

Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook

July 2024

A self-evaluation guide for managers of all horse venues including racecourses, showgrounds, riding and pony club venues, agistment properties and horse events.



Published July 2024
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Acknowledgements

The Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook was originally produced by Animal Health Australia in 2010, after consultation with horse industry and government stakeholders led by Horse SA. Membership of the group included representatives from each of the following organisations and horse industry sectors. Their involvement and contributions to the development of this manual are gratefully acknowledged:

- Horse SA
- Horse Safety Australia (HSA)
- Harness Racing Australia (HRA)
- Pony Club Australia
- Racing SA
- Racing Australia
- Australian Turf Club (ATC)
- South Australian Jockey Club (SAJC)
- South Australian Harness Racing Club Inc.
- Asociación de Caballos de Pura Raza Española Australia Inc (ACPRE-Australia)
- Equestrian Australia (EA)
- Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC)
- Primary Industries and Research South Australia (PIRSA)
- Animal Health Australia (AHA)

The Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook was reviewed in 2023 by a working group led by Animal Health Australia, with significant input from representatives of the following organisations:

- Equestrian Australia (EA)
- Australian Horse Industry Council (AHIC)
- Racing Australia
- Racing Victoria
- Racing Queensland
- Racing South Australia
- Racing And Wagering Western Australia (RWWA)
- Tasracing
- Scone Equine Group
- Animal Health Australia (AHA)

Prepared by Animal Health Australia - www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au



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Purpose

The purpose of this workbook is to assist venue owners and managers to establish a set of biosecurity measures applicable to their venue, which can easily be implemented over time to ensure horses are protected from disease and pests.

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The workbook was produced so a venue holding just one horse, or a racing complex holding hundreds, could design and implement measures appropriate for their particular venue, while also addressing individual management and site issues.

WHAT IS A HORSE VENUE?

Horse venues can take many forms. They range from single horse paddocks to stables housing large numbers of horses – pony club event grounds to large racing tracks – permanent fixtures to highly mobile events. The same principles apply to minimise disease incursion and spread, regardless of size or location. How these principles are implemented will vary depending on individual site requirements, circumstances, and management strategies.

Examples of horse venues include:

- horse paddocks
- riding schools
- pony clubs
- breeding operations
- horse veterinary centres
- tourism stays
- event venues
- show grounds
- stables (owned or agistment)
- stables (competition and racing)
- racing facilities
- training facility
- riding centres
- private or public property.

Implementation

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Promoting the implementation of horse venue biosecurity measures is the responsibility of each horse sector. This is in line with Clause 14 of the Emergency Animal Disease Response Agreement (EADRA), where “each industry will promote improvements”.

The development of sector specific practices is fundamental to the success of improved biosecurity for all horse venues. It is acknowledged that each venue will have a different range of biosecurity threats, challenges, and operating environments, which should be addressed with the relevant approaches identified in the workbook. This workbook references horses specifically, but it should be acknowledged that some of the biosecurity risks and diseases noted throughout may also affect other equid species. This includes other members of the Equidae family, such as donkeys and zebras.

The Horse Venue Biosecurity Workbook is available as a resource for the education of workers/volunteers, business owners, service providers and the development of training and awareness programs. By implementing the measures outlined in the workbook, horse venue managers will reduce the likelihood of introducing and spreading disease onto the venue they manage – reducing the industry’s liability under the EADRA and protecting their livelihood.

Glossary

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Arbovirus	describes a group of viral diseases that are transmitted via an arthropod vector such as mosquitos, ticks, and biting midges.
Biosecurity	described as the management and individual hygiene practices that minimise the movement of disease onto, off and within a venue.
Contaminants	substances which are present in and/or on feed and feed ingredients and constitute a risk to horses' health.
Emergency Animal Disease (EAD)	a disease that has the potential to have severe consequences to human and animal health, the economy and society. All notifiable diseases fall under the category of an EAD.
Endemic disease	diseases which are already established in the region, state/territory and/or country.
Exotic disease	diseases which are not present in Australia.
Fomite	any inanimate object, such as equipment, vehicles, or objects that can spread disease.
Hendra vaccinated event (HVE)	an equestrian event that requires all or some of the attending horses to be vaccinated against Hendra virus.
Manager	the person responsible for the daily management of the husbandry of horses on-site.
Notifiable disease	a disease that bears a legal obligation to report to the relevant authority should a suspected/confirmed case occur. There is a national list of notifiable diseases, as well as lists specific to each state and territory.
Risk management	involves conducting a risk assessment to establish the level of risk that exists in certain aspects of a venue or event (such as venue inputs and outputs) and identify and implement control measures to manage these risks.
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure, a set of defined steps and processes required to undertake a given activity.
Standstill	for some serious diseases such as equine influenza, a widespread standstill may be declared prohibiting all new movements of live susceptible animals into, out of or within declared areas unless a specific permit has been issued.
Venue	a place frequented by horses, and includes private or public property, agistment stables, competition and racing stables, showgrounds, racecourses, event venues, pony and riding club grounds, tourism stays and riding centres.
Vector	a living organism that has the ability to transmit diseases to another organism. Examples of vectors include mosquitos, rats, and bats.
Zoonotic disease	diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans.

Horse Venue Biosecurity

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Biosecurity is like any other insurance policy – a prudent investment

SECURE YOUR VENUE – SECURE YOUR FUTURE

Objectives

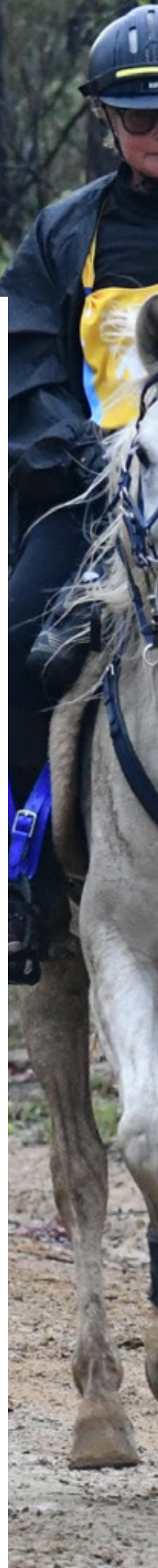
- To prevent the introduction of infectious disease agents to horses.
- To prevent the spread of disease agents from an infected area to an uninfected area.
- To minimise the incidence and spread of disease agents of public health significance.

