



Note Number: AG1361

Published: August 2008

Equine Biosecurity and Best Health Practice – For Holding Equestrian Activities

The purpose of this document is to provide all stakeholders with practical information on how they can manage their equestrian activities and be better prepared should the need arise.

Introduction

Until August 2007 the Equine Industry in Australia had been very fortunate not ever having experienced the far reaching effects an exotic disease can have on an industry. While the Equine Influenza (EI) was successfully contained and eradicated, the outbreak highlighted the importance of ongoing biosecurity. Owners are more aware now that good on-farm biosecurity and personal hygiene is important not only in the prevention of exotic diseases but any infectious disease that can affect horses. Whilst some owners may think that this won't apply to them it is important to remember that "prevention is better than cure".

What is Biosecurity?

Biosecurity includes disease control measures aimed at breaking the cycle of infection and having as much information about the animals and associated movements as possible.

Contingency Plans

Contingency plans which ensure that organisers are prepared should a standstill be declared, should be considered as part of the arrangements for large events greater than 100 horses, especially if horses are drawing from large areas and interstate. Groups only ever need to put this plan together once and then it can be reviewed as needed.

Type of Activity/Event

There are a variety of horse related activities that involve the gathering of numbers of horses. Some of these events had already implemented biosecurity measures prior to August 2007 due to the nature of the discipline being undertaken. These measures are put in place to ensure that the welfare of the horses was not compromised. Some examples of these

activities include horse racing, one/three day eventing, and endurance riding – where it is common practice to have veterinarians in attendance and taking of temperatures is routine.

The recommendations below are the minimum requirements for stakeholders to consider. Additional measures required as part of the rules governing the event or any additional requirements, may be implemented at the discretion of the relevant stakeholder.

Definition of an Activity/Event

An activity/event is gathering of ten or more horses or any number of horses from 3 or more properties and where the horses are moved to an event location and return either back to the location of origin or new location. This would cover horse sales, pony club and riding club rallies, private clinics, group lessons as well as competition events.

Steps Organisers Should Take

Register Your Event

It is strongly encouraged that all events be registered with DPI at least 72 hours prior to the actual event. This will enable the DPI to contact event organisers and provide information should a standstill be implemented while your event is running. Visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au to register your event.

Biosecurity

Any organisation running an activity is strongly advised to consider and where possible implement the recommendations as outlined in these guidelines. Ensure that every participant has access to a copy of this document prior to attending the event.

Peak/Governing Body

Check with your governing body to determine if they have additional requirements.

Traceability

In the event of disease being detected in horses returning from a gathering, it will be absolutely crucial to be able to find all

of their cohorts within the shortest possible time. This will enable the disease to be isolated and managed rapidly. Records must be kept of every horse at an event. To take the pressure off organisers on the day the information could be part of their entry form.

Organisers of the event should keep a record of:

- The name, address and phone number of ALL participants;
- The identification of all horses attending, name of horse, address of where horse came from and where it will be returning to at the conclusion of the event (if different from their origin).
- Avoid on-the-day entries.

Horse Event/Activity Participation Tracing and Declaration

Organisers should consider developing a standard entry form as part of their entry requirements that contains all the necessary tracing information and provision for the participant to acknowledge the very small risk of a standstill being called and their obligations should this occur. [See Appendix One]

It should be noted there is a very minimal risk of a standstill occurring.

Steps Participants Should Take

Monitor Horses Health

- Participants should not embark on their journey if they think the horse is not well regardless of the illness;
- Participants should ensure that they are informed about the health of other horses on the property of origin and not embark on their journey if their horse has been in contact with sick horses regardless of the illness;
- Participants should monitor their horse's health whilst at the event and not leave the venue if the horse falls ill until a veterinarian has assessed the case;

- Participants should notify an event official if they suspect their horse is ill and isolate sick horses promptly. Any equipment that has been in contact with the sick horse should be kept separate and the handler should avoid touching other horses;
- Participants should monitor their horse's health upon returning from the event and, where possible, keep them separated from other horses on the property for a few days.

Duty of Care

- Ensure that accurate tracing details are provided to event organisers;
- Take your own tack or equipment and avoid sharing with other participants;
- Bring own feed bins and water buckets and avoid the use of communal water troughs;
- Obey the directions of officials at the event;

Further References

DPI Victoria Agricultural Note AG0753 - Diseases of Horses Notifiable in Victoria for full list of Diseases

DPI Victoria Agricultural Note AG1285 - Health and Biosecurity Guidelines for Transport of Horses

DPI Victoria Agricultural Note AG1362 - Equine Biosecurity and Best Health Practice – For Equine Service Providers

DPI Victoria Agricultural Note AG1360 – Equine Biosecurity and Best Health Practice – For Equine Owners

Acknowledgements

This Information Note was developed by Samantha Forrest, Chief Veterinary Officers Unit, Attwood. August 2008

ISSN 1329-8062

Published and Authorised by: Department of Primary Industries
1 Spring Street
Melbourne, Victoria

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

This document was provided as a PDF document from the DPI website

For more information about DPI visit the website at www.dpi.vic.gov.au or call the Customer Service Centre on 136 186

The advice provided in this publication is intended as a source of information only. Always read the label before using any of the products mentioned. The State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication

APPENDIX ONE

Note the declaration below is a sample and is to be relied upon as a guide only.
DPI accepts no liability for the losses caused by reliance on this sample.

HORSE EVENT/ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION TRACING AND DECLARATION

(NO FORM, NO ENTRY)

Event/Activity:

Event/Activity Date:

Participants Details

Name:.....Membership No:.....

Address:

Phone:.....A/H.....B/H.....Mobile

E-mail Address:

Horse Details

Registered Name:.....Registration Number:

Address of property from which the horse moved to the event:

.....

Address of property to which the horse will move after the event: (If different from above.)

.....

Declaration

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the DPI Victoria Biosecurity Guidelines and Best Health Practice for Holding Equestrian Activities and agree to adhere to the Bio Security Requirements detailed in that document.

I declare that the horse named above has been in good health, eating normally during the last 3 days leading up to this event/activity.

I give my authorisation for the Organising Committee to call for veterinary inspection of the horse named above and in my care should they be showing signs of illness at any time during the course of the event/activity. I agree to pay any veterinary fees incurred as a result of this veterinary examination.

I understand that due to exotic diseases such as equine influenza, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, or other State or Commonwealth government body, may restrict or prevent the movement of horses, vehicles and personnel for a period of time ("Standstill"). I acknowledge and agree that a Standstill is a risk of participating in the event/activity and agree that I will pay any costs or expenses incurred by the organising Committee for or on behalf of my horse or as a result of a Standstill.

In consideration of the Organising Committee accepting my application to participate in the Activity/Event, I, to the extent permitted by law:

- (a) release and will release Organising Committee from all Claims that I may have or may have had but for this release arising from or in connection with a Standstill and/or my participation in the event/activity; and
(b) indemnify and will keep indemnified Organising Committee in respect of any Claim by any person arising as a result of or in connection with a Standstill and/or my participation in the event/activity.

In this registration form, references to:

"Claim" means and includes any action, suit, proceeding, claim, demand, damage, cost or expense however arising.

"Organising Committee" means the body holding the activity/event, and, where the context permits, includes their committee, officers, members, servants or agents.

"Venue owner/management committee" means any person or group owning or responsible for the management of the venue, and, where the context permits, includes its directors, officers, members, servants or agents.

Name of Participant:

Signature: Date:

