



Beth Collier

**Kim Meier-Morani and Test Pattern**

**Herpes, contd.**

“Lifting the last remaining Hold Order at Pimlico is a positive [sign] that things are coming to a close there,” says Maryland State Veterinarian Guy Hohenhaus. “We will continue working with all parties involved to monitor the situation and bring it to a conclusion. We thank the owners, trainers and staff for their diligence in practicing prudent bio-security measures and their patience as we work through this science-based process that will make sure the remaining horses test negative before they will be released from the detention barn.”

On Feb. 18, Pimlico returned to normal training hours (6-10 a.m.) and each horse stabled on the grounds (except the six in the detention/isolation barn) was allowed to race at Laurel Park.

Meanwhile, at Laurel Park, Barn 9 remained under a Hold Order until Feb. 24, pending negative test results. A filly there was euthanized Jan. 26 due to a suspected pelvic injury, but was later found to have contracted EHV-1. The weekend of Feb. 11/12, two

horses in that barn reportedly developed a fever, with one subsequently testing positive for EHV-1 and prompting the extension of the existing Hold Order. On Feb. 17, however, follow-up test results came back negative on both horses, and neither has “gone neuro” by press time. In addition, a suspected case of herpes at Bowie Training Center has tested negative.

“Given that Pimlico has been new case-free for the better part of a month now, that’s pretty encouraging,” Hohenhaus says. “That starts to suggest that it’s burning itself out – and likewise for Laurel.”

**Beyond the Racetrack**

But elsewhere, EHV-1 still seems a clear and present danger. Two of the virus’ most recent casualties occurred at the property formerly known as Seven Hills Farm, a boarding and training facility near Worton operated by noted event rider/trainer Kim Meier-Morani.

On Jan. 10, Meier-Morani received a yearling filly that came from the Ocala, Florida sales – by way of Pimlico – to be broken. At the time of the filly’s layover at Pimlico, officials believed that the herpes virus was limited to the opposite side of the track, and traffic to and from Pimlico was still permitted.

Five days after the filly arrived at the farm, Meier-Morani says she got “the snots.” But since she wasn’t running a temperature, the horsewoman says she wasn’t particularly concerned. In addition, she says that all of her horses are vaccinated against flu/rhino three times a year (in February, May and August, during peak travel times). “If you

don’t know what [the neurological form of the virus] does, you’re not particularly worried about it, because you figure ‘Hey, I gave a shot against it, I’m okay,’” she says.

Then, on Jan. 19, Meier-Morani received word that a horse in Pimlico’s Barn A – the barn in which her new arrival had stayed – had tested positive for the virus. Although the outbreak had been featured in news reports around the state, Meier-Morani says she was unaware of it until that night. The next day, she had six horses with temperatures, three of them high.

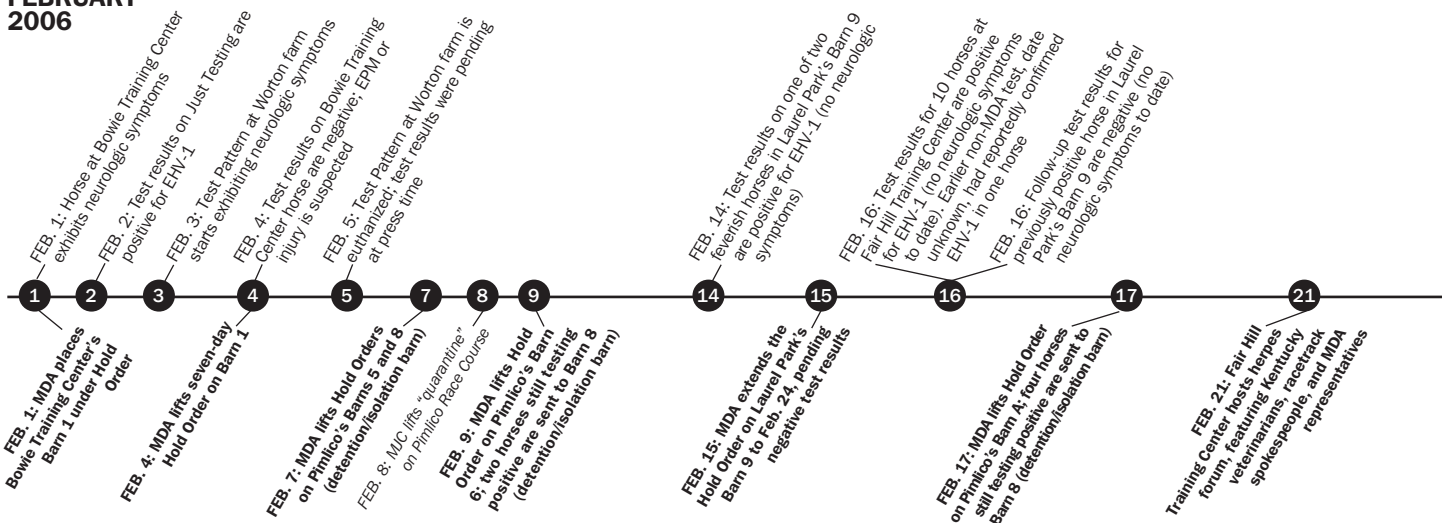
Hohenhaus, who placed a Hold Order on the Meier-Morani farm on Jan. 26, says that the situation there isn’t as easy to manage as individual racetrack barns, where horses are stallbound most of the time. “The horses [at the Worton farm] are commingled a large number of hours a day in pens and paddocks, and have fenceline contact,” he explains. “So while there are two separate barns, there aren’t two separate populations of horses, from a disease control standpoint. We had no choice but to consider all of them as exposed.”

