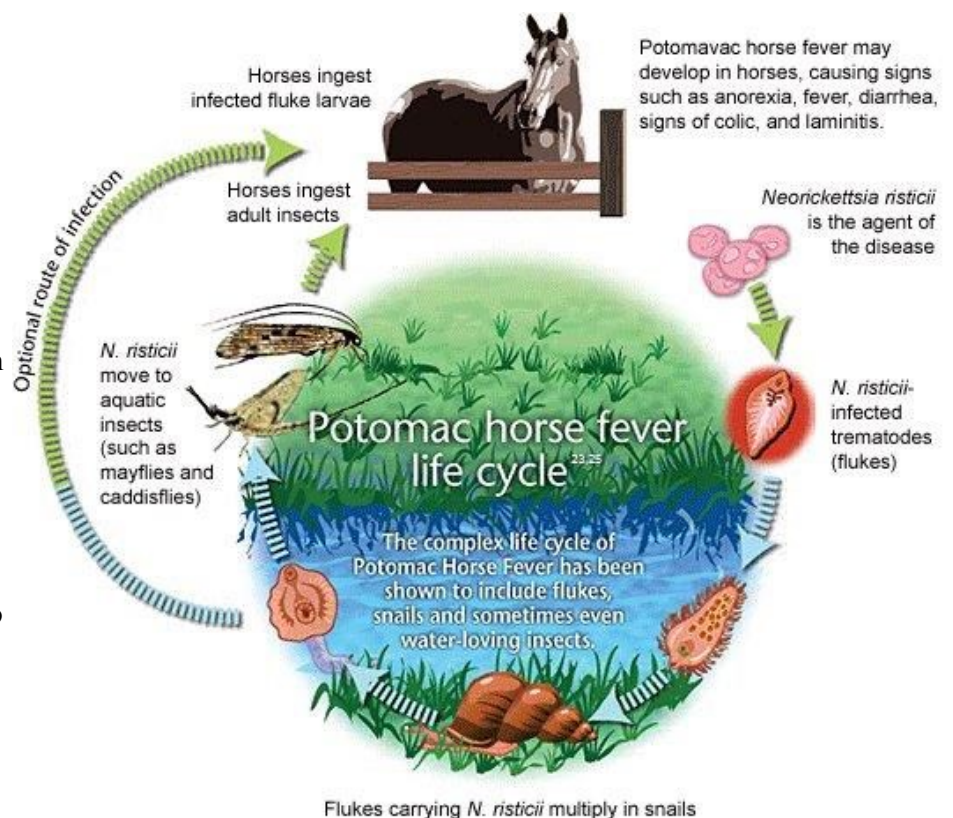
Potomac Horse Fever (PHF) is a sporadic disease first reported in 1979 in the Eastern US near the Potomac River. It has been documented in 40 US states and Canada since then. The disease is **seasonal**, occurring most often in **July, August, and September**. PHF is caused by a rickettsial organism, *Neorickettsia risticii* (formerly known as *Ehrlichia risticii*).

PHF occurs when a horse ingests a trematode parasite present in *Caddis sp.* of flies commonly known in our area as Mayflies. This photo is an example. The flies obtain the trematode from feeding on excrement of fresh water snails. The organism is transmitted to the horse when inadvertently eating the dead flies in pasture near the body of water or with their feed.

Symptoms include fever, diarrhea, depression, poor appetite, colic. Laminitis is a frequent consequence of the fever and diarrhea in many cases. Pregnant mares may abort their foals if they become infected.

Potomac Horse Fever is **not contagious between horses**. One affected horse will not transmit the disease to another. However, when a case is documented in an area, it is likely that additional cases will also develop given the right conditions.

Prevention boils down to identifying a fever in the horse in the “risky” time of year and prompt treatment. There is a killed **vaccine available** with very questionable effectiveness. Other measures include **turning off outside lights around the barn** (lights attract the insects and their short lives may end within the horse’s living space), **clean water buckets and feed areas frequently**, and **keep food covered**. Also when fresh water ponds are present, maintaining **plant habitats around the pond** will help to encourage these aquatic insects to stay near their place of origin and away from the eating areas of our horses.



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We welcome your feedback and comments. What topics would you like covered? E-mail your suggestions to owec@aol.com.

PROUD MEMBER OF



**2013 Ride for the
Cure Virginia**

September 21, 2013

Locust Hill Preserve,

Culpeper, VA

Registration is open!

www.komencentralva.org

To join the organizing committee email

rideforthe cureva@gmail.com



FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF RFC VA!

OWEC once again has joined forces with United Country Piedmont Real Estate, Capital Party Rentals, Dover Saddlery, Squeaky Pig BBQ and Prince Michel Vineyard and Winery to raise money to fight breast cancer through Ride for the Cure Virginia. Pictured here is a private label wine offered to us by Prince Michel in support of RFC VA and Susan G. Komen, Central Virginia Affiliate. Ask us how you can join us in the fight against breast cancer!

A few Updates:

- ◆ **Dr. Alisha Oehling** joined OWEC in February. We are excited to have her as part of our team! Her special interests include Sport Horse Medicine, Lameness, and Dentistry. A brief biography of Dr. Oehling:

Dr. Oehling grew up in Asheville, NC spending every moment she could on a horse. It was then her love of horses and desire to become a veterinarian was formed. She spent four years at Averett University in Danville, VA where she earned a B.S. in Biomedical Sciences with a minor in Equestrian Studies. Here she also actively participated on the combined training team, successfully showing throughout North Carolina and Virginia. Vet school brought her to the Virginia Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine in Blacksburg, VA where she graduated in 2009 with an Equine emphasis. Dr. Oehling has special interest in diagnosing and treating lameness in the sport horse.

Directly after graduating from vet school, Dr. Oehling opened Stateline Equine in Clarksville, VA. Stateline Equine offered care for multiple large animal species in southeastern Virginia to include equine, bovine, camelid, and caprine medicine. After approximately 3.5 years of dedicated service to the area Dr. Oehling closed Stateline Equine's doors in order to pursue an opportunity with Old Waterloo Equine Clinic. She very much looks forward to servicing this community with the same fervor and eagerness she exuded with Stateline Equine. In her spare time Dr. Oehling participates in the sport of eventing with her 7 year old Paint, Ollie. She purchased him eighteen months ago and is currently competing him at Novice and hopes that together their partnership will continue to take them through the levels.

- ◆ **Dr. Tena Boyd** was named 2013 Virginia Distinguished Veterinarian by the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association (VVMA) in late February.
- ◆ Long time employee, **Ingrid Gormly** has "retired" from OWEC. We miss her and hope that you will join us in wishing her well!
- ◆ Please welcome **Alexandra "Alex" Northcutt** to our support staff! Alex lives in Culpeper and is a Virginia Tech graduate, watch our web site for a more thorough introduction.
- ◆ For your convenience, OWEC veterinarians can now swipe credit cards on the farm!