

Principles of Biosecurity

Biosecurity is a set of management practices that reduces the potential for the introduction or spread of disease-causing agents. Setting up a yard plan and maintaining good biosecurity practices will:

- help prevent the introduction and spread of contagious diseases such as equine influenza and Strangles;
- assist in keeping the horses healthy and performing well;
- help prevent unnecessary disruption to equine activities and the operation of an equine business and the considerable associated costs.



GENERAL BIOSECURITY POLICIES

- Horse keepers should know their horse's normal behaviour and vital signs and monitor them daily; and have a good knowledge of the signs of infectious disease.
- Ensure each horse has separate tack, rugs, grooming equipment and feed buckets.
- Wash hands before and after attending to a horse.
- Feed mangers and water buckets or drinkers should be cleaned daily.
- Regularly clean grooming kit, feed and water buckets, tack, rugs, stables and vehicles used to transport horses.
- Park vehicles away from the stables and ensure they are kept in clean condition.
- Ensure all feed stores are kept clean and tidy, doors are kept shut, windows are covered with fine mesh and feed is stored in vermin proof containers.
- Fix leaky taps, keep gutters/drains clear and remove objects that water can pool in.
- Dispose of dung away from horses and water courses. Keep dung heaps covered and dry to reduce their attraction as breeding grounds for biting insects.

Contact with horses at events/shows:

- take your own buckets, and water if possible;
- avoid nose to nose contact between horses;
- wash your hands after you handle other horses;
- clean and disinfect your boots and outer clothing after each show;
- be aware of horses at the yard or stables that may have been exposed to disease e.g. at shows or events, and speak to your vet if you have any concerns.



Vaccinations

Vaccination helps combat infection by stimulating an antibody response, which may either prevent disease occurring or reduce the severity of disease and the potential spread to other animals. They are very useful when their use is included in a yard biosecurity plan.

Basic biosecurity for new arrivals

- Isolate all new arrivals for a minimum of three weeks, ideally with limited shared airspace and downwind of the main barn (some diseases are airborne).
- Ensure that the horses in the isolation facilities are cared for by separate staff or after the other horses. Hands and boots should be washed before leaving the isolation area.
- All new horses should be up to date with equine influenza vaccines. Horses who have not previously been vaccinated or whose vaccinations have lapsed need should have completed the primary vaccination course (first two vaccines) prior to moving onto the yard.
- A strangles blood test with negative result must have been carried out in the week prior to moving to the yard.
- Ensure each horse has dedicated equipment and tack to prevent the potential spread of infection between horses.

SIGNS OF DISEASE

If a horse on the yard is displaying any of the following signs the yard owner and vet should be informed immediately:

- fever (high temperature)
- cough
- lymph node abscesses
- nasal discharge
- diarrhoea
- abortion
- incoordination.

Risk assessment

It can be very useful to perform a yard risk assessment with your vet to try and quantify your yard's risk from infectious diseases. It depends on a number of factors such as the number of horses travelling regularly to shows, and the number of horses coming onto and off the yard.



**ALSO SEE THE
FACTSHEET ON
DEALING WITH A
DISEASE OUTBREAK**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE SPEAK
TO YOUR VET ABOUT SETTING UP A YARD
BIOSECURITY PLAN BESPOKE TO YOUR
INDIVIDUAL SITUATION**



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