FORT COLLINS - The equine section at the Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital is today open to all equine patients but will continue to use extra biosecurity precautions. The change to resume appointments for elective procedures revises previous limitations to accept only emergency cases that were enacted as a precaution in response to the recent widespread outbreak equine herpesvirus-1. The hospital also remains open to all other animal patients. Extra biosecurity measures will be enacted for all equine and camelid patients to help ensure patient safety. These extra precautions include extensive screening of equine and camelid patients for health and recent travel history. Owners of horses or camels scheduled for appointments at the VTH will be asked to monitor their animal’s temperature for two days before their appointment and to develop an accurate history of their animal’s recent travel and exposure to other horses and camels. If animals have been in contact with “stranger” horses or have signs of infection, they will not be denied services, but additional biosecurity measures will be taken. Anyone wanting to schedule an appointment or with an existing appointment at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital should call (970) 297-5000 for more information.

In response to the outbreak, the Veterinary Teaching Hospital had restricted equine and camelid patients to emergency cases only as a best practice to discourage horse owners from moving their animals. The hospital and equine section of the hospital has never been under quarantine due to the outbreak of equine herpesvirus 1, or EHV-1. All horses brought into the hospital are routinely screened for disease signs and their recent history of travel and contact with other horses is always closely reviewed to help rule out possible exposure to contagious diseases. Any horse that is thought to have a contagious disease, such as horses infected during the recent outbreak of EHV-1, is treated in an isolation facility that is separate from the main equine hospital and other equine patients. This isolation unit is specifically designed for treating infectious disease cases. The unit is not physically connected to the main hospital and horses in the main hospital are not exposed to horses in the isolation unit. Equine herpesvirus is contagious between horses and camelids, but cannot be spread to humans or other animals treated at the hospital such as cats and dogs. EHV-1 may cause only mild, flu-like illness in many cases, but some horses may become seriously ill with neurologic disease and pregnant mares can abort. EHV-1 may be fatal in some severely infected horses. The most common way for EHV-1 to spread is by direct horse-to-horse contact. The virus also can spread through the air, contaminated equipment, clothing and hands. Symptoms in infected horses include fever, decreased coordination, nasal discharge, urine dribbling, loss of tail tone and hind-limb weakness. Horses may also face lethargy or lean against a wall or fence to maintain balance. They may become unable to get up or stand. Affected horses can be treated with supportive care, but there is no specific cure and some horses do not fully recover. Colorado State University veterinarians are recommending that horse owners continue to use caution when deciding whether or not to transport their horses and that they continue to take biosecurity precautions, such as washing hands before and after contacting horses and
limiting access to their grounds by other horses, which would allow transmission of EHV-1 and other contagious diseases. The CSU Veterinary Teaching Hospital and the CSU Equine Center also recommend that anyone organizing an event involving horses or camelids follow the “No Fever” policy proposed by the state government of California for horses attending any equine events. The policy would require that all horses at an event will have temperatures taken twice daily and that these results are posted on front of stalls for inspection. Any horse also could be subject to random temperature check by the show veterinarian or designated member of the veterinary staff during the event. Any horse with a fever of 102 degrees or greater should be removed from any event and premises immediately (a normal temperature for a horse is 99 to 101.5 degrees for adults, and up to a half degree higher in foals or in adults on very warm days). Some horses with a fever may not have EHV-1 or other contagious diseases, but the policy provides for an added layer of protection for all horses participating at events. Information about the policy is located at http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/equine_herpes_virus.html.

B.W. Pickett Equine Center update
The B.W. Pickett Equine Center on the Colorado State University Foothills Campus, a separate facility from the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, is lifting its temporary closure to visiting horses. The CSU Equine Center, which is an event and teaching facility, will re-open on a provisional basis using additional biosafety measures similar to those in effect at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. These steps will verify that horses coming onto the property have not been exposed to EHV-1 and are not displaying symptoms of illness. People organizing and participating in events at the Equine Center should call in advance for information about safety precautions, (970) 491-8373. The Equine Center is home to the CSU Equine Sciences Program, an undergraduate degree program, and it hosts a number of horse-related events. The following events are scheduled in June and will move forward as planned, with the additional safety precautions in place: Extreme Mustang Makeover, a wild-mustang training competition and adoption event, June 10-12; CSU summer horse camps for young riders, June 13-18 and June 19-24; and state 4-H horse judging contest in late June.

Colorado State University Extension update
Colorado State University Extension - which works to help Colorado communities by providing research information, locally based projects and 4-H youth programs and facilitating local community and economic development efforts - is monitoring the outbreak and will make decisions on the status of Extension-sponsored events and activities on a case-by-case basis. Anyone with questions about Extension events should contact their local Extension office, usually listed in the county government section of their local phone book. -30-