

Horse Alert **Victoria**

**An operational plan
for the management of horse disease
emergencies in Victoria**

**Version 1
October 2002**

Acknowledgements

Many people and organisations generously contributed their time and ideas to the development of *Horse Alert Victoria* through their active participation in three workshops and through contributions outside the workshops. These included representatives of the racing, harness racing and recreational sectors, of government organisations, training institutions and the veterinary profession.

Earlier work on horse emergency disease management in Victoria was also a valuable resource in developing *Horse Alert*. This work had also been undertaken by many people in the horse industry and government and was coordinated by Patricia Ellis, formerly of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

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Document Control

Horse Alert will continue to develop. Updates and additions to this plan (such as biosecurity and contingency plans for specific sectors or enterprises) are recorded below:

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Executive Summary

Emergency horse diseases have the potential to cause enormous damage to the Victorian horse industry, through their effects on horses and on the social and financial well-being of the people of Victoria.

Horse Alert Victoria provides you with essential information to minimise the risks of a serious horse disease outbreak and it provides guidance on the actions you can take when a disease occurs. Additionally, it identifies a number of issues that will need follow-up, either by you or by organisations involved in horse events. Although all the information in the document is relevant to emergency horse diseases, your needs may be different from other users. Hence, the *Quick Action Guide* provides you with an easy reference to the essential areas that you need to be read when a disease is suspected.

Part 1 – Emergency Animal Disease Response – provides you with simple guidance on the signs that might indicate an emergency horse disease is present and the immediate action you need to take in relation to: isolation of sick horses, hygiene practices, and the requirement for ‘standstill’ of horses. Additional advice is provided on the response needed for a disease outbreak at stables, and also at an event such as a training track where the management requirements are much more complicated.

Horse Alert emphasises that you need to call your veterinarian as a critical first step. It also provides information on subsequent actions that you might take. The function of the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) is explained, and factsheets at Appendix A give you details on the major emergency horse diseases.

Part 2 – Responsibilities – outlines legislative powers and the existing arrangements at Commonwealth and Victorian Government levels to manage emergency horse diseases. The government-industry cost-sharing arrangement for responding to emergency animal diseases is described. However, the horse industry is not yet a signatory to the agreement and therefore there is no guaranteed government financial support to the industry to offset the costs of a disease response.

The relationships between the various organisations in the horse industry in Victoria are shown and the central coordinating and communication role of the Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee is identified.

Part 3 – Related Matters – identifies the significant combined contribution of about \$1.8 billion to the Victorian economy from thoroughbred and harness racing, and also the importance of the non-racing sector. This Part includes *Twenty simple steps to healthy horses* which provides you with comprehensive advice on sound biosecurity practices applicable in both emergency and everyday situations. It also outlines how

communication strategies should be developed for better prevention and management of an emergency.

The appendices complement the plan and include key contact lists (Appendix B).

Throughout the plan you will find continuing risks facing the horse industry that need to be addressed. The five areas identified for further action cover: health management, education and training, communication, policy and funding, and business continuity and recovery. These will require complementary action to ensure that there are comprehensive arrangements to protect the Victorian horse industry from the effects of an emergency disease.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AHS	African Horse Sickness
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
AUSVETPLAN	Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan
CCEAD	Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer (for NRE Victoria)
DVO	District Veterinary Officer (for a NRE district)
EAD	Emergency Animal Disease
EFA	Equestrian Federation of Australia
EI	Equine influenza
HHIAC	Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee
HRV	Harness Racing Victoria
JE	Japanese Encephalitis
LDCC	Local Disease Control Centre (under AUSVETPLAN)
NRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria
PCAV	Pony Clubs Association of Victoria
PVO	Principal Veterinary Officer
SDCHQ	State Disease Control Headquarters (under AUSVETPLAN)
SVO	Senior Veterinary Officer (for a NRE region)
RVL	Racing Victoria Limited

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QUICK ACTION GUIDE

Horse Alert Victoria has been developed to guide the Government and horse industry of Victoria to prevent, prepare for, recognise and respond to a disease emergency in horses.

Success in managing a horse disease emergency will depend, in the first instance, on people being aware of the threats, recognising that there is an unusual problem and knowing how to have suspect cases investigated. In an emergency, speedy action will be needed to stop movements of horses, people and vehicles and initiate vaccination, insect control or other treatments.

