

Horse Events: NSW guidelines for organisers and competitors

1 January 2009

These guidelines take into account some of the lessons learnt from the 2007 equine influenza outbreak in NSW & Qld.

All event participants have a responsibility to maintain good biosecurity.

Horses at events have the potential to spread infectious disease. Horse events act as multipliers for the spread of infectious diseases should an outbreak occur.

Horses that meet the following criteria **MUST NOT** be allowed to compete or take part in events.

- are suspected of suffering from infectious or contagious diseases or
- have been in contact with other animals suffering from such diseases
- have been in contact with horses which are not free from infectious or contagious diseases or
- come from places or establishments which are not free from such diseases

Recommendations for event organisers

Prepare a biosecurity strategy that identifies and analyses the potential for a disease outbreak(s), potential disease risks and impacts of a disease outbreak within your organisation.

at events

- Appoint a **Horse Health Steward**, who can identify and appreciate the biosecurity risks that occur when horses come together at horse events.
- Be aware that organisers have a duty of care to participants and their horses
- Organise a veterinarian to be on call
- Have a method of making emergency phone calls or an alternate method of communication
- Minimise public access to stable areas
- Provide separate vehicle parking from spectator vehicle parking
- Create a single entry and exit to grounds
- Provide adequate horse washing facilities
- Provide adequate hand washing facilities

Definition of a horse event

A horse event or activity is a gathering of ten or more horses from 3 or more properties. A horse event or activity is defined as any market, show, sale, fair, parade, race meeting, recreational activity, clinic, competition or any other horse gathering.

Horse event management

Horse event registration **is not** a requirement.

However it is highly recommended that horse event organisers:

- compile and maintain an annual Calendar of events
- collect and maintain information on horses attending events
including
 - the description of each horse
 - the registered name (or in the absence of a registered name the pet name) of each horse
 - microchip number or other unique identifier of each horse
 - the property identification code (PIC) or address where the horse is usually resident
 - the name, address and telephone number of the owner or person normally in charge of the horse

Event organisers should keep horse event attendance records for a period of six (6) months.

These records should be made available to an inspector upon request.

A sample event record of attendance at horse events is available at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/horse/influenza>



Horse owner responsibilities

The primary responsibility for biosecurity at events lies with the horse owners and riders – well before the event.

CHECK, DECLARE, COMPETE (CDC)

Horse owners must always **Check** the health of their horses before going to an event, **Declare** that their horses are healthy and then **Compete**.

Horse owners must not knowingly take sick horse/s to an event.

- Monitor your horse's health for 3-5 days before leaving for an event
- Check horse's temperature for 3 days, all owners should know their horse's average normal temperature (approximately 38.5°C). Take a thermometer with you.
- Check horse's are eating and drinking normally
- Check for any unusual nasal discharge
- Check for any unusual coughing
- Check for any signs of swelling or lameness
- Wash horses before departure
- Only share cleaned gear at events
- Do not share feed bins at events
- Any recent new arrivals on the property of origin should be kept away from other horses for at least 14 days.
- Contact your vet if you suspect any infectious disease

Key contacts

Website:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/livestock/horses>

Email: biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Emergency animal disease watch hotline – 1800 675 888

Use this number to report unusual disease signs, abnormal behaviour or unexplained deaths in animals that may be due to an emergency animal disease

Examples of Infectious horse diseases

Diarrhoea – serious bacterial infection of the bowel i.e. Salmonella, Clostridial disease. Rare diseases that are often fatal.

Equine Influenza – a highly infectious respiratory viral disease, eradicated from Australia June 30 2008.

Head Colds/Flu/ Respiratory Diseases – these are usually viral diseases caused by endemic pathogens like Equine Herpes Viris, Equine Arteritis Viris, Equine Rhinitis Viruses, Equine Adeno Viris. These are common infectious viral diseases of Australian horses, they mostly have a low impact on the horse's health and horses usually recover without complication.

Ringworm – a contagious superficial fungal skin disease, it can affect humans and spreads very easily, it has a low impact on the horse's health and is relatively commonplace. The disease has a short recovery period.

Strangles – a contagious, upper respiratory tract bacterial infection of horses and other equines. The disease is uncommon in performance horses but has a high impact on horse health and deaths can occur. Recovery and treatment is prolonged.

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