

## Biosecurity alert

# Guidelines for holding equestrian events

October 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

#### Prepare and implement a biosecurity plan

Preventing the introduction of an infectious disease at a horse event 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 spectators
- Single entry and exit to grounds
- Adequate hand-hygiene facilities especially in eating and horse handling areas
- Designated isolation area (or stable) for sick horses
- Good hygiene practice between horses for officials/stewards
- 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.

- **Practise good biosecurity, good hygiene and decontamination of equipment.**
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand wipes and waterless hand hygiene solution immediately after handling horses,
- Do not share equipment, including food and water containers between horses. Avoid use of communal water troughs.
- **Do not take sick/unwell horses to an event.** Horse owners should not knowingly take sick horses to events.
- If a horse is unwell at an event competitors should notify an event official.
- Stop all non-essential contact with the sick horse and blood or body fluids from the horse until a veterinarian has excluded Hendra virus infection as the cause of illness
- Children should not have close contact with a sick horse at least until infection has been ruled out by a veterinarian.
- Sick horses must be promptly isolated and seek veterinary advice. Any equipment in contact with the sick horse should also be isolated.