Horse Alert outlines the actions that are required in three parts:

- **Part 1 provides guidance on recognising and responding to an emergency animal disease.**
- **Part 2 gives details of how governments and industry organisations interact in the management of a disease emergency.**
- **Part 3 covers matters on related threats, prevention of disease, care of horses and on communication strategies within the Victorian horse industry.**

This plan should be read in its entirety as it provides a very useful guide for prevention of emergency animal diseases and to the response arrangements.

If you suspect that you might have an emergency animal disease,

DO NOT DELAY ACTION

- ⇒ **Implement Section 3.2 on page 6, ‘What action should I take right away’.**
- ⇒ **Call your vet.**
- ⇒ **If you can’t get your own vet, call an industry vet or a government veterinary officer.**
See Section 3.3 on page 7 and the contact lists in Appendix B.

If a disease is suspected at a TRAINING CENTRE, RACETRACK or HORSE EVENT, it is even more important that you

DO NOT DELAY ACTION.

- ⇒ **Implement Section 4.2 on page 15.**
- ⇒ **Obtain a copy of the contingency plan that has been developed under *Horse Alert* by your horse industry organisation.**

1. Purpose of *Horse Alert Victoria*

Horse Alert Victoria is an operational plan to help the professional and recreational sectors of the horse industry in Victoria prevent, prepare for, recognise and respond effectively to a disease emergency that affects horses.

An Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) is a disease that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It is a known disease that does not occur in Australia and it is in the national interest to be free of the disease (for example, equine influenza).
- It is a more serious form of a disease that is already present but would have a national impact if the new form established in Australia.
- It is a serious infectious disease of unknown or uncertain cause, as Hendra virus was when it first occurred.
- It is a known endemic disease (ie present in Australia) occurring with such severity that an emergency response is required (for example, anthrax).

The disease may not be one that even infects horses but, as occurred in Britain with foot and mouth disease, the industry could be affected by the response mounted to control the outbreak.

Horse Alert lays out the procedures to be followed where a disease emergency is suspected, as well as measures that should be put in place to reduce the risk of such an outbreak. It also addresses many of the wider threats identified by the Victorian horse industries (see Section 6.2). Applying the best health management guidelines outlined in the plan will help prevent and reduce the impact of a disease emergency. They will also improve the overall standard of horse health and infection control not only in the broad horse industry, but also on individual properties and stables.

Applying these simple principles will help prevent common infections and considerably reduce the losses to the Victorian horse industry every year.

Equine influenza is a viral disease that is present in most overseas countries. If introduced here, it would present a major problem because it is highly infectious, spreads rapidly through the movement of horses and people. It makes affected horses very sick and then out of form and unable to train or race for long periods. Successful control will require vaccination and a standstill, probably over large areas and for a long time. This would have catastrophic effects on the industry.

Case history – equine influenza

The devastating effect on the South African horse industry when equine influenza was introduced in horses imported from the USA in 1986 is the type of emergency that *Horse Alert Victoria* is designed to prevent or mitigate. Within a few days of the infected horses entering South Africa, the virus had escaped quarantine via in-contact horses, infected a national horse championship and spread to major horse centres across the country. Three-quarters of the 450 horses in training at Turffontein were affected before it was diagnosed. The annual yearling sales were delayed two months and normal racing did not start up again for six months. Despite movement controls and intensive vaccination, outbreaks continued in South Africa and neighbouring countries for nine months.

Implementing *Horse Alert* will not only reduce the risk of an outbreak of equine influenza, but also it will help prevent and manage other exotic diseases and diseases of unknown or uncertain cause, like Hendra virus. The strategies in the plan will also help prevent and control outbreaks of infections that are already present in Australia, such as strangles and anthrax.

Case history – foot and mouth disease

The activities of the horse industry in England were severely disrupted by the recent foot and mouth disease outbreak, even though horses are not infected with the virus. It was estimated that the industry lost £100 million a month in the first three months of the outbreak. Trainers, stablehands, jockeys, saddlers, farriers, veterinary surgeons, feed, caterers, course designers, photographers, suppliers of tents, portable stables and cleaning services were affected.

Applying *Horse Alert* on horse establishments will also help put them in a better position to cope with local movement restrictions that might be imposed because of major disease outbreaks that occur in other animals in the area.

All exotic diseases are notifiable, as are many infections that already occur in Australia. These include diseases of horses only (eg contagious equine metritis) or others that also affect other species, some including humans (eg rabies, Hendra virus). Notification to authorities allows agreed control measures to be implemented to reduce the economic, human health and social consequences.

