



Horse Safety Australia

THE ASSOCIATION FOR HORSEMANSHIP SAFETY & EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA INC. ABN 44 215 962 886

Special Equine Influenza Issue

NEWS October 2007

CLINICS late 2007:

Teen Ranch, near Camden NSW	21-25 October	Cancelled due to EI on site
Mill Valley Ranch, Tynong North Vic	28 Oct-1 Nov	Arena clinic now going ahead/strict biosecurity!
Black Mountain Hideaway, near Cairns	2-6 December	This one will go ahead unless EI hits this area!!!

Equine Influenza and BUSINESS GRANTS:

Please do **NOT** be put off by the wording of the Business Assistance Grant for those affected by the Horse Flu, which requires you to have an **increase** in your costs!

The wording of the grant explanation requires amongst other things, that businesses must:

"(d) demonstrate and declare that they have had a significant downturn in their income due to the impact of EI in Australia and an increase in costs due to the restrictions on horse movements."

Does this mean that you are not eligible for this grant because your business has had no 'increase in costs'?

It is difficult to understand how a business has an increase in costs if it involves an instructor who is not teaching, or a trail riding business with no clients. In these circumstances horse keeping costs are similar and other business costs are often reduced (fuel, staffing, etc.). In many legitimate cases costs are actually less, not more. Our problem is often low, or no income, not increased costs!

If this describes your situation...you probably are still eligible....you just have to present your situation to Centreline in a different way!.....

If this applies to you...read on....

Be creative!

A reminder: www.outbreak.gov.au lets you know the current situation on restrictions, general information about EI, including precautions to take if you could be in contact with the disease. For updates on Equine Influenza ring the National Hotline: 1800 234 002 (daily 8am to 8pm).

Do you have a **biosecurity plan** for your horse activities...? Are you sure your clients are not bringing EI in to your place and infecting your horses? Are your staff working at other sites, or at home with their own horses? If so, make sure they are taking appropriate precautions! See over the page for some suggestions:

You can explain your increase in costs as follows: Compare your normal costs and takings with the EI affected figures for expenditure and income. If your costs are the same but your income has dwindled to nothing, your **percentage** of costs has increased. This percentage increase is what you declare when you self assess at the time of making your claim with Centrelink.

If you are genuinely disadvantaged, make sure you apply. Ring 1800 234 002 and follow through with the application process, making a clear case for your current needs.

You can also get application forms on www.centrelink.gov.au

The Australian Horse Industry Council

The other thing we recommend that you do is to join the Australian Horse Industry Council, who are working hard to represent the WHOLE industry in this business. Also make sure you have put your details on the Horse Emergency Control Database (free) on line at their site, www.horsecouncil.org.au. If you cannot go on line to do this, you can use the enclosed 'paper' copy of the HECD registration, fill it in and post it to the Australian Horse Industry Council.

Suggested precautions (for operations outside of infected zones):

1. **Provide prior warning to clients on procedures required before arrival:** When organizing details for bookings let your clients know that all riders, or anyone in contact with your horses, **MUST** have showered, washed their hair, clothes and shoes if they have been near other horses (even in non affected areas.) They should not bring on site anything that could have been near horses (e.g. cameras, hats, riding equipment, helmets) **Take special care if clients have been in infected areas** or have travelled interstate (especially Queensland or NSW/ACT) Make sure it was more than 72 hours ago. You must be extra careful with their biosecurity if it has been less time than this, and may decide the risks are too great. (i.e. Can you trust that they have been thorough in applying bio-security procedures?)
2. **Disinfecting procedures.** Before letting people near your horses, they must wash their hands in soapy water or disinfectant. Footwear must also be disinfected (scrub soles & spray uppers). If you supply boots and helmets for them to wear, remember that if their hats and shoes are stored in the same location as your equipment, these items could pass on the virus!
3. **Display warning signs on Equine Influenza** to ensure proper precautions are taken. Do not let vehicles from infected areas onto your site.
4. **The rules apply to all who come near your horses.** Do not allow ANY uncontrolled interaction of people with your horses (i.e. no one bypasses bio-security)
5. **Disinfect after contact with horses.** Also provide hand washing after contact with your horses if your clients are leaving your site (i.e. it is not necessary while they are staying with you on site).
6. **Keep contact details** of all who have been with your horses, in case your premises become infected, and you need to trace their movements after they leave.

Some facts about Equine Influenza:

What are the symptoms: fever/ horses off their food/coughing with a nasal discharge. If you think you have an infected horse, take NO risks....ring 1800 675 888 immediately!

How is it spread? An EI infected horse will expel virus laden mucus over a distance of several metres. If there is a group of sick horses, there is some evidence to suggest they may generate a cloud of virus that could travel some kilometres by wind!

Costs of Vaccination This would be very expensive, with estimates of approximately \$200 per horse per year (vaccinating every 6 months). This will be a huge burden for some of the larger trail riding and riding school businesses...and along with the drought, and in some cases serious fires, this extra cost could be the last straw for some of them!

How effective is the vaccine? Vaccines are not a 'silver bullet'; while they usually suppress the overt symptoms of the disease, vaccinated horses can still get sick (though they may have milder symptoms), and more importantly the disease can go undetected. In this situation, the apparently well horses can pass on the virus to others. (The virus is thought to have entered Australia through a vaccinated horse passing on the virus to another vaccinated horse!)

Does it matter if a horse gets EI? While the virus is not normally fatal in outcome, horses can have long term respiratory problems, sometimes coughing spontaneously, or during work for some time after 'recovery'.

Can we win this battle? Winning was still possible at the time this newsletter was written. At that stage, EI had largely remained confined to the declared restricted areas, with only a few escapes (due to human error). Currently (mid/late October) only a small percent of the horse population is involved...so if we persevere with sensible biosecurity precautions, there is still a chance we can win over this problem and rid our country of EI.

If the office has not been sending you email updates on EI, we may not have your current email address. Please email it to Nina so she can add you to the internet communication list....

To contact Nina at the office:

nina@horsesafetyaustralia.com.au

Horse Safety Australia, Box 209, Strathalbyn 5255
(08) 8536 3274 or 0411 685 211