

No health certificates found for seized horses

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– Twelve horses seized from a Critchett Road property this week and an additional 17 horses remaining on the land are under quarantine because they each lacked health certificates and proof of an equine infectious anemia test as required by state law.

Meanwhile, Colorado authorities confirmed that last fall they investigated concerns regarding malnourished horses at a farm owned by Heidi Fredrick, but no charges were filed and the case was closed.

Brian Travis, Fredrick's husband and owner of the Critchett Road property, said Fredrick boarded horses in Colorado and some owners were not taking care of them.

Lisa Massie, equine investigator for Douglas County in Colorado, said there was an investigation and concern about thin horses but the case has been closed and she did not have further information.

New Hampshire law requires that horses have a health certificate and proof that an EIA test has been done within six months prior to entering the state.

EIA is a contagious disease that can pass quickly between horses and is "reportable" under state law, according to state veterinarian Steve Crawford.



Some of the 17 horses remaining at Brian Travis' Candia farm take shelter. The NHSPCA seized 12 horses Monday. (GRETYL MACALASTER)

"No one wants sick animals coming into the state," said Lori Towle, data control clerk for the division of animal industries at the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food. She added that the test is required even if a horse is coming into the state for a fair or a show.

Travis said he was not aware of the law, or that he was in violation of it, until he received a search warrant on Monday.

He said he was informed that all of the horses must remain in quarantine until negative test results are received.

Candia Police Chief Mike McGillen said the 12 horses were taken because of shelter and welfare concerns, not because they lacked health certificates.

Two veterinarians examined the horses on scene, and although they were called in by the New Hampshire Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, they do not work for the organization.

Dr. Simon George, with the Deerfield Veterinary Clinic was one of the veterinarians on scene.

"His role was to make sure that the animals' safety came first and foremost above everything else," Jenni George, co-owner of the Deerfield Veterinary Clinic and George's wife, said. She said she could not make any comments on the condition of the horses because of the ongoing investigation.

George confirmed that her husband had visited the Travis property at their request a couple of weeks ago to examine a horse with an injured foot.

Dr. Sara Hodgdon, a veterinarian with TNT Equine in Dover was also on scene. A call to Hodgdon was not returned yesterday.

McGillen said the search warrant has been sealed and he still cannot comment on who filed the original complaint. He said the investigation is ongoing as police await reports from the veterinarians and others involved.

George said the paperwork takes some time because of the number of horses involved.

Travis said police told him that the complaint was lodged about two weeks ago.