Emergency diseases that are considered a threat to Australian horse industries are listed in Section 5 and a fact sheet on the major diseases is in Appendix A. Several of these diseases can infect people.

PART 1

EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE RESPONSE

3. How to respond when you suspect a new or unusual disease

3.1 What might an emergency disease look like?

A disease emergency is probably not going to ‘hit you in the eye’ and may not be typical of the ‘text book’ descriptions in Appendix A.

What to look for

- Signs of sickness that you haven’t seen before, eg hacking cough, blood-stained or frothy nasal discharges, unusual nervous signs.
- An unusually large number of horses affected with similar signs over a short period. This may only be high temperatures.
- Horses affected with similar signs in different places, even if they haven’t been in contact.

Signs like these indicate that the problem should be investigated.

Don’t wait to see what will happen or try treating it yourself in the hope that the problem might get better or go away.

You could lose precious time as the disease could already be spreading among your horses and to other places.

3.2 What action should I take right away?

No matter what the signs are or what the disease might be, the first step is to assume that a disease is contagious and immediately stop potential spread of infection by reducing direct and indirect contact between sick horses and between other horses and people as much as possible.

So pay attention to:

Isolation

- Isolate sick animal(s) from healthy ones at first signs of sickness.
- Isolate in-contact horses and check temperatures twice each day.
- Prevent the flow or drainage of any contaminated fluids or other materials.

Hygiene

- Handle sick and isolated horses last or have different people handle them.
- Use separate equipment preferably, or at least clean and disinfect it between use.
- Wash hands between handling all horses.
- Wear protective clothing such as overalls when attending to sick animals and take them off for washing before moving on to other tasks.

Standstill

- Stop horses leaving the premises.
- Stop entry of new horses unless they can be completely isolated.

How you manage these steps on your place will depend to some extent on:

- the number of horses you have on the site,
- how many are sick,
- what contact they have with outside horses, and
- what space or facilities you have available for isolation and the layout of your property.

3.3 Who can I contact for advice?

Call your vet immediately. Your vet is not only familiar with your horses and your farm or stables but also is aware of the background disease situation in other horses in the area.

Remember

Look. Check. Call your vet.

If you are not in charge of the horses at the time, check with the owner or supervisor first. If you cannot contact the person responsible for the horses and are concerned about the problem, call the vet yourself.

The usual reporting pattern for animal diseases would be:

Horse Owner/Supervisor ⇔ Vet ⇔ District Vet ⇔ Regional Vet ⇔ Chief Vet Officer

but.....

Don't be shy

Skip over a step or three if you can't get your own vet.

The phone numbers for the veterinary officers in the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE) are in this manual (see Contact Lists at Appendix B)

Make sure that you do talk to someone who can respond — don't just leave a message.

Important Phone Numbers

Our vet's name is on phone number

Our closest NRE DVO is in on phone number

The NRE SVO is in on phone number

The Victorian CVO's phone number is 03 9217 4246.

If you can't get your vet, Racing Victoria has a Help Line: 03 9258 4774

The 24-hour Emergency Disease Watch Hotline is 1800 675 888.

3.4 Why should I call a vet?

Too many disease outbreaks have got out of control by people thinking: 'I'll wait a few days and see how things turn out' or 'I'll try a treatment and if that fails I'll get professional help'.

Early action and investigation are crucial in limiting the spread and effects of a disease.

Have it checked before trying to identify or treat the problem yourself.

The government meets the costs of laboratory investigations of a suspected emergency disease.

Many emergency diseases appear similar. Often it is only in the laboratory that an emergency disease diagnosis can be made or ruled out. The Australian Animal Health Laboratory at Geelong is operated by CSIRO and is a world-class veterinary diagnostic facility, specifically designed to identify diseases that are exotic to Australia.

All exotic diseases are notifiable.. These include specific diseases of horses (eg contagious equine metritis), others that may also affect other species and some that may affect people (eg rabies, Hendra virus). Notification to authorities allows agreed control

measures to be implemented to reduce the economic, human health and social consequences

Even if it is not an emergency, the sick horse(s) will be properly attended to. It's also a lot better to have several false alarms than to miss the early indications of a major disease outbreak. Keeping suspicions to yourself might lead to a major outbreak that could otherwise have been managed relatively quickly and easily.

