NZTR Racing Event Biosecurity Recommendations

Practical Biosecurity Measures for Race Meetings and Trials

These recommendations provide practical guidance to assist Racing Clubs, race day staff, officials license holders and other services providers e.g. transport companies in reducing the risk of infectious disease transmission at race meetings and trials.

They reflect current veterinary biosecurity best practice and are intended to complement the NZTR Rules and any disease-specific directives or requirements that may be issued by NZTR from time to time.

Clubs, race day staff, officials license holders and other services providers are encouraged to adopt these recommendations wherever reasonably practicable to help protect the health of horses and the continuity of racing.

Key Biosecurity Principles

The following principles underpin good biosecurity at all race meetings and trials:

- **Minimise horse-to-horse contact** wherever practicable.
- **Minimise the sharing of equipment** between horses and handlers.
- **Practise good personal hygiene**, including regular hand sanitising.
- **Clean before disinfecting** - remove dirt and organic material before applying disinfectant.
- **Identify and isolate unwell horses early**
- **Report concerns promptly** and seek veterinary advice.

Recommended Biosecurity Checklist

Before the Meeting

- Brief Stewards, Veterinary Officers, officials and race day staff on the biosecurity measures in place.
- Identify a suitable isolation stable or yard away from other horses that can be used should a horse require veterinary assessment.
- Where practicable, allocate stalls, tie-up areas and yards to minimise contact between horses from different regions, training centres or training establishments. Consider grouping horses from the same region together to reduce unnecessary mixing and assist contact tracing if required.
- Remove any communal horse drinking facilities
- Ensure adequate supplies of approved disinfectant (e.g. Virkon® or F10®), hand sanitiser, disposable gloves and cleaning materials are available.

- Clean and disinfect high-contact areas prior to the meeting, including:
    - Starting gates
    - Tie-up stalls, rails and chains
    - Stable areas
    - Birdcage
    - Wash-down bays and hoses
    - Swab and veterinary facilities
- Display any NZTR biosecurity notices or disease-specific information where appropriate.

During the Meeting

- Stewards to remind riders of the Club's biosecurity measures prior to the first race.
- Provide hand sanitiser in jockeys' rooms, swab areas and other key locations.
- Provide disinfectant spray to the swab area and vet facilities for use throughout the meeting.
- Consider providing disinfectant footbaths (e.g. Virkon® or F10®) for riders during periods of heightened disease risk.
- Regularly clean and disinfect wash-down hoses, tie-up rails, chains and other shared equipment throughout the meeting.
- Avoid allowing horses to drink directly from hoses.
- Prevent contact between horses and owners and other unnecessary contact between horses and people.
- Encourage the repeated use of hand sanitisers by barrier staff and all people permitted in horse areas.
- Minimise the sharing of equipment between horses and handlers wherever practicable.
- Minimise unnecessary congregation of horses in birdcage, tie-up and wash-down areas.
- Monitor horses for signs of illness and immediately notify the Veterinary Officer of any concerns.

After the Meeting

- Clean and disinfect all shared equipment and high-contact surfaces.
- Launder reusable cloth items before reuse and dispose of waste appropriately.
- Restock disinfectant and biosecurity supplies.
- Notify NZTR of any suspected infectious disease concerns identified during the meeting.

Recommended Biosecurity Practices

Horse Management

- Horses showing signs consistent with an infectious disease should not be permitted to race or trial.
- Where practical, minimise unnecessary movement of horses around the venue.
- Keep horses from different training establishments separated wherever practicable.
- If a horse becomes unwell during the meeting, notify the Veterinary Officer immediately.
- Where appropriate, move the horse to the designated isolation area and restrict access to essential personnel only.
- Where possible, use dedicated equipment for isolated horses.

Personal Hygiene

- Everyone attending the race meeting has a role in maintaining good biosecurity.
- Participants are encouraged to:
    - Wash or sanitise hands regularly.
    - Use disposable gloves where appropriate.
    - Avoid unnecessary contact with horses from other training establishments.
    - Avoid unnecessary movement between stables where practicable.
    - Attend to any sick or suspect horse last, where operationally possible.

Equipment and Shared Items

- Where practicable:
    - Allocate equipment to individual horses.
    - Avoid sharing lead ropes, twitches, thermometers, feed and water buckets, grooming equipment and other horse gear.
    - Avoid the use of reusable handler number vests.
    - Equipment that cannot be effectively cleaned and disinfected should not be shared.
    - Remove organic material before disinfecting any shared equipment.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Effective disinfection requires surfaces to be cleaned before disinfectant is applied.
- Clubs are encouraged to:
    - Remove manure, bedding and other organic material before disinfecting.
    - Use an approved disinfectant suitable for equine environments (e.g. Virkon® or F10®) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
    - Allow adequate contact time and surfaces to dry before reuse.
    - Prioritise regular cleaning of high-touch areas throughout the day.

- Provide disinfectant buckets and sponges and/or sprays/wipes to each jockey room to allow riders to disinfect riders gear.

Horse Transport

- Where practicable:
  - Encourage transport operators to clean and disinfect trucks and floats between loads.
  - Minimise mixing of horses from different properties during transport.
  - Encourage transport operators to unload horses promptly on arrival and avoid unnecessary waiting in confined areas.

Managing a Suspected Infectious Disease

- If a horse displays signs consistent with an infectious disease:
  - Notify the Veterinary Officer immediately.
  - Move the horse to the designated isolation area where practicable.
  - Restrict access to essential personnel only.
  - Avoid sharing equipment with other horses.
  - Clean and disinfect any equipment or areas the horse has contacted.
  - Record the horse's location and any close contacts where appropriate to assist tracing.
  - Follow the advice of the Veterinary Officer and any guidance issued by NZTR.

During Periods of Heightened Disease Risk

- During an infectious disease outbreak, Racing Clubs should consider implementing additional biosecurity measures, including:
  - Enhanced cleaning and disinfection throughout the meeting.
  - Increased availability of hand sanitiser and disinfectant stations.
  - Additional veterinary surveillance.
  - Measures to reduce horse-to-horse contact in communal areas.
  - Temporary closure of communal equine facilities where appropriate.
  - Allocation of stalls or yards by region or training establishment where practical.
  - Additional disease-specific requirements or recommendations issued by NZTR.

Further Information

Racing Clubs should seek advice from the attending Veterinary Officer where there are concerns regarding horse health or biosecurity.

Strangles directives, updates and information are available from NZTR Strangles Hub.