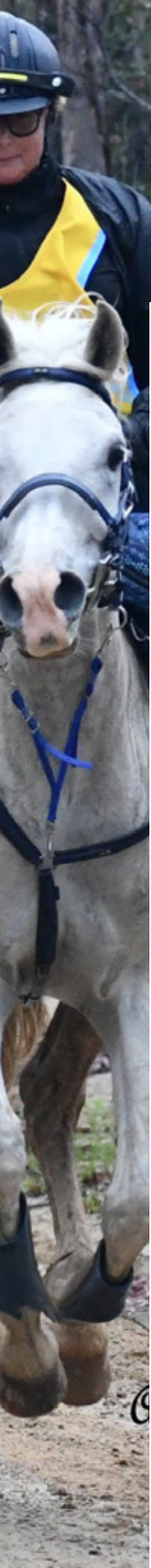
Biosecurity should be an integral part of the management of any horse venue. It is about managing risk to meet the objectives stated above. Biosecurity refers to the measures taken to prevent, or control, the introduction and spread of infectious agents to horses. Such diseases, whether clinical or subclinical, significantly reduce the productivity, profitability and long-term financial viability of a horse venue.

Biosecurity measures are venue specific and can vary greatly depending on factors like site design, management, cost of implementation and climate. As such, we use the acronym PECCS to help assess what measures might be appropriate:

Practical	How practical is the measure?
Effective	How effective is the measure?
Cost	How much will the measure cost to implement?
Capability	Does the venue have the capacity and workers/volunteer capability to implement the measure?
Sustainable	Is the measure sustainable?

Everyone that visits, works at, or enters a horse venue – such as horse owners, competitors, jockeys, stable hands, trainers, farriers, drivers, vets or spectators – must follow the directions of the manager in order to ensure biosecurity measures are implemented properly. Everyone is responsible for their actions.





THE NEED TO DEVELOP A HORSE VENUE BIOSECURITY PLAN

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A venue that has undertaken a risk assessment of threats to horse health (either a self-assessment or using the services of a third-party) will be better able to recognise potential risks of disease spread. Such a venue will be in a better position to implement sound management practices to prevent disease spread. Good practices will not only help protect the horses on your venue, but also the horses on venues you visit.

During the typical operations of a horse venue, people – such as owners, workers, volunteers, club members, spectators, contractors and farriers – as well as other animals, move on and off the venue. Each movement is a potential risk for disease agents to enter, circulate within, or leave a venue. Venue managers have a responsibility to assist in minimising the potential for everyday movements to spread disease agents within or outside the venue.

A quick checklist to see if movements pose a potential horse health risk at your venue.

High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visitors go from venue-to-venue as part of their job – such as farriers, vets, horse dentists, trucks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occasionally you, or visitors, travel from venue-to-venue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You, and visitors to your venue, do not go from venue-to-venue.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horses frequently race, compete or visit studs.• Horses are not uniquely identified.• Records are not kept of individual or group horse movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horses are not always identified.• Biosecurity practices are in place but applied inconsistently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horses rarely leave the property.• Horses are uniquely identified.• Records are kept of all horse movements².
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venue managers do not implement or advocate horse health (biosecurity) principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venue managers are aware of horse health practices (biosecurity), but not sure how to change practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Venue managers understand practices and promote horse health (biosecurity) practices.



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GETTING READY TO DEVELOP A HORSE VENUE BIOSECURITY PLAN

The biosecurity workbook has been designed to take horse venue managers through a series of questions relating to how the venue is currently operating. A range of 'tips' have also been provided to assist with informed decision-making.

Before starting, it will be useful (but not essential) to have:

1. An aerial map of the venue, showing roads, entrances/exits and watercourses (try Google Maps).
2. A plastic overlay to cover the map, if it is not laminated, and non-permanent whiteboard markers.
3. Any existing documentation relating to the operations of the venue.

It is important to involve family members, committee, club members, workers, agistees or frequent visitors in preparing your Horse Venue Biosecurity Plan, where possible. The plan is more likely to have a high-level of uptake if ownership is shared among key people.

HOW TO USE THE WORKBOOK

Step One

To get started – set your goals. Clearly state what you aim to achieve – for example, reducing the disease risk for your horses. Then work your way through each section of this resource tool. For each topic, select the statement that best reflects current management practices.

Step Two

Summarise your results in the 'Summary of Results Checklist'.

Step Three

Rank the Actions to be taken to improve horse practices on your venue. Those marked 'haven't thought about it' or 'just beginning' should receive the most consideration when developing your action plan. This will assist you to better manage and control health risks at your horse venue. An Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Action Plan Template, citing examples, is included as a guide.



This workbook is divided into the following three broad sections:

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1. Everyday Biosecurity Activities

Everyday biosecurity activities and preventative measures that should be followed in the lead up to, during, and after an equestrian event has taken place.

2. In the event of a suspected Emergency Animal Disease

This section outlines the kinds of procedures that may take place should you suspect a case of an emergency animal disease at a venue or during an event. This will cover a likely sequence of events, what to expect and who to contact.

3. Response phase

The response phase section will cover the events that take place if there is a confirmed case of an EAD on your venue, or if an EAD response is announced while your event is taking place. This includes information on movement restriction procedures, contact tracing and the relevant AUSVETPLAN.



STEP 1 – GETTING STARTED

List what you aim to achieve in relation to horse health at your venue.

This is a statement that will guide your goals when it comes to biosecurity practices on your venue. It can be an addition or extension to an existing statement you may have already had in your business plan or organisational strategy, noting that smaller venues or weekend events will not have these sorts of plans.