3.5 What will my vet do?

A vet who identifies or suspects an emergency disease takes on the responsibility for official notification, and must notify NRE immediately. NRE treats this information as strictly confidential.

Depending on the type of disease, the vet may also

- help you determine how best to isolate affected and in-contact animals from healthy ones,
- advise how to minimise the spread of the disease to other horses,
- warn about any possible transmission of disease to humans and how to prevent it,
- treat the horse(s) if appropriate, and
- stay with you on the property until an investigation team arrives, so as not to risk spreading infection further.

3.6 What information should I get ready to help the investigation?

Having an accurate and complete history of the initial case and the in-contact horses may be critical to preventing a major horse disease outbreak.

For a start, the following information about the sick horse(s) will help:

- Identities of sick, in-contact and non-affected horses, listed by group or location.
- Ages of affected horses.
- When did you first notice the sickness?
- What signs of sickness have they shown and have they changed or worsened?
- Movements of horses on and off the property in past 2 to 3 weeks, including any changes in location within the stables.
- Who transported them and from where?
- Where are horses that left the property?
- All treatments given to horses in last 10 days.

3.7 How will my information be handled?

All animal disease investigations are treated as strictly confidential and only people directly involved in the investigation would routinely know whose property and horses were involved.

To help trace the movements of in-contact horses, the identity of a suspect, infected or contact premises may have to be disclosed to other authorities or people assisting with the investigation, such as horse owners, transport drivers and others who may have handled in-contact horses. These people would also be advised that they must treat the information confidentially.

In some cases where animals have moved from a farm, stable or event or have been in an infected area and the animals cannot be located, it may be necessary to identify this district or locality more widely to alert people to the risk.

General alerts referring to an area would also be made to help stop the spread of disease.

Unfortunately this may not prevent rumours but a communication campaign will be launched to provide accurate information to the horse industry and the public.

In some cases it may be in the interests of the owner and others to make it quite clear to the public or industry the premises and horses that are involved and which ones are not. People affected would be consulted before any public announcement is made.

3.8 What might happen if it is an emergency disease?

It is worth noting that, to successfully control the vast majority of horse disease emergencies, humane destruction of horses will **NOT** be needed.

The Victorian CVO can take steps to control the spread of the disease if it is considered serious enough. These actions and orders could include:

- Quarantining a property or an area.
- Ordering a standstill on horse movements in a defined area or throughout the State.
- Prohibiting gatherings of horses.
- Ordering the treatment or vaccination of horses.
- Ordering the cleaning and disinfecting premises, trucks, and equipment. .
- Prescribing methods to control insects and animals pests.

Other States will probably impose bans on the movement of horses from Victoria until the disease is diagnosed and the situation is more clearly understood.

Depending on the particular disease, the ongoing control or eradication program could vary in scale from local movement restrictions and treatment of suspect and in-contact horses through to movement standstills over a large prescribed area and large-scale

vaccination of horses at risk (eg for equine influenza). Various livestock industries and the Commonwealth and State governments have jointly agreed to a national cost sharing agreement for the control of prescribed emergency diseases: the 'Government and Livestock Industry Cost Sharing Deed of Agreement' (EAD Response Agreement). Once the Agreement comes into effect, costs incurred to eradicate the disease are covered by a predetermined mix of industry and government funds (further details are provided in Section 5.1). As of October 2002, the horse industry has not signed the agreement so there is no agreed mechanism in place at the moment to fund the cost of responding to and eradicating an emergency horse disease. (Note: The Australian Racing Board is a financial member of Animal Health Australia representing the thoroughbred industry, but it is currently not a signatory to the EAD Response Agreement)

Consequential loss to business as a result of an emergency disease is not covered by the Agreement. Any such compensation would be a matter for separate government consideration.

More information on arrangements for managing emergency animal diseases can be found in Section 5.

3.9 AUSVETPLAN response to Equine Influenza

Of all the exotic diseases of horses that might enter Australia, equine influenza is probably the most challenging one to control. This is because it is a highly infectious virus that could have a significant effect on the health and well-being of a large number of horses, but also on the conduct of horse racing and other equestrian events for a long period.

