

BIOSECURITY MEASURES

TO KEEP THE COMPETITION
HORSE HEALTHY



Please direct all inquiries to:

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WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Many hours of training and hard work are invested to prepare healthy, high-quality horses for a competition. The competition of these horses is a rewarding experience for all. Unfortunately, even healthy animals entering the competition grounds are at risk for exposure to an infectious disease. The stresses of travel, close confinement, and changing environments may be enough to compromise the horse's resistance to disease. Furthermore, horses returning home may also pose a risk for introducing disease to the horses at home.

Equine competition venues pose unique risks for disease introduction and spread among the participating horses. The frequency and number of horses and humans moving around the event grounds, the commingling of horses of unknown health status, the often close stabling of horses, and inadequate or non-existent isolation areas for sick horses all increase the risk to the individual competition horse.

Biosecurity is defined as a set of preventative measures to help prevent the introduction and transmission of infectious diseases on a premises. Biosecurity measures taken by you prior to the competition, during the competition and after the competition help keep your horse healthy by decreasing the risk of exposure to an infectious disease agent such as flu or EHV-1 virus or strangles bacteria.

CORE BIOSECURITY PRINCIPLES

Your main objective is to keep your competition horse healthy. However, traveling and commingling horses at a competition ground is not without risk. There is no way to eliminate all disease risk from a competition grounds, but following core biosecurity principles significantly reduces the risk of disease introduction and spread. You and competition management should focus efforts to:

- Restrict horse contact with other animals, humans and equipment.
- Clean and disinfect equipment.
- Isolating and remove sick horses.

ISOLATING PRIOR TO THE COMPETITION

As you are preparing for the competition, the following biosecurity measures will help protect your horse:

Event Entry Requirement Review - Check with competition management regarding health requirements for entry to the event grounds. Competitions may require proof of vaccination and health declaration or certificate of veterinary inspection to be provided in advance of arrival and may require arrival time to be scheduled with the event organizers.

Horse Health Examinations - Disease prevention and biosecurity start before you leave home. Only healthy horses should be transported to the event grounds. Before leaving home, you should examine each horse and take their temperature twice daily for at least 3 days prior to the event departure. Any horse with an increasing temperature or temperature greater than 101.5°F should remain at the home stable or further evaluated by veterinarian to determine health status.

Disease Exposure Evaluation - If there has been an infectious disease confirmed or suspected at your horse's home premises in the last 21 days, your horse should be thoroughly evaluated by a veterinarian and diagnostic testing performed, if deemed necessary to confirm the health status of your horse. If your horse has been exposed and is incubating an infectious disease, the stress of travel and competition may result in your horse becoming sick at the show.

Vaccination and Testing Status Review - Before the event, you should ensure your horse is up to date on vaccinations as required by the USEF rules and you have a valid Coggins for the horse. It is also important to check to see if the event or the state of destination has required additional testing requirements for entry.

Equipment and Supply Check - All supplies and equipment should

be cleaned and disinfected prior to loading them onto the trailer to prevent disease pathogens being carried from your home stables to the event grounds.

Destination Disease Status Verification - Diseases, viruses and bacteria are always circulating in equine environments. On occasion there are outbreaks of disease which can pose a risk to the destination event grounds. To best protect your horse, review the Equine Disease Communication Center (equinediseasecc.org/alerts) alert webpage to identify any disease outbreaks which may impact your venue location or the participants intended to be at that event.

Trailer Inspection - Once the above have been completed, you are ready to load your horse on the trailer and head to the competition. Before loading, the truck and trailer should be inspected to ensure all maintenance and cleaning and disinfecting has been performed. If your horse is traveling by a commercial hauler, ask when they last cleaned and disinfected the trailer. Ideally, the trailer should be cleaned and disinfected after each new group of horses. If the trailer does not look clean or does not look safe, do not load your horse.

BIOSECURITY AT THE COMPETITION

The competition grounds can pose significant risk for disease exposure to your horse. However, you can protect your horse by taking the following biosecurity measures to reduce the risks while on the event grounds:

- **Limit horse-to-horse contact:** Increase distance between your horse and other horses in the warm-up or competition arena or at the wash rack or other commingling areas to limit potential for disease pathogen exposure. Ensure the stall door is closed to prevent direct contact with other horses in the aisles.
- **Limit horse-to-human-to-horse contact:** Decrease or limit the number of people interacting with your horse. Ideally, those persons in direct contact with your horse should have no contact with other horses on the event grounds. If they have had contact with other horses, they should wash hands, change clothes and footwear and clean and disinfect any shared equipment prior to entering your horse's stall.
- **Avoid sharing equipment or supplies:** Any equipment or supplies which have had direct or indirect contact with other horses should not be shared with your horse or brought into your stabling area. If the supplies or equipment must be shared, it is to be thoroughly clean and disinfect between uses. Nose rags should never be shared between horses. Cover feed and hay to reduce the risk of contamination.

BIOSECURITY MEASURES

- **Designate Supplies for Each Horse:** A water bucket, feed bucket, brushes and tack should be designated, labeled with horse name and restricted to use for that horse. If shared, they must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.

- **Prevent submersion of hose into water buckets:** When watering your horse do not submerge hose in the water bucket, as hose may have been contaminated when providing water to another horse.

At the end of competition, clean and disinfect all equipment before loading onto the trailer. Unused feed and hay and bedding should be discarded on the event grounds and not taken home.

BIOSECURITY AFTER THE COMPETITION

The possibility of your horse's exposure to an infectious disease agent can still occur even with the best biosecurity practices being implemented at the event venue. When you get back home, your horse may be incubating a disease agent without showing clinical signs. Therefore, any horse returning from a competition should be isolated away from other horses on the home premises to prevent any further exposure to any disease pathogens. Monitor your horse in isolation for any signs of illness or temperature over 101.5°F and contact your veterinarian if any unusual signs are observed. The individual caring for the horse in isolation should change clothes and footwear after completing chores for the isolated horse(s).

Implementing biosecurity measures before, during and after the competition is an essential step to ensuring your competition horse and all those at home remain healthy.

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