

Biosecurity alert

Guidelines for holding equestrian events

May 2010

Overview

These guidelines provide general information for those organising and competing at horse events in Queensland.

After the successful eradication campaign of equine influenza (EI) in Australia in 2007–08 it remains vital that all involved in equestrian activities continue to follow good biosecurity measures to minimise the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

Recommendations for event organisers

Registration of a horse event with Biosecurity Queensland is encouraged. This should be done at least seven days before the event. Register your horse event through the website or via the QPIF Business Information Centre on 13 25 23. This will enable Biosecurity Queensland to contact event organisers with information should an emergency situation arise while an event is in progress.

Prepare and implement a biosecurity plan

A horse event is an aggregation of horses where the prevention of introduction of an infectious disease is vital. A biosecurity plan outlines the precautions taken to minimise the risk of introducing an infectious disease into an animal population.

A biosecurity plan should include:

- veterinarian to be on call during event
- method of making emergency phone calls or alternate communication
- plan to minimise public access to stable areas
- separate vehicle parking for competitors and spectator
- single entry and exit to grounds
- adequate hand-washing facilities
- designated isolation area (or stable) for sick horses
- good hygiene practice between horses for officials/stewards

- develop a contingency plan in the event a stock standstill is declared

Event records should be kept. The following records are recommended.

All horses:

- name of horse/s
- identification of horse/s
- (brand/microchip number, sex, colour)
- PIC (property identification code), location where the horse came from

All competitors

- name, address and phone number of all competitors, (persons in charge of horse)

Event organisers have a duty of care to participants and their horses. Event organisers should keep event attendance records for a period of six months.

Recommendations for competitors

Primary responsibility for biosecurity at horse events lies with the horse owners/competitors, long before the event.

- **Practice good biosecurity, good hygiene and decontamination of equipment.** Do not share equipment, including food & water containers between horses. Avoid use of communal water troughs. If using communal hose, avoid touching buckets when filling with water to avoid spreading disease from previous bucket.
- **Do not take sick/unwell horses to an event.** Horse owners should not knowingly take sick horses to events. Competitors must notify an event official if they suspect a horse is sick. Sick horses must be promptly isolated and seek veterinary advice. Any equipment in contact with the sick horse should also be isolated.