Should equine influenza enter Victoria, the types of control strategies that government and the horse industries may need to implement are described in the Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan (AUSVETPLAN) Disease Strategy. These include:

- Total movement control on infected and dangerous contact premises.
- Preventing movements and gatherings of horses within a 10km Restricted Area.
- Establishing exit points out of the Restricted Area for controlled movement of horses that are moving under permit to quarantine or have been vaccinated.
- Stopping horse movements in a surrounding Control Area except as allowed by written permits.
- Disinfecting premises, vehicles and equipment.
- Procuring vaccine, vaccinating (twice at 4-6 week intervals) and permanently identifying vaccinated horses on infected and dangerous contact premises, and possibly in the Restricted Area.
- Treating sick horses.
- Disposing properly of any infected or suspect animals that die.
- Monitoring the incidence of infection and progress of the vaccination program and adjusting area boundaries as needed.

- Tracing in-contact and potentially infected horses that were on infected premises in the previous 7 days.
- Tracing movements of horse transports and people that were at infected premises in the previous 3 days and possibly longer.
- Tracing back movements that had occurred onto the infected premises that may have introduced the infection.
- Maintaining surveillance of horses on dangerous contact premises for at least 7 days after last contact.

These are complex issues for which more specific contingency plans should be developed for individual premises, such as a major training centre, or for events, such as a race meeting or a large equestrian competition (see Appendix C).

Many of these tasks will be supervised and/or undertaken by NRE officers. It is worth remembering that the costs of control of equine emergency diseases will be largely borne by the horse industry. Should the horse industry sign the EAD Response Agreement control measures for half of the listed equine diseases would still require a funding commitment of 80% from the horse industry.

Horse owners and supervisors of horse premises will have to support official control measures by:

- Clearly and effectively communicating to staff, clients and transport drivers the action required by the authorities.
- Ensuring compliance with NRE directives.
- Holding horses and attending to their husbandry needs in compliance with current standards for animal welfare.
- Carefully monitoring the health of in-contact horses.
- Nursing and treating sick horses.
- Seeking veterinary attention for sick horses where necessary.

3.10 AUSVETPLAN response to other equine emergency diseases

AUSVETPLAN disease strategies have also been developed for African Horse Sickness, Glanders, Rabies, Screw-worm Fly and Vesicular Stomatitis. The strategies for Contagious Equine Metritis and Surra are currently being finalised and will be available shortly.

PDF versions of these and other AUSVETPLAN modules can be downloaded from

<http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/index.htm>

Most diseases will be controlled by a combination of some or all of the following measures:

- Isolation and quarantine.
- Movement controls in defined areas.
- Surveillance inspections and testing.
- Hygiene, cleaning and disinfection.
- Vaccination .
- Treatment with appropriate drugs.
- Insect control.

Information on some of the major horse diseases covered by the EAD Response Agreement is in Appendix A.

4. Actions to be taken by others when a disease emergency occurs

When the CVO agrees that an emergency horse disease is suspected, or when it is confirmed, NRE may move to restrict horse movements and gatherings to limit the possible spread of disease. NRE may also impose specific disease control measures on affected premises, with the help of the horse industry (See Section 5).

Owners of premises involved in the response are legally obliged to comply with these orders even though they may not be the owners of the animals involved. A Quarantine Order could extend for several weeks.

A response will probably involve more premises than just the place on which infection had been first found. These may be premises in a declared area or places to which animals, people or items have recently moved.

4.1 At Stables or a property

Owners or supervisors at stables or on a farm usually have personal control of animals and can manage the security of the premises. They should be prepared to take action required of them or assist disease control authorities in the following areas:

Isolation and quarantine

- Isolate any sick or suspect horse or group of horses in contact with diseased horses.

Isolation implies a separation of several metres, and preferably much more, from other horses. Horses in adjoining stalls or paddocks are not considered to be isolated. Isolation of horses may present challenges to be overcome in providing food and water.

- Move horses away from property boundaries.
- Ensure that waste and effluent from sick horses is disposed of in a way that does not place other horses at risk.

Movements

- Stop all animal movements, floats, foodstuffs, tackle and equipment on and off a premises as required by a quarantine order.
- Provide records of horse ownership and movements.

Handling and monitoring horses

- Attend to healthy horses before sick horses.
- Wear protective clothing such as overalls and dedicated boots when handling sick horses. Wash hands and disinfect and launder protective clothing immediately afterwards.
- Treat or vaccinate sick horses as directed by a government or private veterinarian.
- Notify further cases of affected animals.
- Assist with the sampling of horses to establish whether an infection is present.