The following pages will guide you through eight steps in the development of a *Horse Venue Biosecurity Plan*.



Everyday Biosecurity Activities

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MAJOR ROUTES FOR DISEASE AND PATHOGEN TRANSMISSION

Horses

- Transfer of horses from venue-to-venue
- Nose-to-nose contact between horses or biting
- Dead animal disposal

Other Animals and Vectors

- Domestic animals – including other livestock and pets
- Flying foxes (vectors of Hendra virus)
- Birds – wild and domestic
- Insects – such as mosquitos and midges

People

- Personnel and family members living on-site
- Contractors, maintenance personnel, neighbours, service providers and visitors
- Disease can be carried on hands, boots, clothing, hair and even in the respiratory tract
- Zoonotic diseases that can be passed between horses and humans

Vehicles & Equipment

- Tack
- Sharing of Feed and water
- Rugs
- Disease can be carried on tyres, etc.
- Horse floats/trucks that have multiple pick-ups
- Tools and equipment used by service providers

Air

- Transmission as an aerosol or dust

Feed & Water

- Feed can be contaminated by the raw materials used during, post-production and transport, or by exposure to rodents and pests on the property. Bacteria and mould in poor quality or damaged feed may also be a concern.
- Water supplies can become contaminated with faeces from contact with the same, or other, species.

Pests & Weeds

- Poisonous plants
- Feral animals
- Rodents – including rats and mice



IMPORTANT HORSE DISEASES TO BE AWARE OF

You should take the opportunity to educate yourself and those around you on endemic and exotic emergency horse diseases. Being aware of these diseases and how they're spread will help you to protect yourself, your workers and visitors, the horses attending your events and the wider Australian horse population.

Below describes some of the notifiable equine diseases and their modes of transmission, however this list is not definitive. Refer to section 'In the event of a suspected emergency animal disease' of this workbook for advice on what to do should you suspect any of these occurring in horses attending your venue. More information can be found on the Department of Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries website: National list of notifiable animal diseases - DAFF (agriculture.gov.au).

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Endemic Equine Diseases in Australia

Hendra virus: A serious, potentially fatal virus with flying foxes as the natural host. Horses become infected after coming into contact with the urine and faeces of infected flying foxes. In rare cases, upon initial infection it may also be spread from horse to horse, or horse to human following very close contact. Initial infection typically leads to acute illness, sometimes presenting in respiratory or neurological signs and quickly becomes fatal.

Outbreaks of the disease have occurred in Queensland and New South Wales, with vaccination of horses highly encouraged. If your event is taking place in a Hendra endemic region, you may be required to make it a Hendra vaccinated event (HVE) according to Equestrian Australia's Hendra Vaccination by-law. Furthermore, ensuring that your venue does not contain any fruit-bearing trees that may attract flying foxes will reduce the risk of transmission.

Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV): A vector-borne disease (arbovirus) spread by mosquitoes affecting horses, humans, and pigs. Horses are considered dead end hosts, meaning there is no risk of horse-to-horse transmission. Horses usually only develop mild clinical disease. However, some rare cases can cause severe encephalitis and be fatal.

Mosquito management practices are the most effective form of prevention as there are currently no animal vaccines registered for general use within Australia. Consider the location of your horse event or venue, as any active mosquito breeding grounds in the area may increase the risk of exposure to JEV and require an integrated mosquito management plan. A mosquito management guide for horses has been developed and is available for download on the Farm Biosecurity website: www.farmbiosecurity.com.au/livestock/horses/mosquito-management-for-horses

Other endemic mosquito borne diseases: Ross River Virus (RRV) is an arbovirus that can be passed onto horses, humans, and other species through the bite of an infected mosquito. Murray Valley Encephalitis (MVE) also affects both horses and humans and is currently endemic to Papua New Guinea and parts of northern Australia. Some wild birds may also serve as a reservoir host for MVE. The Kunjin virus (KUN) shares similarities with MVE and has caused outbreaks of neurological disease in Australian horses. It is most commonly seen around the Murray Darling Basin areas of NSW during the summer and autumn months.

Equine herpesvirus (EHV-1): A large group of viruses responsible for respiratory, neurological and abortion related disease in horses. EHV-1 is endemic to Australia and causes respiratory illness in horses and abortions in pregnant mares. However, the more serious neurological strain is very rare in Australia. Typical signs include fever (39-40.5°C), depression, nasal discharge and coughing. It is highly contagious and readily spread through close contact between horses, as well as through fomites such as contaminated feed buckets and tack.

Exotic Equine Diseases

Equine influenza (EI): An extremely contagious respiratory disease in horses that has become endemic throughout many areas of the globe. Australia is currently free of the disease and is the only country in the world to have successfully eradicated it following the 2007 EI outbreak and response. This outbreak triggered a national standstill on all horse movements in Australia at the time. This would have had consequences for every horse venue in the country, whether it be a large racing event or local pony club rally. Key symptoms to look out for include fever, swollen glands, a dry hacking cough and watery nasal discharge.

African horse sickness (AHS): A serious arboviral disease spread by some species of biting midges. AHS is endemic to Africa, but outbreaks have occurred in other areas such as the Middle East, Pakistan, Spain, and Thailand. Australia remains free of this deadly disease and it has never been detected here. However, Australia is home to midge species that could potentially serve as a vector for the AHS virus.

Glanders: A highly contagious and potentially fatal disease caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia mallei*, with possible zoonotic transmission to humans. Glanders affects all equids with susceptibility observed in some non-equid species. Thanks to biosecurity and surveillance efforts, this disease has been eradicated from Australia, Northern Europe and North America but is still seen in parts of Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East.

Exotic Diseases of Other Livestock

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD): while horses **cannot** contract FMD, an outbreak in Australia will likely cause severe disruptions for the horse industry. Many horse owners also have FMD susceptible species co-habiting on their properties (e.g., cattle and sheep) or at their events (e.g., cattle used in campdrafting events), which may leave them implicated in the event of a livestock standstill. It was estimated that during the 2001 FMD outbreak in England, horse industries collectively lost £100 million per month in the first three months of the response.



