



20 Simple Steps to Healthy Horses

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INTRODUCTION

The 20 basic steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of a disease emergency are simple! But even simple measures can often be overlooked.

Putting them into practice will reduce the chance of a horse having a serious disease and of introducing disease to the property. It will also reduce the chance of a horse being affected by or spreading more common endemic infections like 'colds' that cost the horse industry millions of dollars every year.



HORSE MOVEMENT

- Give a full course of vaccinations and regular boosters for diseases like tetanus, strangles and equine herpesvirus.
- Use a fresh needle and syringe for every horse when vaccinating or giving medicine.
- Verify proof of vaccination for new arrivals
- Isolate new arrivals from resident horses for 10 days or introduce horses only from premises with known high health status. Pay particular attention to horses that have come from large sales, have been transported over long distances by commercial transport or recently returned from events. Where space limits isolation of introductions, pay more attention to good hygiene, handling them last and checking their temperatures daily.
- Isolate horses at the first sign of sickness until contagious disease has been ruled out. Keep their gear separate.
- Handle, feed and water sick horses last or use separate staff and equipment.
- Do not move sick horses except for veterinary treatment or under veterinary supervision.
- Contact a veterinarian or government officer immediately if unusual sickness or unexplained death occurs, especially if it something you have not seen before.
- If horses are stabled, take daily rectal temperatures. Fever immediately suggests the presence of disease.
- Group horses, by use and ages, in as small groups as practicable, e.g. keep yearlings separate from older horses and pregnant mares, and competition horses away from stay-at-home horses.
- Keep records of movements of horses and semen so contacts can be traced in the event of a disease outbreak.
- Keep boundary fences in good condition. Barriers such as double fencing and tree plantations increase perimeter security.

PEOPLE

- Train staff in disease prevention, identification and control procedures.



VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT

- Regularly clean and disinfect stables, equipment and transport vehicles. Remove as much soil and organic material as possible before disinfecting.
- Clean, then disinfect equipment such as tooth rasps, stomach tubes, endoscopes and twitches between use on different groups of horses.
- Wash hands between handling groups of horses and use separate protective clothing and footwear when handling any sick horses, or handle them last.

FEED & WATER

- Avoid the use of communal watering troughs when away from home.

PESTS & WEEDS

- Control insects. Good drainage and manure management help prevent insects like mosquitoes and March flies from breeding.
- Control rodents and keep food in rodent-proof containers.
- Avoid locating horse operations in swampy areas, near bat colonies or intensive piggeries as these may be carriers of some virus infections that affect horses.