Environment

- Carry out insect control measures including animal treatments and spraying as directed.
- Disinfect fixtures, equipment, and other areas that may be contaminated as directed.
- Destroy stable waste and bedding in an approved manner.

Disease control measures such as these involve commitment and expenditure. Where horses are agisted or visiting for stud, training or other purposes, it may be necessary to get assistance. Discuss this with the inspector supervising your premises.

4.2 At a training centre, racetrack or event

If you suspect that your horse is getting sick,
don't take it to a track or event!

Where large numbers of horses, people and vehicles are gathered for training, a race meeting or other horse event, the site manager or supervisor may have limited control over the horses on the site and probably even less over the people and their vehicles. Such events would include pony club meets, equestrian events, agricultural shows, polo and polocrosse competitions, camp-drafting and endurance rides.

It is likely that several people including the owner and handlers of the horse will know that there is a potential problem before the race or event officials.

Elite equestrian events and endurance events usually have one or more attending veterinarians who are primarily charged with monitoring the fitness and welfare of the competing horses. A sick horse may be detected in this way. Before such events, the health of competing horses is monitored very closely and owners should not bring a horse to an event if they feel it is not going to be competitive.

The great majority of horse events take place over a day or less and do not have a veterinarian in attendance. The owner or person in charge of a horse that becomes sick at the event horse could well remove it from the venue just because it is not going to perform well before anyone realises.

When someone advises organisers that they are taking their horse home because it is off-colour or sick, the possibility that it could be a contagious disease should be considered.

A horse that is off-colour after returning from an event could be incubating a contagious disease.
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At events at which horses are not stabled, the risk of spread will be reduced if horses are tied-up well away from other horses so there is little, if any, direct contact.

If, however, an emergency horse disease is detected or suspected on the site, this presents special challenges.

Controls have to be put in place quickly while reassuring the people affected:

Brief the person in charge of the event

At a race meeting this person will be the Chairman of Stewards. It is important that the person in charge fully understands the situation, risks, possible consequences and the action required. The supervising veterinarian at the venue should be included in this briefing.

Stewards at race meetings have wide-ranging powers under the Rules of Racing to control movements of horses and licensed people, including trainers, grooms and jockeys.

Notify the Chief Veterinary Officer of Victoria

- Immediately report the problem and seek advice about what to do and what to say to people on the site.
- Also seek assistance at the site. Government inspectors have wide powers to take steps to control animal diseases.
- The CVO may also be able to enlist the support of other authorities quickly.
- The CVO's phone number is: 03 9217 4246.

Stop all movements

As rumours can spread quickly, it is essential that the site manager or designated person in-charge implements a complete standstill as quickly as possible without causing panic.

Secure the entrances to the property in such a manner that does not jeopardise the safety of people or animals.

Immediately announce why this has been done and what action is being taken to clarify the situation.

If a rumour is left to run or an announcement is delayed, there could be a tendency for owners and trainers to want to move horses immediately to avoid being caught in a quarantine situation. This is understandable but could have very adverse effects on the success of subsequent attempts to control the spread of the disease. It may turn a manageable situation into a disastrous national epidemic very quickly.

Record any movements

Record the identities and destination of any people, vehicles and/or animals that do leave the site. Also identify those who have already left. The government veterinarian will need this information to trace movements.

For some emergency diseases, people and vehicles will not spread infection. However, in the early stages, the cause of the problem may not be known and a conservative approach should be taken until the situation is clarified.

Inform people

In an emergency, people will be helped to understand and cooperate with control procedures if they are given accurate information and can discuss issues with informed people.

A statement to people on site should include:

- What disease is suspected
- What its effects on horses and people might be
- Why it is important to take control action
- What action has been taken
- What is being done to investigate the situation and clarify the suspicion
- What cooperation is required of the people present
- When is it expected that people, vehicles and/or horses could move away from the site and under what if any conditions
- That authorities appreciate the concerns of the people affected by these actions
- What is being done to cater for their needs and concerns (eg holding, feeding and watering horses)
- When further information will be provided
- Who is the designated person to speak to if necessary
- Who is the person for the media to contact

The wide range of issues associated with these statements indicates the complexity of dealing with an infectious horse disease at an event. People may be angry at having their personal arrangements disrupted. They may become uncooperative. Hence, there is a need for planned and rehearsed arrangements in accordance with a detailed contingency plan. Such contingency plans as outlined in Appendix C should include details as to how the requirements listed above for smaller properties can be achieved and should also include:

