

# Biosecurity procedures for WA horse events

Prepared by veterinarians from the recreational horse industry, Racing and Wagering Western Australia (RRWA), and the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAFWA) in consultation with the WA Horse Council

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## The risks

1. Infected horses, contaminated tack, equipment and personnel can transfer equine influenza virus between premises.
2. Equine Influenza virus can survive on skin, fabrics and the surface of contaminated equipment for up to 48 hours.
3. The equine influenza virus is easily killed by cleaning and disinfection.
4. Organic material such as dirt, manure and straw may neutralise disinfectant and make it useless.
5. If the virus is introduced to the State, then horses at events have the potential to allow the spread of virus. Horse events act as multipliers for the spread of this disease should an outbreak occur.
6. Biosecurity procedures will mitigate the risk of spread of contagious diseases such as Equine Influenza.

## Biosecurity principles

1. Maintain tracing details of horses coming to and leaving events.
2. In general terms apply a "clean-on and clean-off" approach.
3. Interstate personnel and equipment should not have had contact with horses in eastern Australia for at least 48 hours, shower (including washing hair) and wear clean clothes before any contact with WA horses.

## General application

The following guidelines are intended to be used as a minimum standard for all horse events in Western Australia. Individual organisations or associations (such as the Equestrian Federation of Australia or Racing and Wagering Western Australia) may require additional procedures (such as recording body temperature) as a condition of entry to an event. Event organisers should consider their affiliations and options when deciding on the procedures to be adopted.

## Before the event

The event organiser *must*:

1. Clarify the biosecurity standards under which the event will operate, and ensure all participants are advised of these in advance of the event.
  2. Appoint an animal health officer (or steward) who will have authority to call a veterinary surgeon to examine any horse suspected of being ill. For the racing industries, this role is carried out by the official veterinary surgeon present at all race meetings.
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3. Arrange for a veterinary surgeon or veterinary practice to be available to visit the event premises to examine any horse(s) at short notice.
4. Provide a copy of the Guidelines for Veterinarians to the veterinary surgeon or veterinary practice (guidelines available at [www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au)).
5. Recognise that the attending veterinary surgeon will be responsible for instituting appropriate action in regard to any sick horse(s).
6. Develop a contingency plan to manage the situation if a horse(s) with signs of equine influenza is identified by the attending veterinarian.
7. Be aware that they have a duty of care to the participants and their horses and they are clear on their liabilities in the event of a serious disease outbreak.

The event organiser *should*:

- Provide advice on health conditions which will render a horse ineligible for admission to an event.
- If possible, provide a designated arrival area, separate from other horses, for incoming horses and documentation to be examined.
- Require all participants in the event to submit a signed declaration as a condition of entry to the event.

The declaration *should* include the following:

1. The identity of each horse.
2. The name and contact details of the person in charge of the horse(s).
3. The address of the property from which the horse will move to the event.
4. A statement that each horse and all horses on the property of origin have been eating normally and have not shown any signs of respiratory disease during the three days leading up to the event.
5. Authorisation for the designated animal health officer to call for a veterinary inspection of any horse and agreement to pay veterinary fees incurred.
6. A statement that all horse equipment and the horse transport vehicle have been cleaned before leaving the property to travel to the event.
7. The address of the property to which the horse will be moved after the event.

### **At the event**

The animal health officer *must* for each horse arriving at the event:

1. Check if the horse is covered by a declaration and if so:
  - a. ensure that the signed declaration relating to the horse is completed in all respects before allowing the horse(s) to enter the event;
  - b. retain the declaration for a period of no less than 28 days.
2. Record the identity of the horse.
3. If the horse is not accompanied by a declaration, record and retain for 28 days:
  - a. the name, address and contact details of the person in charge of the horse;
  - b. the address of the property from which the horse will move to the event;
  - c. the address of the property to which the horse will move after the event.
4. Examine the horse for general signs of health.

5. Contact the nominated veterinary surgeon or veterinary practice and request an urgent examination of any horse suspected to be ill, especially with respiratory disease.

### **Owner responsibilities at the event**

- Provide truthful and accurate information as required.
- Carry out instructions given by the animal health officer.
- Do not share tack and equipment between horses.
- Ensure each horse has its own water and feed bucket.
- Do not use communal water troughs.
- Minimise any contact between horses.
- Minimise contact between other people and your horse(s).
- Do not allow horses to eat any other horse's feed.
- Take home any left-over feed.

### **On return to the property**

The person in charge of the horse(s) *should*:

- Clean and disinfect all horse equipment and the horse transport vehicle.
- Have a thorough shower, including washing hair, and change clothes.
- Continue to monitor the health of the horse(s).

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