Mansfield 2024 - Photo Credit: Brian McKay Photography

DAILY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE LEAD UP TO, DURING AND AFTER AN EQUESTRIAN EVENT

Horses and Other Livestock

Objective:

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by movements of horses and other livestock onto or off the venue.

Tips – General

- Consider any horse returning to the venue from an event as a potential disease risk – such as racing, showing or breeding.
- Ideally, new, returning, or visiting horses should be separated (quarantined) from resident horses for at least 10 days, and have their temperature checked every day. A minimum of 10 days of separation is ideal, as it allows signs of illness to emerge. It may be more practical to group regularly travelling horses together, away from resident horses that do not travel.
- Encouraging attendees to regularly monitor their horses' temperature before, during and after an event will reinforce good biosecurity habits, as well as provide an opportunity to quickly detect signs in the unlikely event of an EAD such as equine influenza. Temps should be within the range of 37.5 and 38.5°C.
- If horses entering the property show obvious signs of disease, do not permit them to offload, or immediately separate them and start strict hygiene procedures. For example, use separate equipment for sick horses and deal with sick horses last.
- Ensure appropriate animal health practices are applied to other animals, such as dogs and cats.
- When moving horses within the venue, minimise contact with other horses.
- Horses that are sick, or suspected of being sick, should be handled by a separate person allocated to the task, or seen to after all other horses have been attended. Sick horses should not be moved without veterinary advice, unless for veterinary treatment.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Make sure all horses entering the event grounds are known and recorded – including visiting horses, lead ponies and non-competitors. Record details of ownership and the identification/description of the horse. The property identification code (PIC) should also be recorded.
- Stables, yards or paddocks for resident horses should be separate from those for visiting horses at a venue.
- Observe horses, preferably on arrival, to confirm identification, check travel records (if required by state legislation) and for general signs of good health.
- Horse venues should have enforceable (and enforced) rules for refusing the entry of unhealthy horses to the venue.
- Ensure other animals entering the venue, such as sheep, cattle, goats and alpacas, have animal health practice (biosecurity) principles applied to their management. This could include working closely with other show/event section co-coordinators at showgrounds/events.

Tips – General for Travel

- Prior to travel, reduce the horse's stress levels by ensuring the horse is in good condition, fed and watered before the journey.
- If a horse is suspected of being unwell, or has come into contact with a sick horse, separate (quarantine) the horse, and delay or modify travel plans until the horse is fit to travel.
- Promote to workers / volunteers and competitors the requirement for horses, and their hooves, to be free of visible dirt, weed seeds and other contaminants, prior to entering or exiting the venue.
- Avoid mixing different animals during transport, especially when coming from different venues.
- Engage a transport company that has a quality assurance program in place.



Guidelines for horses and other livestock	Additional threats from horses entering the venue	Potential risks of disease transfer from horses leaving the venue
<p>Recommended situation at the venue</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Details about all horses are recorded, including owner and PIC details. 2. Horse movement is managed to minimise the transfer of disease – both on, off and within the venue. 3. Horses are prepared for travel before arriving at the venue, or before leaving. 4. The health status of horses is known. Sick or suspect horses are separated, or refused entry. 5. The health status of other livestock is considered as part of horse health management. 		
<p>1. How do you currently manage the health of horses residing at the venue?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-date administrative processes. • Multiple entry points to venue. <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>2. What steps can you take to improve horse health management?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Vehicles, Equipment, Feed and Bedding

Objectives:

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by movements of vehicles and equipment onto or off the venue.
- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by movements of feed and bedding onto or off the venue.

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Tips – General

- Designate a specific parking area for visitors and contractors, and encourage them to report to one area. Have a bell or other device they can use to call your attention. This area becomes the 'control point'.
- Avoid placing vehicle parking areas within horse traffic areas, to prevent the transfer of potentially contaminated manure or feed. Ensure deliveries are made close to the venue boundary, or have designated travel routes or delivery entry points. Some venues may consider developing feed delivery protocols. Feed and bedding entering or leaving the venue should be checked for contaminants, and accompanied by a Commodity Vendor Declaration (www.mla.com.au/globalassets/mla-corporate/meat-safety-and-traceability/documents/commodity-vendor-declaration.pdf), where possible.
- Workers and volunteers should have dedicated work boots and clothing on-site, to avoid the potential transfer of contaminants from outside the venue.
- Aisles in stables areas should be kept clean. No manure, bedding or urine should be present in traffic or drainage areas.
- Clean and disinfect equipment, such as tooth rasps, twitches, stomach tubes and endoscopes, between horses. Consider separate handling equipment, like halters, especially for visiting horses and between age groups.
- Promote to workers, volunteers and competitors the requirement for vehicles and equipment to be free of visible dirt, weed seeds and other contaminants, prior to entering or exiting the venue.
- Identify designated travel corridors and parking areas for vehicles, floats, farm bikes and other traffic. Car parks and delivery points should be on venue boundaries where practicable, and/or have managed travel routes through a venue.
- Select contractors and suppliers with a quality assurance program in place.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Separate horses entering the venue for events from resident horses and their equipment, including feed and water containers.
- Ensure events have a feed policy which is made known to clients and competitors before arrival, including feed types and storage procedures.
- Promote a 'clean venue', encouraging competitors to follow a standard of cleanliness during their stay, including a venue cleaning routine.
- Avoid providing communal water troughs.
- Equipment, which may be used on a range of horses at an event, should be assessed for its risk level. For example, a measuring bay would be considered low-risk, whereas a twitch would be high-risk.

Guidelines for vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding	Additional threats from vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding entering the venue	Potential threats of disease transfer from vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding leaving the venue
Vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding movement on to, within, and leaving the venue is managed to prevent transfer of disease.		
<p>3. What procedures do you currently use to manage vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All equipment for resident horses is stored in a separate room from equipment used by visitors <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>4. What steps can you take to improve your management of vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

People

Objectives:

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by movements of people (workers and volunteers, contractors, family, competitors) onto or off the venue.
- To minimise the risk of spreading diseases or contaminants by the movement of people within the venue.

