was a significant drop of outbreaks and case incidences. The accrued experience evidenced the need of an information system available at National level providing efficient timely communications and data sharing for appropriate actions. A WEBGIS developed by the Italian EIA National Reference Centre (NRCEIA) was tested in 2015 at Regional level (Latium) to: ensure real time tracking of EIA case location; trigger immediate alerts on new cases and outbreaks; allow risk evaluation and management of equid movements; provide practical tools for Veterinary Officers for surveillance, control or emergency actions in infected areas. The WEBGIS was also specifically oriented as a practical instrument for outbreak management. The Geo-portal was developed using open-source geographical layers (Base map aerials, topography, streets and municipalities borders) and programming softwares with the geodatabase automatically fed using official sources of structured data relative to farm registration and location, confirmed cases and officially notified outbreaks through dedicated web-services, providing an interactive, unified SOAP interface display to users with daily updating. By accessing to CRAIE WEBGIS webpage (http://195.45.99.77/craie/), the Local, Regional and National Veterinary Authorities can generate and display the list and location of the confirmed cases and the notified outbreaks. Details on outbreak status (i.e. from suspected to confirmed or to extinguished, species and number of individuals involved) are daily tracked and available. Controlling the retrospective geodatabase, it is possible to discriminate incident from recurrent cases and outbreaks as also activate the display of the areas at risk around the active outbreaks, allowing the automatic listing of all the farms registered within a defined surveillance buffer/area, where targeted serological and syndromic surveillance must be put in place. Further to the dynamic tools, the CRAIE WEBGIS also releases periodic static reports (lists and maps) relative to outbreak characteristics and location, allowing a timely supervision of the actions undertaken and a preliminary evaluation of the epidemiological trends. The CRAIE WEBGIS experience in Latium contributed to reduce uncertainty, provide timely and effective actions, raising the biosecurity level of the equid population. Its extension at a national level will support the country surveillance, data collection and outbreak tracking, allowing the derived epidemiological data to be used for risk assessment and management and timely evidence-based interventions.

### 211 Undetermined cause of mortality in horses in Argentina

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As in other mammals, horses can be affected by several fungal infections. However, only a small number of these are known to cause clinical disease and death. Multiple species of fungus are ubiquitous in the environment, and thus horses can acquire the fungal spores by inhalation, ingestion or contact (skin and mucosa). In addition, there is a predisposition for disease development related with the environmental conditions and the host's immune conditions. The aim of this report is to describe the features and clinical findings in a series of equine mortalities occurred in a Thoroughbred and Quarter Mile horse breeding farm located in Canuelas, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina. The affected population consisted of 20 nursing foals (between 3 to 6 months of age). They were allowed to graze freely on natural pasture, without supplementation of dry (hay) or other commercial equine feed. Due to the excessive rainfall, the animals were frequently moved over different paddocks for food access. During February-April 2014, 7 foals and 1 mare showed hyperthermia, depression, edema, profuse diarrhea, colic, serous nasal secretion and mucous membrane congestion. These clinical signs were followed by the development of ulcerative lesions with posterior necrosis of nasal septum mucosa. Even though all the affected animals received analgesic, antiinflammatory and different antibiotics treatment, no improvement was obtained.

The course of the disease was variable between 2 and 45 days. Ultrasonography revealed the presence of *Rhodococcus equi* (*R. equi*)-like lesions (abscesses) in the lungs in 6 out of the 7 affected foals. Nasal turbinates swabs (NS), tracheal washes (TW), whole blood to obtain peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PMBC) and serum samples were collected for microbiological studies (virology, bacteriology and mycology). Exhaustive necropsy, tissue samples collection and histopathology and microbiology studies were performed. No virus was detected in NS or PBMC. No antibodies against Burkholderia mallei (Glanders) were identified. At necropsy, the most consistent lesions were ulcers and necrosis of nasal septum; similar lesions but of lesser extent were also found in the tongue, palate and along the gastrointestinal tract. Lesions compatibles with those induced by *R. equi* were not observed in the lung. Histopathology revealed severe acute multifocal necrotizing interstitial pneumonia; severe chronic multifocal necrotizing rhinitis with vasculitis and intralesional fungal hyphae in nasal turbinates, and mild to severe suppurative inflammation with marked lymphoid depletion in colon. The fungi in the nasal turbinates were morphologically consistent with Zygomycetes (*Mucor, Basidiobolus, Conidiobolus*) or Oomycetes (*Pythiumsp*). Unfortunately, the etiology of the disease and death of these horses could not be determined; the presence of fungus-like microorganisms in the lesions could be a result of secondary infection due to intestinal injury.

### 166 Anthrax in a horse and post-exposure interventions

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Anthrax is a highly pathogenic zoonotic disease caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, a Gram positive spore-forming bacillus. Although it primarily affects herbivores, other mammals, including humans, can be affected. Animals may have at least three clinical presentations, hyperacute, acute, and subacute or chronic; horses almost always develop the acute form, generally manifesting throatach swelling, fever, dyspnoea, rapid onset of septicaemia, disseminated intravascular coagulation and shock. Bleeding from natural orifices is common in most species. The importance in public health lies in its zoonotic potential. Three forms of presentation have been described in humans: cutaneous, respiratory and digestive, depending on the route of exposure. Lethality in humans is extremely high without rapid detection and treatment. In December 2013, an adult crossbred work horse, belonging to persons of extremely limited resources, presented at the Universidad Austral de Chile’s Veterinary Hospital due to sudden
Equine grass sickness (EGS; Figure 1) is a frequently fatal neurodegenerative disease affecting grazing equids, predominantly in northern European and South American countries. It is hypothesised that EGS represents a toxico-infectious form of botulism, where a combination of risk factors triggers in-vivo production of *Clostridium botulinum* type C toxins by bacteria present within the gastrointestinal tract. Several previous studies have reported a protective effect of natural immunity to *C. botulinum* type C. To date, no vaccine is available for EGS prevention. This study aimed to determine safety and immunogenicity of a modern *C. botulinum* type C vaccine intended for EGS prevention, in the target species. An experimental randomised, triple-blinded, placebo-controlled safety study of a *C. botulinum* type C bacterin-toxoid vaccine was undertaken in 15 foals (aged 10–14 weeks). Foals were randomly assigned to one of two groups at a 1:2 ratio, and received either the test vaccine (n=10) or placebo (sterile saline) (n=5), with four intramuscular injections administered at 21 days intervals. All personnel performing animal care, clinical examinations and laboratory analyses were unaware of the foals’ vaccination status. Health assessments were performed daily from day -2 until day 70, and clinical assessments were performed daily on the day of each injection and six days subsequently. To evaluate vaccine immunogenicity, serum samples were obtained on days 0, 14, 21, 35, 42, 56, 63, 77, and 91 and analysed using an indirect *C. botulinum* type C ELISA. Analysis of variance and Student’s t-test or Wilcoxon signed rank tests were used to conduct intra- and inter-group comparisons, respectively.

### 046 Randomised controlled safety study of a *Clostridium botulinum* type C vaccine for the prevention of Equine Grass Sickness: evidence of vaccine immunogenicity and safety in the horse

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