

# Horse Events: NSW guidelines for organisers and competitors

1 July 2008

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These guidelines take into account some of the lessons learnt from the equine influenza outbreak.

It is the responsibility of all event participants to contribute to the welfare of horses and their biosecurity.

Horses at events have the potential to allow the spread of infectious disease. Horse events act as multipliers for the spread of infectious diseases should an outbreak occur.

Horses that meet the following criteria **MUST NOT** be allowed to compete or take part in events.

- are suspected of suffering from infectious or contagious diseases or
- have been in contact with other animals suffering from such diseases
- have been in contact with horses which are not free from infectious or contagious diseases or come from places or
- come from places or establishments which are not free from such diseases

## Recommendations for event organisers

- Appoint a **Horse Health Steward**, who can identify and appreciate the biosecurity risks that occur when horses come together at horse events.
- Be aware that organisers have a duty of care to participants and their horses
- Organise a veterinarian to be on call
- Have a method of making emergency phone calls or alternate method of communication
- Minimise public access to stable areas
- Provide separate vehicle parking from spectator vehicle parking
- Create a single entry and exit to grounds
- Provide adequate horse washing facilities
- Provide adequate hand washing facilities

## Definition of a horse event

A horse event or activity is a gathering of ten or more horses from 3 or more properties. A horse event or activity is defined as any market, show, sale, fair, parade, race meeting, recreational activity, clinic, competition or any other horse gathering.

## Horse Event Registration (HER)

An event is authorised in NSW if a horse event registration form, is duly completed and the event is conducted in accordance with the following conditions.

Event organisers **must** register their events at least 72 hours before the event using the form available from the department's website (see 'Key contacts' below)

The owner or person in charge of the horse must provide the person in charge of the event with

- the description of each horse
- the registered name (or in the absence of a registered name the pet name) of each horse
- microchip number or other unique identifier of each horse
- the property identification code (PIC) or address where the horse is usually resident
- the name, address and telephone number of the owner or person normally in charge of the horse

Event organisers **must** make a written record of the information specified above for each horse attending the event, and retain that record for a period of six (6) months.

The event organiser **must** make this record available to an inspector within twelve (12) hours to an inspector upon requests.

A sample event record of attendance at horse events is available at [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/)



## Horse owner responsibilities

The primary responsibility for biosecurity at events lies with the horse owners and riders – well before the event.

### CHECK, DECLARE, COMPETE (CDC)

Horse owners must always **Check** the health of their horses before going to an event, **Declare** that their horses are healthy and then **Compete**.

Horse owners must not knowingly take sick horse/s to an event.

- Monitor your horses health for 3-5 days before leaving for an event
- Check horses temperature for 3 days, all owners should know their horse's average normal temperature (approximately 38.5°C). Take a thermometer with you.
- Check horse/s are eating and drinking normally
- Check for any unusual nasal discharge
- Check for any unusual coughing
- Check for any signs of swelling or lameness
- Wash horses before departure
- Only share cleaned gear at events
- Do not share feed bins at events
- Any recent new arrivals on property of origin should be kept away from other horses for at least 14 days.
- Contact your vet if you suspect any infectious disease

Horse owners and other people dealing with horses must continue to look for any sign of equine influenza and report any suspected signs of infection to the hotline on 1800 675 888.

## Key contacts

Animal disease watch hotline – 1800 675 888

Website:

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza)

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (June 2008). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of New South Wales Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser. File reference PUB08/5

## Infectious horse diseases

**Equine Influenza** – a highly infectious respiratory viral disease, although considered eradicated in February 2008 and a new outbreak is unlikely horse owners must remain vigilant.

**Strangles** – a contagious, upper respiratory tract infection of horses and other equines. The disease is uncommon in performance horses but has a high impact on horse health and deaths can occur. Recovery and treatment is prolonged.

**Head Colds/Flu/ Respiratory Diseases** – these are usually viral diseases caused by endemic pathogens like Equine Herpes Viris, Equine Arteritis Viris, Equine Rhinitis Viruses, Equine Adeno Viris. These are common infectious viral diseases of Australian horses, they mostly have a low impact on the horse's health and horses usually recover without complication.

**Ringworm** – a contagious superficial fungal skin disease, it can affect humans and spreads very easily, it has a low impact on the horse's health and is relatively commonplace. The disease has a short recovery period.

**Diarrhoea** – serious bacterial infection of the bowl i.e. Salmonella, Clostridial disease. Rare diseases that are often fatal.

### ***Ensuring traceability:***

*Because all events must be registered, NSW DPI would be able to rapidly trace the contacts of any suspicious case.*