

Securing horse health at shows and events

Shows and events are prime places for your horse to catch an infectious disease. Simple measures can help reduce that risk and protect the health of your horse.

Horse movement

Pre-travel:

When attending shows or events, always check your horse thoroughly beforehand. It is never wise to transport a sick animal unnecessarily in case it gets worse, and you shouldn't risk the health of other horses by exposing them to your sick.

Check with your vet whether any vaccinations are recommended and ensure they are up to date. Keep records of movements on and off your property.

Stay separate:

When at the show, it is best if your horse is not housed too closely with other horses where possible. Make sure the stable or housing areas have been adequately cleaned before you allow your horse to enter and avoid yards that have a lot of weeds.

Keep your horse away from swampy areas, bat colonies, piggeries etc. as these may be carriers of some viruses that can affect horses. If the housing areas are located near to any of these do not allow your horse to enter.

Keep an eye on your horse's health throughout the show or event. You will be in the best position to notice any changes in health or behaviour if you have been checking regularly.

If you are at the event for longer than one day, take your horse's rectal temperature regularly. A fever suggests the presence of disease (around 38 degrees is normal).

If you notice strange behaviour or signs of disease in your horse, or any horse, report it immediately to the show convenor so they can determine the risk to other horses. Do not move the horse.

Returning home:

Make sure you clean and disinfect your vehicle thoroughly before returning to your property. Remove all dirt and manure, which can carry disease, to ensure you are not taking anything nasty home with you.

Keep returning horses away from other horses on the property for 10 days. If they are sick, it will prevent the disease from being passed on.

People

Discourage people from touching your horse as this is a key way for disease to spread from horse to horse.

Wash your hands between handling horses.

Make sure that vet staff/personnel clean and disinfect equipment and themselves before touching your horse.

Do not allow strangers to feed your horse. If you arrange someone else to feed your horse whilst at the show, make sure they do not use the same equipment on other horses first.

Vehicles and equipment

Bring Your Own Equipment:

If at all possible, do not borrow equipment from other attending horse owners, or from show/event facilities. If you do need to borrow anything, clean and disinfect it thoroughly before use.

Keep Your Trailer Clean:

Horse trailers should be cleaned and disinfected between each use, both inside and outside. Don't forget to disinfect the wheels as well.

Feed and water

Don't Share Germs:

If at all possible, do not allow your horse to drink from shared water buckets or eat from shared feed bins. Bring your own.

Pests and weeds

Make sure there are no noxious weeds in areas where your horse is being housed or feeding and that feed is stored properly to prevent pests from gaining entry.

Most importantly, follow all required biosecurity measures at the venue.

Horse biosecurity:

Make certain the only thing your horse brings back from the show is a ribbon.

Handy tip: diluted truck detergent is an acceptable disinfectant. Always read the instructions.

Further information is available at: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au