

# Keeping Your Horses Free of Equine Influenza

## INTRODUCTION

There are some basic steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of Equine Influenza (EI) affecting your horses. These are simple measures to implement and can often be overlooked!

Putting these practices into place will reduce the chance of your horse/s catching EI, of introducing it to your property and spreading it to other horses.

## SUSCEPTIBLE STOCK

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 and 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.

## AWARENESS

Ensure all staff are aware of the methods for the prevention, identification and control of EI.

## PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Isolate 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 introductions, pay more attention to good hygiene, use separate equipment where possible, handling them last and checking their temperatures daily).

Isolate horses at least 20 metres from other horses at the first sign of sickness until EI has been ruled out.

Keep sick horses' tack and associated gear separate from others. Clean and disinfect after each use.

Handle, feed and water any sick horses last. Clean and disinfect all clothing and equipment and if possible, use separate staff and equipment. Single use disposable overalls are preferable.

Do not move sick horses except for veterinary treatment or under veterinary supervision.

Avoid the use of communal watering troughs.

Avoid visiting other properties where horses are kept. Do not let other horses come in contact with other animals (including household pets) – you do not know where they have been and they can carry the virus.

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

## **HORSE MANAGEMENT**

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

Keep records of movements of horses and semen so contacts can be traced in the event of a disease outbreak.

## **CLEANLINESS**

Regularly clean and disinfect stables, equipment and transport vehicles. Thoroughly clean all surfaces by removing all snot/mucus, soil and organic material before disinfecting.

Clean, then disinfect equipment such as tooth rasps, stethoscopes, stomach tubes, endoscopes and twitches between use on different groups of horses.

Wash hands and under finger nails with soap/detergent between handling different groups of horses.

Use separate protective clothing and footwear when handling any sick horses. Clean and wash these clothes/footwear with disinfectant to ensure cleanliness. Remember to attend to sick horses last or totally separately.

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

**For further information on disinfection please see [Advice to horse owners on disinfection for equine influenza](#)**

## **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

Keep boundary fences in good condition. Barriers such as double fencing and tree plantations increase perimeter security.

Contact your private veterinarian or government veterinarian immediately if you suspect your horse/s has symptoms of EI. Or phone the Emergency Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.