

## Biosecurity for horse properties

At the time of writing this article, equine influenza is infecting horses in certain States of Australia.

Equine influenza is highly contagious and requires very strict biosecurity measures to control it. This article is about adopting general biosecurity measures on your horse property. Some of these measures will help control the spread of equine influenza, but also improve the general biosecurity of your horse property.

What is biosecurity? It is a series of procedures which protect the animals and plants that live on the property from external pests and diseases.

Biosecurity includes trying to prevent new pests and diseases from arriving, and helping to control outbreaks when they do occur. As a horse owner it is your responsibility to try to prevent pests and diseases from entering your property and, if they do, from spreading to other properties. .

There are various ways that you can make your horse property a safer place in terms of biosecurity:

- 1 Know what to look for. Every horse owner should be able to recognise when their animals are healthy or otherwise. If not then horse owners should take steps to learn basic horse health. They should also be able to recognise pest species such as fire ants, Patterson's Curse and fireweed.
- 2 Check the origins of material coming on or off your property to assess it for the risk of disease, weeds or insects.
- 3 Isolate new animals and check their health before introducing them to your herd. This can be done by setting up a yard that is well away from your herd to prevent them coming into contact with each other. Follow good hygiene practices such as seeing to the new horse after your own horses and showering/changing clothes after that. It is also a good idea to keep the manure separate and make sure it is thoroughly composted to kill weed seeds. As an extra precaution this can be used on the garden rather than in the paddock.
- 4 Create a 'buffer zone' with your neighbours through measures such as double fencing and wind breaks using bushes and trees. These buffer zones have many other advantages including providing habitat for wildlife (some



PIRSA's Kym Hebbberman at Morphettville racecourse checking the credentials of Peter Jolly's horse Rumarco.

Photo courtesy PIRSA

of which, such as certain insectivorous birds and bats, eat pest insects by the thousands!) and preventing horses from playing over fences and getting injured.

- 5 Limit visitors to your stock. When setting up a horse property try to design the layout so that visitors do not come into contact with any horses before 'checking in' with you. This is also a safety and liability issue which will lead to fewer accidents between inexperienced people and horses. It will also reduce weeds spreading from visitors' vehicles to your property.
- 6 Fence off waterways/dams and reticulate water to where it is needed. Horses need clean water! Waterways that are fenced off and allowed to re-vegetate can become a haven for wildlife, some of which eat pest insects (see the paragraph about buffer zones above).
- 7 Do not bring agricultural equipment on to your property without ensuring it is clean and free of soil or contaminants.
- 8 If you suspect a disease, isolate sick animals and do not visit neighbouring properties until the cause has been determined – this limits its chance of spreading.
- 9 Do not bring in animal or plant material from overseas or from interstate, or intra-state, without appropriate permits or horse travel statements.

### How to report a suspected outbreak

If you see any unusual symptoms, abnormal behaviour, an outbreak of a new weed or unexpected deaths in your animals, immediately call your vet or report it to your state or territory's Department of Primary Industries on the freecall hotline 1800 675 888.

Reference:

[www.daffa.gov.au/animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/biosecurity](http://www.daffa.gov.au/animal-plant-health/pests-diseases-weeds/biosecurity)



Did you know you can contact the Greening Australia Exchange Program to receive free advice about land, flora and fauna?

# HorsesLandWater Peri-Urban Project

## Have you visited [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com) lately?

If you are interested in improving the land on which your horse lives, visit this website for a heap of great resources!

Equestrian coaches, pony club instructors, land care technical advisors and individual horse owners alike will find that there are a range of great ideas for sharing the good land management message.

With many horse keeping educational programs still based on traditional European "set grazing" systems, the HorsesLandWater resources will provide an informative insight into how your horse keeping practices can improve the environment in which he lives.

Especially developed with the small property owner or horse agistment centre in mind, resource books, posters, brochures are just some of the great ideas to share. Link your website today!

## New resources

There are many links between good land management and controlling risk from horse 'flu, such as ...

- shelter belts around property boundaries reduce nose-to-nose contact with neighbouring horses;
- keeping records of all horse, visitor and contractor movements; and
- isolating new horses to observe their health status.

You can download this poster illustrating the links from [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)



## Peri-Urban Project CD available now

Contents include national versions of the HorsesLandWater Action Planner, Management Guidelines, Horse Health Fact Sheets and horse property catchment poster as part of 35 different resources for you or your organisation to use to share the horse keeping, horse health and good land management practices message. Cost \$27.50 inc GST from Horse SA, email [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au) or download an order form from [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

## What's coming up?

**Promote your horse keeping and land management courses today!**

If you are organising a field day, workshop, training course or other activity to promote horse keeping and good land management practices why not promote this on [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com) !

Promotion is free. Just send an email to [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au) with a request to be given access to the relevant part of the HorsesLandWater website.

[www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

Project Partners:- Harness Racing Board (AHRB), Australian Pony Club Council (APCC), Melbourne Water, Environmental Protection Authority SA (Watershed Protection Office), Greening Australia Exchange Program, Tasmania South Natural Resources Management Board, Adelaide and Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board, Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Australian Trail Horse Riders Association... with more joining in!

**Please promote the Peri-Urban Project through your club or horse-related business website, noticeboard or newsletter.**

### HorsesLandWater

PO Box 483  
Plympton SA 5038  
Phone (08) 8294 2460  
Email [horsesa@horsesa.asn.au](mailto:horsesa@horsesa.asn.au)  
Web [www.horseslandwater.com](http://www.horseslandwater.com)

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