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Tips – General

- People includes invited and uninvited visitors, persons collecting manure, or entering the property in response to signage or other indirect invitation. It also includes friends, workers, volunteers and competitors.
- Promote property hygiene practices to all people through signage and other methods. Highlight the additional risk posed by visitors recently travelling overseas, to a saleyard or to an event.
- Restrict visitor access to horse facilities that are essential only. Isolation areas for sick horses should not have general visitor access.
- Manage horse contact with feed, manure or other waste.
- Locate hand washing facilities at strategic points, such as isolation areas, arrival/dispatch sites or husbandry areas, and install appropriate signage. Provide foot baths, separate footwear, or disposable protective wear for movement in and out of isolation areas. Washing facilities must be placed in work stations to increase the adoption of hygiene procedures.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Try to keep people not associated with the horses away from them – such as spectators.
- Have designated entry points, signage and separation areas for spectators and competitors.
- Provide information to competitors to discourage entering stables of horses from other venues, especially at showgrounds and sales. Authorised horse attendants, venue staff – such as veterinarians, stewards, and authorised venue attendants – should be called to enter a restricted area.
- Identify all tasks that take place on the venue requiring horse-to-horse contact and take measures and provide facilities to manage the risk. For example, hand washing, and other precautions, when checking horses' mouths.
- Locate hand washing facilities at strategic points and install signs to encourage use

Guidelines for people	Additional people entering the venue	Potential threats from people leaving the venue
<p>People coming onto the venue, moving within and leaving the venue are managed to prevent transfer of disease.</p>		
<p>5. How do you currently manage people coming onto, moving within and leaving the venue?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>6. What steps can you take to improve your management of people coming onto, moving within and leaving the venue?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Venue Design

Objective

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants through the incorporation of specific design attributes in the construction of the venue.

Tips – General

- Avoid locating permanent and temporary horse venues in swampy areas, near bat colonies or intensive piggeries, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
- Include isolation areas for sick horses in venue designs. Introduce double fencing or boundary roadways between mixed stock, to prevent nose-to-nose contact with external horses or other livestock. Feed and waste from isolation areas should be kept separate from the main venue stores.
- Horse wash areas should be designed to avoid contact between horses. Enforce rules for sand rolls/rolling areas.
- Horse entry is easier to manage with single, or few, venue entry points. Manage traffic areas to minimise or prevent dust, mud or water flowing over the tread surface.
- Stables with cement floors and walls made of, or covered with, a solid material are easiest to clean and disinfect. Good ventilation is essential. Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs) should be developed for regular stable cleaning and periodical sanitation. Sanitation includes the removal of all manure and feed followed by washing, scrubbing and rinsing, or pressure washing all surfaces with hot water and detergent. This is followed by applying disinfectant. Give consideration to stable access for mechanical cleaning devices, such as bobcats.
- Venue design should feature gates or systems to secure sections of the venue. Control points can be established to assist in management, in addition to venue access and exit points. Install designated travel corridors and parking areas for vehicles, floats, farm bikes and other traffic. Car parks and delivery points should be on venue boundaries, where practical, and/or have managed travel routes through a venue.
- Ideally, a quarantine area should be coupled with an insect control program. Insects and flies can spread disease from mucus, wounds or other fluids.
- Facility designs for waste management should consider heavy rain and flooding. Waste includes uneaten feed, soiled bedding, manure, medical waste, rubbish, and water runoff.
- State or local regulatory requirements for the management of waste water must be met.
- Watercourses entering the venue, such as streams, creeks, rivers, dams, ponds and lakes, need to be identified and managed for water quality. For example, sending samples to laboratories to test for potential disease contaminants.

Guidelines for venue design	Additional threats relating to venue entrance	Potential threats relating venue exit
Venue design facilitates horse health (biosecurity) practices for general operations.		
<p>7. How does the current venue design assist you to manage horse health?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having multiple entrances makes monitoring of horse and vehicle movements difficult. <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>8. What steps can you take to improve the venue design?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Venue Management

Objectives:

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by implementing management practices specific to the venue.
- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by feral and domestic animals and pests.

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Tips -General

- Identify and manage pest animals, including rodents, feral cats, dogs and pest birds. An integrated pest animal control program should be in place to deter pests. Avoid keeping horses, feed or equipment in areas that may be contaminated by bats.
- Ensure isolation areas contain separate coveralls, rubber boots and gloves for handlers. Keep protective clothing within the area and wash frequently. A separate wash area must include a hand basin, paper towels and garbage containers. A separate supply of basic veterinary stocks is also required, such as bandages and syringes. SOPs should also promote using new needles and syringes each time.
- Establish a work schedule for workers or volunteers that ensures they do not move between isolated horses and other resident horses.
- Yellow medical containers – ‘sharps containers’ – should be placed at each work station, such as vet boxes at a racecourse and the breeding crush on a stud, for the immediate disposal of all syringes and needles.
- A venue waste management policy should consider how waste types are moved, collected, stored and disposed. Waste from isolation areas needs to be kept separate to avoid contamination from flies and water.
- Develop stock disposal regulations to reduce the risk of contaminating water courses, water tables, soils or wild animal movement.
- Select contractors and suppliers who have a quality assurance program in place.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Consider the venue layout when planning event programs, to minimise horse- to-horse contact – for example, marked traffic lanes. Also consider the separation of spectator and general vehicles from competitors, with designated entry/exit points, marked with clear signage.
- Investigate and designate stock disposal options.
- Waste disposal should be part of the overall event management plan and should include water from wash bays and truck washes.

