



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Bret D. Marsh, DVM, State Veterinarian

INDIANA STATE BOARD OF ANIMAL HEALTH

Office of the State Veterinarian
Discovery Hall, Suite 100
1202 East 38th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205-2898
Phone: 317/544-2400

ANIMAL HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISORY

Horse Owners: Use Caution on the Roads During Solar Eclipse

(4 October 2023)

On the afternoon of April 8, a significant portion of Indiana will be overshadowed by a total solar eclipse. While the event will be brief—about 4 minutes of darkness—horse owners need to plan ahead and be aware of how the eclipse could impact their animals.

The Indiana State Board of Animal Health (BOAH) strongly advises people not to be out on roadways in horse-drawn buggies or carts or riding horseback during the period of the eclipse.

The totally dark and low-visibility conditions present a danger to horses and riders because they may not be visible to motor vehicle operators. Areas of Indiana where the eclipse will be the most intense (a line, roughly, from Knox County in the west to Randolph County to the east) can expect to see high volume of vehicular traffic from visiting spectators trying to experience the eclipse—especially in rural areas.

What's more, the sudden change in conditions can motivate unsafe and unpredictable behavior in the animals.

As most owners know, horses, mules, donkeys and ponies can be unpredictable under some circumstances. Rapid darkness during daylight hours can disrupt animals' normal behaviors. Horses observed in past eclipse events have been reported to become restless, shaking their heads and tails. Sometimes animals have been reported to stop moving or exhibit extreme behaviors.

BOAH advises horse owners to prepare for the eclipse:

- Determine when the darkness of the eclipse period will begin in your area.
 - Darkening skies are predicted to begin as early as 12:45pm in Southwestern Indiana and as late as 1:52pm in eastern counties. The darkened period is predicted to extend to 4:23pm in some locations.
 - Total darkness will vary by location and can last up to 4.5 minutes.
- Avoid travelling on roadways during the eclipse period.
- Anyone on the roads when darkness begins should pull off the roadway and secure the horses.
- Horse owners should ensure their animals are in a secure location, such as barn, paddock or tied, during the dark period. Even non-working animals may act unpredictably.

More details about the total solar eclipse in Indiana are online: www.eclipse2024.in.gov

###

Safeguarding Indiana's animals, food supply and citizens for more than 125 years.

An equal opportunity employer and provider.