

Equine Influenza Biosecurity Checklist for Horse Owners/Handlers

INTRODUCTION

There are some basic questions that you can ask yourself to reduce the risk of Equine Influenza (EI) affecting your horses. These questions will assist in you managing your daily operations and highlight the risks to your horses.

EI affects horses much as the “common flu” affects humans. EI is easily transmitted, and produces a range of clinical signs such as high temperatures, coughing, runny noses, etc. Young, pregnant, nutritionally and/or physically stressed, and elderly horses are more susceptible to catching EI, and some of these animals might die. The majority of horses will eventually recover.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

YES NO

Does your horse have the following symptoms:

any cough?

a watery nasal discharge, (this may be thick and smelly)?

depression?

loss of appetite?

laboured breathing?

stiffness?

a fever (with a temperature above 39°C)?

If horses are stabled, take rectal temperatures twice daily. A fever immediately suggests there is something wrong. If possible, isolate any horses with temperatures.

Contact your private veterinarian or government veterinarian immediately if you suspect your horse/s has symptoms of EI.

Or phone the **Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.**

It is essential you adhere to any stock standstill provisions or other movement restrictions as they apply to your region/state.

HORSES

YES NO

Have you isolated any new arrivals from resident horses for at least 14 days?

Pay particular attention to horses that have come from large sales, have been transported over long distances by commercial transport or recently returned from events. (Where space limits the isolation of new arrivals, pay more attention to good hygiene and disinfection practices, use separate equipment where possible, and handle them last).

Are your horses at least 20 metres from horses on other properties?

Eg. run an electric fence to ensure that separation can be maintained.

Are you seeking immediate veterinary advice at the first sign of sickness?

These animals need to be isolated immediately until EI has been ruled out.

Are you handling, feeding and watering ALL sick horses last?

If feasible use separate staff and equipment. You must clean and disinfect all equipment and protective clothing and wash any bare/exposed body parts with soap.

Do you have records of the movements of your horses so any contacts can be traced in the event of a disease outbreak?

PEOPLE

Are you and your staff avoiding visiting other properties where horses are kept?

You do not know the level of security these horses are kept under.

Have you restricted the access of visitors to your property?

Minimise the number of visitors and try to restrict them to people who have not had contact with horses during the previous 48 hours. Record all personnel entering your property and where they have previously been for the purposes of tracing.

Have you and your staff been made aware of the methods for the prevention, identification and control of EI?

Clean and disinfect all clothing and equipment and if possible, use separate staff and equipment.

Disinfection can be easily achieved with the use of household products. The virus is readily killed by common detergents and soaps, household chlorine bleach, hypochlorites, swimming pool disinfectant and citric acid. Check concentration and exposure times on the label.

YES NO

Are you and your staff vigilant about hygiene when handling different horses?

Wash hands (under finger nails) and any exposed skin with soap/detergent between handling different groups of horses.

When handling any sick horses are you using separate protective clothing and footwear?

Clean and wash all clothes/footwear with disinfectant to ensure cleanliness.

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

Are you using fresh needles and syringes for every horse when vaccinating or giving medicine?

Are you keeping sick horses' tack and associated gear separate from others?

Clean and disinfect after each use.

Are the stables and other equipment in contact with horses regularly cleaned and disinfected?

Thoroughly clean all surfaces by removing all snot/mucus, soil and organic material before disinfecting.

Have you been cleaning and disinfecting equipment such as tooth rasps, stethoscopes, stomach tubes and twitches between use on different groups of horses?

Are you maintaining and regularly checking the boundary?

VEHICLES

Are all transport vehicles regularly cleaned and disinfected?

Thoroughly clean all surfaces by removing all snot/mucus, soil and organic material before disinfecting.

Do you check all livestock vehicles entering your property for cleanliness?