Guidelines for pests, waste and stock disposal	Additional threats relating to pests, waste and stock disposal	Potential threats relating to pests, waste and stock disposal
<p>Recommended situation at the venue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste management practices for movement, collection and storage, to minimise disease transfer – including water. • Pest animals and vermin are identified and a control program put in place. • A plan for the disposal of deceased horses. 		
<p>9. How do you currently manage pests, waste and stock disposal?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>10. What steps can you take to improve your management or venue design?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed room is swept clean and feed bins closed to prevent rodent access. <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Record Keeping

Objective

- To assist in the early detection of horse health issues and respond to any horse health issue.

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Tips – General

- Develop, and regularly review, an emergency disease response plan. This plan may include policies for postponing or cancelling events, or policies that outline the reasons the business can refuse to accept a horse onto a venue.
- Keep, or sight, health and travel records for each horse.
- Keep internal movement records of horses – this is particularly important on large studs.
- Keep feed, bedding, veterinary drug and delivery records.
- Ensure records are organised and readily accessed for updating and backup.
- Ensure records are linked to industry databases, where applicable, to assist with disease management.
- Documentation should include provision for recording identification, point-of- origin and destination information.
- Check policies of venues in relation to dogs and other visiting animals.
- Where practical, record visitors.
- Venues should have enforced minimum requirements for health status, for example, inoculations.
- Travel records, including vaccinations, should be up-to-date, prior to travelling.
- Keep records of test or standard mare servings, and semen transport, storage and use – both frozen and chilled.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Develop, and regularly review, an emergency disease response plan. This plan may include policies for postponing or cancelling events.
- Documentation should include the provision for recording identification, point-of-origin and destination information (including the PICs), preferably on entry forms.
- Ensure movement records are linked to industry databases, where applicable, to assist with disease management.

Guidelines for record keeping	Additional consideration relating to stock/ feed/personnel/ equipment entering the venue	Potential threats relating to stock/feed/ personnel/ equipment leaving the venue
Record keeping procedures for venue operations are up-to-date.		
<p>11. How do you currently manage record keeping?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Examples: Recording vet and farrier visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records are kept in a diary but there is no computer database • When we are busy, records are incomplete <p>Notes:</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor disease trace-back capabilities, therefore higher potential for reoccurrence. <p>Notes:</p>
<p>12. What steps can you take to improve your management?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Training of Venue Workers and Volunteers

Objective

- To ensure awareness by training all venue workers or volunteers in relevant horse health requirements.

Tips – General

- Ensure induction for all new crew members includes venue horse health practices.
- Ongoing training opportunities should be provided for existing workers and volunteers.
 - » Training may include mentoring, focus groups, workshops, field days, lectures, online, self-directed and information sheets.
 - » Training can include sessions involving workers/volunteers in the development of SOPs, review of workplace safety practices, and the provision of new information relating to research findings, legislation updates and news – as this often provides a time to discuss how and why procedures on your venue are carried out.
 - » Accredited or information style training for members, to grow organisational capacity, can be provided.
- Record the training each worker participates in.

Tips – Venue Managers

- Venue personnel includes key officials and volunteers.
- Ensure people are informed of horse health practices on entry to the venue, for example closing gates, designated areas, etc.
- Signage or information promoting horse health practices should be provided to competitors.

Guidelines for training of venue workers and volunteers	Threats/risks from new workers and volunteers	Threats/risks from workers/volunteers leaving
Training records of venue personnel are kept.		
<p>13. How do you currently manage workers/volunteer training programs?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>14. What steps can you take to improve your management?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		

Information

Objective

- To minimise the risk of introducing diseases or contaminants by providing relevant information and infrastructure that promotes relevant horse health messages.

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Tips – General

- Gate signage will inform visitors that horse health (biosecurity) is taken seriously on your venue.
- Use signage to restrict entry by persons to designated isolation areas, to encourage hand washing, to close gates, or as triggers for SOPs.
- Place a copy of the action plan in the venue staff room, with additional reference material.
- Have training, or information sessions, for workers and volunteers, including horse health messages and practices.
- Ensure visitors are informed of minimum practices or restricted areas.
- Brochures, posters and stickers can be used to promote venue horse health messages.

Tips – venue managers

- The key message is that all people are responsible for horse health at the venue. Use a range of methods to promote key information – including signage, public announcements and competitor information in event programs. Key messages can be included on clubroom noticeboards, magazine articles, media releases, club newsletters or websites. Brochures, posters and stickers can also be used to promote venue horse health messages to spectators.

Guidelines for training of venue workers and volunteers	Threats/risks from new workers and volunteers	Threats/risks from workers/volunteers leaving
Information is provided on venue horse health practices.		
<p>13. How do you currently manage workers/volunteer training programs?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Notes:</p>	<p>Notes:</p>
<p>14. What steps can you take to improve your management?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		
<p>Where are you now? <input type="radio"/> Ideal <input type="radio"/> Nearly there <input type="radio"/> Just beginning <input type="radio"/> Haven't thought about it</p>		



STEP 2 – SUMMARY OF RESULTS

In the following table, record your rating for each topic, then assign each an action and a HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW ranking.

		Ideal	Nearly there	Just beginning	Haven't thought about it	Ranking
Guidelines for horses and other livestock						
1.	Details about all horses are recorded, including owner and PIC details.					
2.	Horse movement is managed to minimise transfer of disease on, off and within the venue).					
3.	Horses are prepared for travel.					
4.	The health status of horses is known. Sick or suspect horses are separated, or refused entry.					
5.	The health status of other livestock is considered as part of horse health management.					
Guidelines for vehicles, equipment, fodder and bedding						
6.	Vehicles, equipment, feed and bedding movement onto, within and leaving the venue is managed to prevent the transfer of disease.					
Guidelines for people						
7.	People coming onto the venue, moving within and leaving the venue are managed to minimise disease transfer.					

Continued

		Ideal	Nearly there	Just beginning	Haven't thought about it	Ranking
Guidelines for venue design						
8.	Venue design facilitates horse health (biosecurity) practices for general operations.					
Guidelines for pests, waste and stock disposal						
9.	Waste management movement, collection and storage practices minimise disease transfer – including water.					
10.	Pest animals and vermin are identified, and a control program put in place.					
11.	A plan exists for the disposal of deceased horses.					
Guidelines for record keeping procedures						
12.	Records for venue operations are up-to-date.					
Guidelines for training of workers and volunteers						
13.	Training records of venue personnel are kept.					
Guidelines for information about horse health practices						
14.	Information is provided on venue horse health practices.					

