

# A CHECKLIST FOR EQUINE HEALTH

This guide should be used to ensure responsible horse management. Seek advice from a suitable person/vet or professional body.

## 1

### ARRIVALS

- **ORIGIN AND STATUS** - risk assess the horse even before arrival, depending where it is from (the passport may help here), e.g. is it from abroad (including the Republic of Ireland) and if so, how long ago? Also what is its worming or vaccination history?
- **PREPARE** - clean/disinfect\* box, isolation area, equipment and storage; review documents (livery agreements, information from new owners on vaccination/worming etc.)
- **GENERAL HEALTH CHECK** - on arrival: behaving normally; good appetite; no cuts, wounds or swellings; moving normally and sound
- **RISK** - based on above, use to determine whether to:
  - **Test**, e.g. worm egg count, blood test for Strangles, EIA (come from abroad), tapeworms, piroplasmiasis, other?
  - **Isolate**, minimum period two weeks (also see column 4)
- **INTEGRATE** after isolation period, gradually and carefully, to avoid social stress and injury

\*Government approved general purpose disinfectant

## 2

### GENERAL

- **GENERAL HEALTH CHECK** - (see column 1) - minimum twice daily if stabled, once daily if at grass
- **NUTRITION**
  - **Water** available at all times
  - **Feed**, forage and graze according to type, work, weight and season
  - **Establish** a routine
  - **Record weight** regularly
  - **Seek advice** from nutritionist or vet (feed manufacturers/merchant)
  - **Beware overweight** as well as underweight; all horses have a laminitis risk
- **EQUIPMENT SHARE** - try to avoid, especially tack, headcollars, brushes, rugs, mucking out kit. Never share syringes or needles between horses
- **MUCK CONTROL** - poo-pick regularly; site muckheap away from horses; arrange regular muckheap disposal
- **HEAT CONTROL** - depending on the season, weather or work level. Wash down after exercise; clip and rug as appropriate
- **BREEDING** - risk-based pre-breeding testing for disease (e.g. CEM, EVA) essential for natural covering and AI. Also, correct certification/identification/record keeping. Follow industry codes, e.g. HBLB Code. Use vet or qualified technicians

## 3

### HEALTH

- **WHICH VET** - all horses should be registered with a practice and contact number displayed. Yard manager should appoint a 'yard vet' for coordinating disease, health and general advice
- **CONSULT** if ill, injured, lame, swelling, discharge, off food or water, or concerned in any way
- **VACCINATION** - Tetanus is very important; Influenza, and maybe EHV, are important in livery yards and animals mixing at shows; Strangles vaccination requires risk assessment and planning with your yard vet; EHV and Rotavirus in studs; EVA in some stallions
- **PARASITE CONTROL** - worm egg counts and strategic worming programme. External parasite control – flies, lice, mange, ticks. Consider mosquito/midge breeding sites especially standing water. Sweet Itch control essential
- **FINANCES** - charities can help with advice and solutions, but not vets fees. Consider appropriate insurance

## 4

### DISEASE

- **DISEASE RISK** is constant and increasing from both endemic disease (eg. Strangles) and exotic disease (eg. EIA). Be vigilant especially in recently imported animals. Seek advice from your vet
- **SUSPECT** - always isolate if illness suspected or a horse has been off the premises at a risky event (eg. been in contact with sick horse at a show)
- **ISOLATE**
  - **Stable and graze** away from other horses eg. own paddock (preferably without ability to "nose-touch" over fence, ideally 10 metres separation). Any in contact companions should be separated and monitored too
  - **Barrier management** - wash hands; dedicated over-clothes; disinfectant\* boot dip; schedule handling after contact with other horses; no sharing of equipment/utensils
  - **How long** - risk dependent, seek veterinary advice
- **EUTHANASIA** - old, sick or injured animals may require euthanasia which should not be avoided but must be done humanely by a vet or a licensed slaughterman. Disposal of the body can be costly, so plan for this eventuality

## 5

### TRANSPORT

- **SAFETY** - ensure horsebox/trailer is suitable and is well maintained, including flooring and partitions. Be aware of the Emergency Services Protocol (BEVA and Fire and Rescue Service)
- **REQUIREMENTS** - valid (equine) passport; Horseboxes will have to be roadworthy (i.e. MOT inspected) and drivers will need to have (a) the appropriate driving licence and (b) if driving as part of an economic activity etc they will need a Certificate of Competence
- **PREPARE** - muck out, clean and disinfect\* vehicle after each journey or before journey if vehicle unused for some time. Train all horses to load/travel as they may need to be transported in an emergency (eg. to the vets)
- **TRAVEL**
  - **Separate** from other animals for safety
  - **Risk Assess** - long journeys can bring out disease and increase risk of catching disease
  - **Water and Feed/Forage** should be taken on any journey in case of breakdown or heavy traffic
  - **Record** overnight stays away from yard of one night or more (eg. in yard diary)

**BIOSECURITY - the steps we take to prevent the spread of disease.**

Produced for the equine sector in conjunction with government.

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