



protect your animals and produce from pests and disease

HORSE and DONKEY BIOSECURITY

Biosecurity is relevant to everyone who owns animals, birds, crops, and other plants - whether you are a large commercial farmer, a small-scale grower or just keep a few plants or pets.

As seen with the 2007 equine influenza outbreak, animal diseases can be highly contagious and are capable of spreading large distances in a short period of time.

In Australia, there are regular movements of large numbers of horses from state to state to participate in different horse sports and for breeding.

Biosecurity

What is biosecurity?

'Biosecurity' is protecting the economy, environment and people's health from pests and disease. It includes trying to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving, and helping to control outbreaks when they do occur.

The simple biosecurity measures below are relevant to everyone who owns or works with horses or donkeys – whether they be kept as a hobby or as a business.

On your property

- Only allow visitors contact with your horses if necessary. Keep visitors out of stable areas and paddocks if they don't need to be there.
- For new horses or donkeys arriving on your property, know where they've been prior to their arrival and make sure they're healthy. A 7-day period of quarantine (isolation) before introducing them to other animals on your property is advised. While in quarantine check your animals for signs of disease. Also wash your hands and change your clothes before coming into contact with horses or donkeys already on the property.

Horse and donkey gear/tack

- Don't share your horse's or donkey's equipment with neighbours or other people.
- If your gear has been used by other animals/people, make sure it's thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before coming back into contact with your horse or donkey. This includes headstalls, bits, rugs, saddlecloths, feed and water bins. Ensure vets, farriers and others providing equine services use clean equipment on your animals.

You and your gear

Some diseases can be easily carried on people's clothing, hats, hair and footwear. This was illustrated during the equine influenza outbreak.

Before having contact with horses or donkeys outside your property, wash your hands with soap and water, and change into clean clothes and footwear.

Floats and trucks

Where horses or donkeys from different properties are using the one vehicle, it is suggested the interior of the float or truck be washed out and disinfected before loading new animals.

Cleaning and Disinfectants

For a surface to be sufficiently disinfected, it must first be thoroughly cleaned. Remove all soil, organic material, snot/mucus, saliva and manure.

Disinfection cannot be achieved without thoroughly cleaning the item first. Wash your gear with warm soapy water (such as washing detergent), and then use a disinfectant such as household bleach or hypochlorites. Use this in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions on the label. For leather items, such as saddles, thoroughly clean with an appropriate leather cleaning product making sure all contaminants such as hair and sweat are removed.



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Events

Event organisers should check what biosecurity measures are required by the relevant Department of Primary Industries (DPI) or Agriculture. You may also need to register your event with them.

The biosecurity measures outlined above are also applicable at events - don't share your gear, feed and water bins. While it is impossible to keep horses separate at events, make sure your horse is in full health before leaving your property.

Any horses showing signs of illness should be isolated and veterinary attention sought.

Keep Records

Keeping a simple log of visitors to your property is also a good practice - especially if they have had contact with other animals prior to entering your property. Other details that are also important to record are vehicle registration and a mobile phone number. Free *Visitor Register* sheets can be downloaded from the farmbiosecurity.com.au website.

This information can assist agricultural authorities with tracing and containment if there is a disease outbreak.

Reporting

The key to success in controlling the spread of any disease (whether exotic or endemic*) is early recognition. The sooner a disease is reported, the earlier authorities can contain it, undertake tracing and put a control program in place - providing a better chance of disease control.

Reporting is easy. Simply call your local vet, who can then notify the Department of Primary Industries or Agriculture, if a notifiable disease is suspected. If you suspect something unusual, you can also phone the national **Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline** on **1800 675 888**. This will put you in contact with your Department of Primary Industries or Agriculture, where an officer will follow up on your report.

* **exotic** - a disease not expected to be present in Australia
endemic - a disease known to be in Australia

Most equine diseases do not require horses or donkeys to be destroyed for disease control purposes. Usually, treatment will involve quarantine, a recovery period and possibly vaccination.

Stay Informed and Inform Others

- Your state or territory DPI website will have the latest on pest and disease outbreaks in your area. The website for major disease outbreaks requiring a nationally coordinated response is www.outbreak.gov.au
- You can subscribe to the Australian Horse Industry Council's *Emergency Horse Contact Database*. This free service provides horse owners with relevant, localised information during an emergency, including disease outbreaks, fires and floods. This information can be provided by email, sms or fax. The AHIC can be contacted by phoning (03) 5222 6650 or visit www.horsecouncil.org.au
- DAFF's biosecurity information is available at www.daff.gov.au/biosecurity
- See Animal Health Australia's Farm Biosecurity website: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au
- Horses, Land and Water - an Australian website containing information and resources for horse keeping and good land management practices: www.horseslandwater.com
- Feel free to copy this fact sheet and give to others.

Can we help you further?

If you would like further information about animal or plant biosecurity please contact us:

Emergency Risk Management Unit
Product Integrity, Animal & Plant Health
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry
Email: ermu@daff.gov.au
Phone: (02) 6272 5859