**STEP 3 –
DEVELOP A
BIOSECURITY
ACTION PLAN**

A biosecurity action plan will help you prioritise the implementation of horse venue biosecurity practices. Now that you have ranked your priorities, you may also like to consider which ones you can achieve in the short and long terms.

As a guide, short-term activities can:

- Be planned and conducted within 12 months.
- Help your venue comply with regulatory requirements.
- Be financially feasible in the short-term.
- Fit in with venue/operations/enterprise time commitments.

Long-term activities:

- Are planned and conducted over more than one year.
- Need additional financial or personnel resources, not currently available.
- Enhance the overall quality of service, aesthetics and reportable administrative procedures.

Include a property map with your Biosecurity Action Plan.

The Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Action Plan Template is only a guide and you may wish to develop your own model. Some key points to remember are that all actions must be:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Timely**

If this workbook is being used as part of a group workshop, plan for participants to decide on one short-term and one long-term goal.

With each action, set-out the steps needed to achieve the task – this is especially helpful if a committee is working on a venue. A responsible person will need to be appointed to oversee the implementation of the action by a certain date.

A successful plan will provide for continuous improvement. As part of determining if the action has been planned and carried out successfully, a monitoring or recording system will need to be put in place. A monitoring program needs to consider:

- What are you monitoring?
- Where and when are you going to monitor?
- How will the monitoring take place?
- What records will you need to keep?

A responsible person will need to manage the monitoring process. This could be a different person to the one that implemented the plan.

A plan may also use a number of tools. The aerial photo (try Google maps) of the venue can be linked to tasks that need to be achieved. You may use technology as part of the recording processes – remember, good practices:

- Must be built into normal operational procedures.
- Need not be costly.
- Must be easy to follow.

HORSE VENUE BIOSECURITY ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

Name of Venue:

Vision Statement (aim or goal)

Short Term				
List the changes you can implement this year. Risks ranked EXTREME or HIGH must be attended to. Action: Steps needed to achieve the action:				
When to do it	Start date	Responsibility	Any special notes, additional resources, training, etc.	Action completion date
How will monitoring and recording take place?				
Review date				

Long Term

List the changes you can implement this year. Risks ranked EXTREME or HIGH must be attended to.

Action:

Steps needed to achieve the action:

When to do it	Start date	Responsibility	Any special notes, additional resources, training, etc.	Action completion date
How will monitoring and recording take place?				
Review date				

BIOSECURITY TOOL BOX

- Visitor Register
- Visitor Risk Assessment
- Movement Records
- Husbandry Records
- Action Plan for Suspected Emergency Animal Diseases
- Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Action Plan
- Useful resources and website links

VISITOR RISK ASSESSMENT

Date:		Visitor's Name:	
Service or Occupation:		Contact Number:	
Time In:		Time Out:	
Reason for Visit:			

Venue visitors can be classified by the risk they represent. These visitors are... [please tick]

<input type="radio"/>	Low-risk visitors	People coming from urban areas that do not contact horses. They present almost no risk of introducing disease. No need to impose restrictions.
<input type="radio"/>	Moderate-risk visitors	People who travel from venue to venue, but do not directly come in contact with horses or manure. Need to ensure footwear and clothing is clean.
<input type="radio"/>	High-risk visitors	People who travel from venue to venue and work directly with horses or manure. These people must be the most diligent with their biosecurity practices. Need to ensure footwear and clothing is clean and disinfected. Alternatively, provide clean footwear and clothing on arrival.
<input type="radio"/>	Comments	

HUSBANDRY RECORDS

Date	Horse Being Treated (description/ name/id)	Treatment*	Batch Number (if drugs or Vet chemicals are applied)	Person administering the treatment	Staff responsible for the treatment	Comments

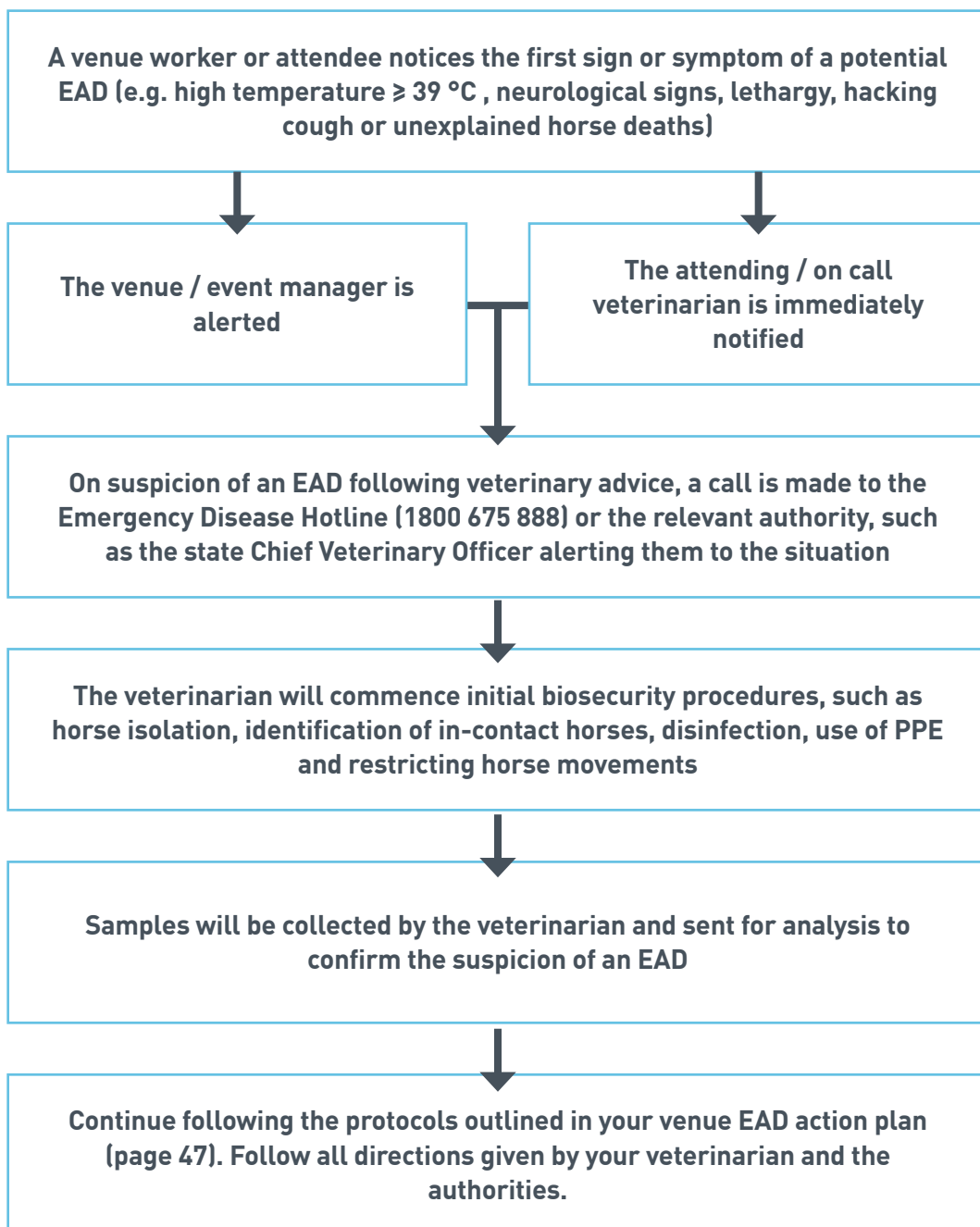
*A treatment includes the application of a drug or veterinary chemical, farrier treatment, physiotherapy, dental care.

IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE

Each venue manager should establish and document clear guidelines regarding the circumstances when an emergency animal disease alert should be raised, and who must be informed. For example, when experiencing horse deaths, illness or drop in performance. An example of an Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Action Plan can be found on page 47 of this workbook.

The below flow chart shows the order of events that may take place from the first instance of symptoms being discovered to the confirmation of an EAD by the authorities. It is important to note that a suspected EAD will not be confirmed until samples have been taken and laboratory results are available

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Response Phase

EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE (EAD) ACTION PLAN

This document details the actions and responsibilities that are necessary in the event of an emergency disease outbreak.

In the event of an emergency animal disease outbreak or serious endemic disease, more stringent practices will need to be implemented on the venue. Respective state and territory governments will implement standard operating procedures that are in line with the AUSVETPLAN disease strategy (please see <https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/ausvetplan>).

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[A] Important Contact Details

	Name	Contact Number
Venue name and PIC number		
Manager		
Person responsible for the EAD Action Plan		
Consultant veterinarian		
District veterinary officer		
Emergency Animal Disease Hotline		1800 675 888

[B] Management Commitment

Management undertakes that unfamiliar signs of disease will be investigated, and the following actions undertaken, without delay, if an emergency disease is suspected.

[C] EAD Action Plan

Develop an action plan allocating responsibilities to relevant personnel.

Action	Person Responsible
1. Contact the relevant authority through the district veterinary officer or the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline – 1800 675 888.	
2. Follow all instructions as directed by the relevant authority.	
3. Do not dispatch any horses from the venue until authorised by the relevant authority.	
4. Ensure suspect horses are isolated within the venue.	
5. Ensure companion animals of the suspect horses are segregated from other horses.	
6. Ensure the movement of all other horses within the venue, and surrounds, is restricted.	
7. Delay or halt the transport of horses onto the venue.	
8. Delay or halt the delivery of all non-essential commodities.	
9. Secure the property perimeter, limiting access to the venue and ensuring all vehicles and visitors only enter the venue under controlled conditions.	
10. Remove unnecessary personnel and machinery from horse feeding and holding areas.	
11. Ensure that any personnel, equipment or machinery do not leave the venue until authorised by the relevant authority.	
12. Compile a list of all horses, including the identification/owner details and where the horse usually resides (include the Property Identification Code (PIC) if applicable), personnel and machinery movements over the past seven days. Prepare a site plan that details current location and numbers of horses.	
13. Ensure all workers and volunteers are made aware of the actions being taken and their individual responsibilities towards the action plan.	
14. Ensure that attendees are advised if they are immediately affected by the delay in or restriction of horse movements.	
15. If an emergency disease is identified, the venue will follow the directions of the relevant authority. The relevant AUSVETPLAN Disease Strategy will also be used.	

Useful resources and websites

For copies of 'AUSVETPLAN' and biosecurity materials	Animal Health Australia P: (02) 6232 5522 E: aha@animalhealthaustralia.com.au www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au
To download horse related biosecurity resources	Primary Industries & Resources South Australia (PIRSA) P: +61 8 8226 0995 www.pir.sa.gov.au and search for 'Horse biosecurity glovebox guide' for a free download
To find an Australian Veterinary Association Equine Vet	The Australian Veterinary Association P: 1300 137 309
For biosecurity tips	Farm Biosecurity www.farmbiosecurity.com.au
For a reference book on exotic horse diseases	'Equine Exotic Diseases' – available for purchase or download from Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation (AgriFutures) E: info@agrifutures.com.au www.agrifutures.com.au/product/equine-exotic-diseases

The following organisations are members of Animal Health Australia:

Harness Racing Australia	P: (03) 9227 3000 www.harness.org.au
Australian Horse Industry Council	P: 0478 351 112 E: secretary@horsecouncil.org.au www.horsecouncil.org.au
Racing Australia	P: 1800 138 704 E: customerservice@racingaustralia.horse www.racingaustralia.horse
Equestrian Australia Limited	F: (02) 9763 2466 E: info@defanational.com www.equestrian.org.au



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