Since her experience with EHV-1 began, Meier-Morani says she’s learned that although there are conflicting schools of thought on the efficacy (and even the advisability) of repeat vaccinations on the virus’ neurologic form, many vets recommend that the flu/rhino vaccine be given every 90 days – i.e., four times a year. She has also learned firsthand about the devastation the neurologic form can cause, having nursed two cherished homebreds – full sisters, in fact – through

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**HERPES CRISIS:  
Analysis & Debate**  
What went right? What went wrong? Meier-Morani, Hohenhaus and other industry leaders speak out in *The Equiery’s* April issue!

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the heart-wrenching final hours of their lives. One was her daughter's 5-year-old Pony Club mount Just Testing, who was euthanized Jan. 26. The other, Test Pattern, was a 7-year-old Preliminary eventer and consistent ribbon winner who belonged to Meier-Morani's friend Susan Newton-Rhodes. She was euthanized Feb. 5.

At press time, Hohenhaus says the Worton farm has been infection-free (by the MDA's definition of that term) for about 10 days. However, Meier-Morani was still monitoring two horses impacted by the virus: the homebred Test Ride and her full sibling, Meier-Morani's beloved upper-level event horse Test Run. Tenth at the 2004 Rolex Kentucky CCI\*\*\*\*, he also completed the 2004 Burghley CCI\*\*\*\* with Meier-Morani in the irons. "I have a four-star horse it took me my whole life to breed and develop," she says. "And he can't trot now."

### Minimizing the Risk

At press time, Hohenhaus says officials were still trying to determine the status of interstate health papers on the filly from Florida that ended up at Meier-Morani's farm. The filly has reportedly recovered from the virus.

Did she pick up EHV-1 in Florida, at Pimlico, or somewhere in between? "It's hard to say," he admits. "[Florida officials] are telling our folks that they haven't had any problems anywhere. So is it possible that an 18-hour trailer ride caused herpes to emerge in that horse, and then it dropped off a present at Barn A on the way through? That's certainly possible."

As Hohenhaus explains, EHV-1 – which isn't as contagious as, say, influenza – lies dormant in many horses until activated by unknown triggers (some experts believe stress might play a role). "Why exactly it wakes up in that vicious form is not at all understood," he says. "I've always had at least a partial suspicion that the Barn A outbreak was separate and distinct from what was going on at the other side of Pimlico. It could just as easily be directly linked, but the circumstances suggest that it might be ... an unfortunate coincidence in time."

"But when the dust settles and the herpes season is behind us in a couple of months, [Gluck Equine Research Center in] Kentucky is going to attempt to do more detailed fingerprinting of the samples that we've sent them," he continues. "That allows us to compare viral types between

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## Quarantine vs. Hold Order: What's the Difference? And Is A "Hold Order" as Effective as a "Quarantine"?

To read the use of the term "quarantine" as applied to large animals in the Maryland Annotated Code, please visit [www.equiry.com](http://www.equiry.com) and visit the Herpes Health Crises Update section.

### Both A Legal and Medical Term

In the context of the code of Maryland, the word "quarantine" is a legal term, according to Maryland state veterinarian Guy Hohenhaus. And although it's not mentioned in the code, the term "Hold Order" – which was coined by the Maryland Department of Agriculture – is legalese, too, "because it's the Secretary of Agriculture exercising his quarantine authority, basically."

As he goes on to explain, the word "quarantine," while generally understood in the legal sense, has a somewhat questionable scientific definition. Originally, it was defined as a restriction on movement for 40 days – something used with ships coming into port when plague and cholera were common.

"So the word 'quarantine' in the strict [modern] medical sense is the restriction on movement put on somebody or an animal that you have reason to believe has an increased risk of exposure (to infectious and contagious disease)," he says. "You make them wait through one-plus incubation period, and then say, I guess they don't have it – or they had it, but it's over now."

