



Biosecurity at Bransby Horses

What is biosecurity and why is it important

“Biosecurity is the principles, actions, precautions and protocols that protect the health of horses by preventing the transmission of disease through physical barriers and hygienic practices”

Maintaining good biosecurity practices will:

- Help prevent the introduction and spread of exotic and notifiable diseases.
- Control more commonly-encountered diseases, such as strangles, salmonella or equine influenza.
- Keep both horses and staff healthy (as some equine diseases can be passed to humans).

Horse keepers should know their horse's normal behaviour and vital signs; changes may indicate the onset of disease. Our rescued animals are challenging as we have to get to know them, their health status is unknown and they can arrive sick and needing our help.



What is biosecurity and why is it important

- The Bransby Horses Team are on standby to care for rescued equines at all times. Before a rescued animal can go onto one of our specialist yards, we need to make sure that they are safe and well and don't pose a health risk to any of the other 400 equines we care for.
- Because of the work we doing rescuing horses in need we always have animal coming in to the charity every week. We have taken a minimum risk approach and have very stringent biosecurity procedures for the safety of everyone. The wellbeing of the horse is at the centre of everything we do and the teams work hard to ensure that every equine is cared for during this time.
- All equines entering Bransby Horses are considered at risk of carrying infection or disease until relevant tests suggest otherwise.



What is biosecurity and why is it important

- Our biosecurity yard is a closed yard meaning no members of the public are permitted entry.
- Any contractors or maintenance work must be arranged with the Team Leader in advance so they can be fully briefed on biosecurity procedures.
- The Team Leader and other team members have full permission to refuse or request removal of any person not following the procedures.



Equine and human biosecurity



The following policies and procedures are implemented at Bransby Horses to protect ourselves and our horses on arrival...

Does your yard have a biosecurity plan?



Some common equines found amongst equines across the UK

- Strangles
- Equine influenza
- Tetanus
- Equine herpes virus
- Ringworm
- Salmonella



Signs of diseases will vary for each condition, some common symptoms may include...

- Fever (high temperature)
- Cough
- Lymph node abscesses
- Nasal discharge
- Diarrhoea
- Incoordination
- Lethargy
- Increased Temperature, Pulse Respiratory rate
- Anorexia/ weight loss
- Recumbancy
- Colic episodes



Transmission of diseases...

The most common way diseases are spread between equines are:

- Direct contact with each other
- Cross contamination from humans
- Sharing water troughs and feed buckets
- Tools and equipment
- Used bedding and other holding areas
- Used headcollars and haynets etc.
- Vehicles
- Carried through the air e.g. sneezing
- Carried by wildlife such as rodents and birds



Yard areas and equipment biosecurity

- All equines will be allocated one stable/ pad/ field dependant on their needs. Once an equine is assigned a suitable holding area, they must remain there for the duration of their stay.
- Equines must only be allowed contact with other equines housed in their area. No other contact is permitted.
- Intensive care equines and those with known diseases will be quarantined away from other equines. Overalls, gloves and boot covers must be worn for any equine displaying visual signs of infection, i.e. nasal discharge or diarrhoea.



Yard areas and equipment biosecurity

- Each equine will have his own water bucket, feed bucket and hay nets which must be disinfected after each use to avoid cross contamination.
- A pad and/or field should be left empty for three weeks unless the equine has been scoped. Stables are to have all bedding removed and be disinfected before housing a new equine. Water drinkers/troughs should be emptied and disinfected between each use.
- Foot dips and hand sprays are located outside each stable/ pad/ field. These require replacing and topping up in line with disinfectant guidelines.



Yard areas and equipment biosecurity

On arrival at Bransby Horses all animals are settled with their carers and will be assessed by the attending veterinary surgeon in accordance with the clinical criteria detailed in the Bransby Horses Veterinary Assessment Summary.

The 'vetting in' includes;

- A full health check
- 1st Flu and Tetanus injection started with a second booked for 28 days or after.
- Blood sample to check underlying health - many of our rescued horses have underlying health conditions that require treatment.



Yard areas and equipment biosecurity

- Faecal worm egg counts (FWEC) and tapeworm ELISA will be completed for all intakes. A worming programme will then be provided according to the results.
- Salmonella testing will be completed for all intakes, taken by collecting faecal samples on 3 consecutive days.
- A Farrier and Dental assessment will also be completed.
- A microchip and/or passport will be provided for the animal and appropriate clinical care will be provided following all these assessments.



Yard areas and equipment biosecurity

Strangles screening: Equines will stay for a minimum period of 3 weeks before moving onto our farm. Before they are permitted to leave, they will have completed two, strangles serology tests (ELISA test). One test will be on arrival during their initial assessment and one at the end of their stay alongside an endoscopy. This is to determine that they are free from disease that could spread to other equines on the farm. This approach allows us to pick up an acute or active strangles infection and also identify carrier animals which may not show symptoms.



Vehicle biosecurity

- Any vehicle entering the biosecurity area such as tractors, Kubota's, truck and trailers will require the wheels to be disinfected before leaving the site.
- Drive over pads with disinfectant are located at the main gates and various locations on the trackways when leaving fields.
- If the vehicle body comes into direct contact with an equine, this should also be disinfected using the spray bottles provided at the exit.



Vehicle biosecurity

- Any vehicle that has transported equines will require a full wash down and disinfecting. This includes removing all bedding.
- Foot dips are provided outside each pad, field, stable and each yard entrance, feet **MUST BE** dipped when exiting.
- Any maintenance staff requiring entry to an area where a horse is being kept, overalls must be worn and tools disinfected. Overalls will be provided by requesting from a member of the biosecurity team.



Vehicle biosecurity

The Crush area:

The crush must be disinfected; including gates, fencing and surface after each use and in between each equine.

Stocks:

The stocks must be fully disinfected after each use and between use and ensure all debris from previous equine is removed. Stocks must remain clean and tidy at all times.

Overalls:

Any quarantine staff member leaving the ARC are required to wear overalls. Any non-ARC team member entering the yard must wear overalls.

Staff room:

The staff room doubles up as a rug washing area and meeting area for Vets and RSPCA. With this in mind it is important that the staff room is well presented at all times. Alarm codes and key codes need to be made available to all on site staff.



Conclusion

Infectious disease is becoming more common with the increase in density and movement of horses. Therefore biosecurity measure are vital to stop an increase in infectious disease.

It is important we do everything we can to reduce any risk of infectious diseases from being introduced to other equines.

Taking these basic precautions is common sense and once you're in the habit, should be easy to implement. Reducing the incidents of infectious disease in our animals, saves time, money and enhances the quality of life for the equines in our care.

“Prevention is the key to success”

