

Biosecurity Plan for a Viral Respiratory Outbreak

Purpose

To prevent the spread of viral respiratory infections among horses, staff, and visitors, while minimizing disruption to operations and ensuring horse welfare.

1. Immediate Response Measures

A. Identify and Isolate

- Identify infected horses: Look for signs such as coughing, nasal discharge, fever, or lethargy.
- Isolate affected horses: Move them to a separate, well-ventilated quarantine area far from healthy horses. No nose to nose contact. No shared water or feed.

B. Restrict Movement

- No horse movement: Halt all horse transportation on and off the property.
- Limit personnel access: Restrict barn access to essential staff only.

2. Daily Operations

A. Segregation Protocols

- Designate areas for sick, exposed, and healthy horses.
- Use separate equipment for each group. Clearly label equipment for quarantine areas.

B. Staff Hygiene

- Provide disposable gloves, coveralls, and boot covers for staff working in quarantine areas.
- Require thorough handwashing or use of hand sanitizer before and after handling each horse.
- Enforce the use of footbaths with disinfectant at barn entrances and quarantine zones.

C. Feeding and Watering

- Feed and care for healthy horses first, then exposed, and lastly, sick horses.
- Do not share feed buckets, water troughs, or hay nets between horses.

3. Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection

- Stalls and Equipment: Clean and disinfect stalls, tack, and equipment daily.
- High-Touch Surfaces: Disinfect doorknobs, gates, and other frequently touched areas multiple times daily.
- Manure Management: Dispose of manure and bedding from quarantine areas separately.

4. Monitoring and Reporting

A. Daily Monitoring

- Check all horses for symptoms twice daily and record temperatures.
- Report any new cases immediately to the barn manager or designated biosecurity officer.

B. Communication

- Notify all stakeholders, including owners, veterinarians, and staff, about the outbreak and implemented measures.
- Share updates regularly.

5. Prevention and Education

A. Vaccination

- Ensure all horses are up-to-date on vaccinations against respiratory viruses (e.g., equine influenza, rhinopneumonitis).

B. Staff Training

- Train staff in recognizing symptoms, proper hygiene practices, and the importance of biosecurity protocols.

C. Visitor Policies

- Restrict visitor access during an outbreak.
- Provide disinfectant stations and guidelines for visitors who must enter the premises.

6. Recovery and Resumption of Normal Operations

- Quarantine horses for a minimum of 14 days after the last symptomatic case, or as advised by a veterinarian.
- Conduct thorough cleaning and disinfection of all facilities before lifting restrictions.
- Evaluate and update the biosecurity plan based on the outbreak experience.

Supplies Checklist

- Disposable gloves, coveralls, and boot covers
- Hand sanitizer and soap
- Disinfectants effective against viruses (e.g., bleach solutions)
- Thermometers for horses
- Separate feed buckets, water troughs, and tools for quarantine