

Enhanced Biosecurity in the Face of an Outbreak

Disease risks are inherent when animals of varying health status come together. Complete elimination of all disease risks at a horse event is not feasible, so event managers must determine the acceptable level of disease risk for their event and develop an event biosecurity plan with policies and procedures to attain the needed level of biosecurity suitable for their risk tolerance.

Before the event, assessment of the facility layout and construction, animal entry requirements, horse stabling, manure disposal, hay and feed storage, equipment handling, cleaning and disinfection procedures, horse-to-horse contact, horse-to-other species contact, isolation of sick horses, vector and wildlife control, visitor access, traffic control and record keeping is essential. (See Appendix A - Equine Facility Biosecurity Risk Assessment Text Version and Appendix B - Equine Event Biosecurity Risk Assessment Pictorial Version.) The risk assessment of the event grounds and horse handling practices will reveal potential areas for direct or indirect transmission of infectious disease agents between horses. Working with veterinarians and stakeholders, event managers should determine which identified risks warrant implementation of mitigation measures in the basic event biosecurity plan. The implementation of basic biosecurity at an event will maximize the effectiveness of the Infectious Disease Control Plan should an infectious disease outbreak occur.

The initial venue biosecurity risk assessment may identify disease transmission risk areas that cannot be eliminated by a practical day-to-day or routine biosecurity mitigation program. Addressing these risks with biosecurity measures may require significant expenditure of financial and human resources. An enhanced biosecurity plan, which would be implemented simultaneously with the infectious disease control plan during an infectious disease outbreak, should address any biosecurity gaps.

When facing a disease outbreak during an event, enhanced biosecurity measures are necessary to control the disease outbreak. At the time of a disease outbreak, event managers should review the basic biosecurity plan implemented for the specific event and determine which assessed disease risks were not addressed through the basic biosecurity mitigation measures. With suspicion of an infectious disease at the event, it is advisable for event management to work closely with an equine veterinarian to determine the likelihood of the worst-case scenario – an infectious disease has been introduced to the venue. Implementing stricter enhanced measures will assist in the timely control of the most highly contagious diseases. At the time of an outbreak enhanced biosecurity measures may include:

1. **Stop Movement Orders:** Event management, in consultation with the onsite veterinarian, must determine what level of “stop movement” is warranted for the specific disease outbreak situation. Temporary movement restrictions may be necessary until assessment of the situation is complete, after which permission for allowing certain movements on the premises may occur. Under some circumstances it may be appropriate to allow the event to continue with minimal movement restrictions being placed only on sick and directly-exposed horses. Higher disease risk situations will require more stringent movement controls, such as securing the venue and restricting all animal movement. Firm policies should be delivered, preferably face to face, to those impacted. Enforcement of policies should be consistent and fair. An enhanced biosecurity plan, developed before the event for a disease outbreak situation, should outline procedures to promptly secure the event venue, to redirect personnel resources to close and lock venue gates and to block roadways to and from the venue with barriers. When stop movement orders are issued, monitoring of the premises by event staff will heighten compliance of movement restrictions by participants, owners and trainers. (See Appendix Q - *Stop Movement Sign*)



2. Control and Track Horse Movement:

During an infectious disease outbreak, it is essential for event management to know what horses are on the event premises and where they are stabled. For events without a check-in gate or admittance protocols, locating horses may require barn to barn inspection and documentation. If a disease outbreak warrants movement controls, a check-out protocol is necessary for all horses being moved from the premises. In some cases, event staff may require owner/agents to obtain approval before horses are moved from the event premises. A basic check-out



During a disease outbreak, it may be necessary to set up check points at barn entry and exit points to stop horse and riders before proceeding.

process includes follow-up owner/agent contact information (cell phone number and email address), documentation of horse identification and the intended destination for the horse(s) being moved from the event premises. Additionally, owner/agents should receive a handout with recommendations for biosecurity measures to be taken at destination premises. (Appendix R - Sample Exhibitor Handout *Biosecurity Measures for Exposed Horses*)



Temperature monitoring is an easy, efficient, early detection tool for disease. By requiring recording of temperatures twice daily on a log displayed on stall, event management can easily monitor health of the horses on the event grounds.

3. Monitoring of Horse Health: During an infectious disease outbreak, continuous health monitoring of all horses on the premises is a priority. Designated, knowledgeable, experienced event staff should perform a periodic walk-through of stables and event grounds directly observing horses for any sign of clinical disease. Notify participants of the requirement to monitor their horses for signs of disease and to report any signs of disease to a designated event official. The designated event official will evaluate the reports to determine if the situation requires immediate disease control measures, such as horse isolation and examination by a veterinarian.