This restriction also covers complete isolation, Hohenhaus says, which is what is done to a person or animal that is known (not just suspected) to be sick.

Thus, when it is said that the Secretary has the right to quarantine, it means that he and his agents at the Maryland Department of Agriculture have the right to restrict movement according to good scientific practices for infectious and contagious diseases.

"That's what our legislation says – we just try not to use the 'q' word, if we can avoid it, because everyone else misuses it, and it had bad connotations," Hohenhaus comments. Instead, the MDA generally uses the term "Hold Order," he explains. "We

introduced some additional nuance into it because we've learned ... that if you start throwing the 'quarantine' word around ... it generally causes overreaction.

"We've had pretty good luck with the [terms] Investigational Hold Order and Hold Order," he continues, adding that other states who've also had problems with the term "quarantine" have asked, "Hey, where'd you get that idea?"

### Levels of Restriction: A Matter of Extent – and Stakes

Hohenhaus goes on to explain that the Hold Orders placed on those barns with equine herpes fall under the category of the Secretary's "Special Quarantine" authority. "That's a legal definition that pertains to individual, small lots – a barn, a farm, a cluster of barns," he says.

Beyond that, he says, the Secretary can quarantine large blocs of land, right up to the whole state – and the higher the stakes, the more probable the governor's involvement. A restriction at this level is likely to be referred to as a "General Quarantine."

Hold Orders are basically divided into Investigational Hold Orders and General Animal Hold Orders, Hohenhaus continues. "The Investigational Hold Order is just a temporary Special Quarantine that you use when you have reason to believe that you're dealing with a disease, but you haven't confirmed that," he explains, adding that it generally lasts a week, or however long it takes to get test results back. If the diagnostic information is already there, however, the investigational stage is skipped in favor of a General Animal Hold Order, which lasts a specified amount of time. "But ultimately, we're still exercising the Secretary's quarantine authority," he stresses.

As for what was imposed on Pimlico by the Maryland Jockey Club, that was not technically a quarantine, Hohenhaus says, because a "quarantine" has a very specific legal definition as described above, and can only be imposed by certain authorities (including the Secretary of Agriculture). "Perhaps a more appropriate term would be 'self-imposed restriction on movement' or 'lockdown,'" he suggests.

To learn more about Maryland's Quarantine Protocols, please visit [www.equiry.com](http://www.equiry.com), and click on the Herpes Health Crises Update section, and then select Maryland's Quarantine Protocols.

Marylanders Speak Out: Send your thoughts on the herpes crisis to [editor@equiry.com](mailto:editor@equiry.com).

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barns and between individual horses.”

Meanwhile, Hohenhaus says that while the current flu/rhino vaccine is no panacea, it's still best to administer it every 90-120 days. Some experts believe that routine vaccination might reduce the respiratory form of EHV-1 infection, which in turn might help prevent the neurologic form.

In terms of general hygiene, Hohenhaus recommends avoiding shared tack and handling, “particularly anything that has to do with the front of the horse, including the handlers' hands, bits and bridles, and identifiers at the tracks.”

In addition, he says, “If the horse doesn't need to go somewhere, don't take him. On the other hand, if you have strange entries to your population, you really need to segregate them for, ideally, 21 days. But even a week is a huge benefit ... and that's just basic good husbandry.

“But you can't get the risk to zero,” he emphasizes. “You have to accept the fact that if you're going to do with your horse what you would like to do with it – whether it's race it, ride it or show it – you're going to have to accept some risk.”

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*For continuous updates on the herpes outbreak, as well as MDA recommendations for bio-security in stables, visit [www.eququery.com](http://www.eququery.com).*

## Bio-Security for Equine Shippers

With the competition and breeding/foaling season upon us, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has the following bio-security recommendations for equine shippers:

### Trailer interiors:

- Always clean and disinfect vehicles used for moving horses and other livestock after each use;
- Mix 1 part bleach to 10 parts water and spray over areas in which horses make contact during shipment.

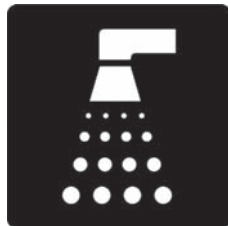
### Car, truck, and trailer tires:

- Taking a few minutes to spray disinfectant over your tires can kill germs you've picked up in parking lots, on dirt roads, or in a stable or pasture area.

### Hands, shoes, and clothes:

- Take time to clean and disinfect your shoes;

- Mix 3 parts bleach to 2 parts water and pour solution into a shallow container to dip shoes in after each shipment;



- Washing your hands with soap and water after handling horses will limit your ability to pass on germs;
- Change clothes or coveralls after handling horses from different locations;
- Wash clothes before wearing them again to handle and ship other horses.