4. Temperature Monitoring of Horses: A requirement for monitoring horse temperatures two (2) times a day and documenting temperature readings in a log is an easy, efficient, early disease detection tool for horses on the event premises. Ideally, temperature logs should be displayed on the stall door to provide a quick status of individual horse health. Temperatures taken immediately after transport or exercise may be temporarily elevated, so initial temperature monitoring should be obtained after the horse is settled in the stable. A horse

body temperature over 102°F should be immediately reported to a designated event official. Horses with temperatures between 101°F and 102°F should be monitored for other signs of disease and have the temperature retaken in one (1) hour. To ensure compliance with a horse temperature monitoring requirement, event staff should perform random audits of the temperature monitoring logs. (See Appendix G – Stall Temperature Monitoring Log)



Tack is difficult to clean and disinfect. Therefore, after tack is cleaned, it should be left in the sun, as sunlight can inactivate/kill some pathogens.

5. Equipment Handling: At the onset of an infectious disease outbreak, instruct all exhibitors who share equipment to stop doing so. Immediately clean equipment of organic matter, thoroughly scrub with detergent and water, rinse, dry and disinfect all previously shared equipment (lead ropes, chains, bits, twitches, thermometers, grooming supplies, etc.). Items, such as tack, to which disinfectants cannot be applied, should be cleaned and allowed to dry in the sun, since sunlight inactivates/kills many pathogens. Any equipment which must be shared during the event should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.



During a disease outbreak, direct horse-to-horse contact and indirect contact with potentially contaminated surfaces in common areas should be avoided. Ideally, shared communal areas, such as wash racks, should be cleaned and disinfected between horses to reduce contamination.

6. Restrict Direct and Indirect Horse Contact: To reduce the spread of disease during an outbreak, steps to limit direct and indirect horse contact are necessary. All areas which are touched by human hands or by horses, such as fences, wash racks, bathroom sinks, faucets and door handles, should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily. Common use items, such as wash stall cross ties and washing equipment, should be removed and exhibitors should be required to use their own equipment. Monitor exercise and exhibition areas to ensure that minimal direct or indirect horse-to-horse contact occurs. Restrict participants from tying horses to fencing outside the arenas or stabling areas, since fencing can be contaminated by secretions of an infected horse. When an aerosol transmitted disease is high on the differential disease list for a sick horse, evaluate the event venue to determine additional methods to minimize risk of aerosol spread of the pathogen. Indoor arenas and indoor stabling can potentially increase the risk of aerosol spread. Indoor events may need to move to an outdoor facility or be cancelled if aerosol pathogen spread is suspected.

7. Control Dog Entry to the Premises: Since dogs may carry infectious disease agents from one location to another on the premises, no dogs should be on the event grounds during an infectious disease outbreak. Require owners with dogs onsite to immediately remove dogs from the event grounds. Dogs should not be placed in trailers or vehicles due to the possibility of escape, barking and temperature stress.



8. Restrict Human-to-Horse Contact: During an infectious disease outbreak, only the owner or designated personnel should handle horses on the event grounds. Limit the sharing of personnel between barns or trainers. Supply additional hand washing stations and signage during the outbreak to enable horse handlers to perform proper hand sanitation after handling each horse. Where bit inspection is mandatory, the event official conducting the inspection should use and change disposable gloves between handling each horse.



During a disease outbreak, horse contact should be restricted to owners and designated personnel. Visitors should not be in horse stabling areas.

9. Restrict Visitor Access: If a disease outbreak occurs during an event, it is essential to communicate disease biosecurity measures to visitors. Keep visitors out of the horse areas and inform them of proper biosecurity measures if they are returning to horse premises.

10. Post Adequate Biosecurity Signage: The key to successful disease control is implementation of enhanced biosecurity measures. Communication of the plan and measures being implemented are critical; therefore clear and concise signage and messaging to all on the event grounds is essential. During an infectious disease outbreak, there is limited time to develop adequate signage, so developing critical messaging before the event and having clear attention-getting signs available for use in an outbreak will aid in prompt effective communication and successful implementation of enhanced biosecurity and infectious disease control plan measures. Decide in advance where signage will be posted.

11. Strict Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols: Thorough cleaning and disinfection at the beginning of an infectious disease outbreak can significantly reduce the potential for disease agent spread. Inform exhibitors of the *Four (4) Step Cleaning and Disinfection Protocol* and request them to clean and disinfect their equipment, trailer and vehicle before leaving the grounds. Before the event, develop a contact list of local disinfectant suppliers which you can provide to exhibitors during an outbreak. To limit vehicle traffic on and off the premises, consider ordering bulk disinfectant supplies for delivery to a designated bio-secure area on the event grounds.

(See Appendix N - Equine Event Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations)

Four (4) Steps to Cleaning and Disinfecting

Step 1: *Remove all organic matter.*

Step 2: *Wash with soap and rinse with water.*

Step 3: *Allow drying time.*

Step 4: *Apply disinfectant according to label directions.*