- A means to control human and horse movements through a (preferably) single entry and exit point that is supervised and through which all approved movements are recorded. Other gates should be locked. There may be a need to establish a disinfection facility at the entry/exit.
- Details of the provision of isolation facilities, food and water and approved waste disposal. These may become major issues for the people involved.
- Disinfection of people, site, equipment and vehicles, and provision of associated supplies.
- How and where to handle sick horses.
- How to undertake euthanasia and carcass disposal.
- A means of always keeping records of movements so that tracing horses is made simple.
- Who is to carry out the duties required, including a single designated media spokesperson.
- Who is to be contacted and how.
- Compliance with Codes of Practice for the welfare of horses (Appendix D).

Such contingency plans should be checked periodically for effectiveness and practicality.

PART 2
RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Government and industry arrangements for responding to an animal disease emergency

5.1 National arrangements

The Commonwealth Government has powers under the Quarantine Act 1908 to control the import and export of animals and products. Under the Australian Constitution, control of animal disease is the responsibility of the States and Territories.

In March 2002 the EAD Response Agreement was ratified. It provides certainty of funding for the initial response to a disease incursion or outbreak through a partnership of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments and major livestock industry organisations. It specifies 63 diseases, divided into four categories. The apportioning of the government and industry share of costs for each category depends on who benefits from controlling and eradicating the infection. This is measured in terms of the impact on human health, socio-economic well-being, the environment, animal production and trade.

The prescribed diseases that affect horses are listed in Table 5.1

The costs to which each party is liable are managed by applying an 'agreed limit' that ensures intense scrutiny of costs and benefits by the parties before committing to further spending. The livestock industry contributions are collected by a variety of means appropriate to particular industries, but usually by a predetermined levy to be implemented under industry arrangements.

As well as provisions relating to cost sharing, the Agreement has many other important provisions relating to the conduct of an emergency animal disease response. In particular, it requires the use of the AUSVETPLAN and defines standards for training of response personnel, accounting and auditing. It also refers to National Animal Health Performance Standards (or benchmarks) that are being developed across all sectors of the animal health system.

The EAD Response Agreement also requires each industry to improve its biosecurity arrangements. The National Disease Risk Mitigation Program involves each industry party preparing and promulgating a plan to improve on-farm biosecurity arrangements. This means encouraging the adoption by all producers of some simple measures that will reduce the likelihood of a serious disease being introduced and spreading within and between premises. The *20 Simple Steps to Healthy Horses* in Section 7 outlines such a strategy for horses. In addition, government parties will prepare statements outlining their biosecurity policies and programs including feral animals, public health and environmental policies.

Although the Agreement allows for participation by the horse industry, it is not yet a signatory and so cannot take advantage of the cost-sharing provisions.

Table 5.1 Diseases that affect horses scheduled under the EAD Response Agreement.

EAD Response Category	Disease	Affects people	Transmitted by insects
1 100% government funded*	Japanese encephalitis	✓	✓
	Rabies	✓	
	Western, Eastern and Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitides	✓	✓
2 80% gov't :20% industry*	Glanders	✓	
	Hendra virus infection	✓	
	Screw-worm fly	✓	✓
	Vesicular stomatitis	✓	?
3 50% gov't : 50% industry*	African horse sickness		✓
	Anthrax (major outbreaks)	✓	
4 20% gov't : 80% industry*	Borna disease		?
	Contagious equine metritis		
	Dourine		
	Epizootic lymphangitis		
	Equine babesiosis		✓
	Equine encephalosis		✓
	Equine influenza		
	Getah virus infection		✓
	Potomac fever		✓
Surra		✓	

* Government and industry cost sharing under the EAD Response Agreement is yet to be ratified by the horse industry

5.2 Victorian Government arrangements

In Victoria, the relevant legislation is the Livestock Disease Control Act, 1994. The Act allows the Victorian Government to take measures to control and/or eradicate animal diseases. The Act is administered by the NRE and falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Agriculture. Additionally, response arrangements may be coordinated under the State Emergency Response Plan, which is the over-arching plan for all emergencies under the Emergency Management Act 1986. The relationships between various government organisations are shown in Figure 5.1. How government will relate to industry through the Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee (HHIAC) in the event of a horse disease emergency is shown in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.1. Outline of Victorian Government arrangements for the management of emergency animal disease.

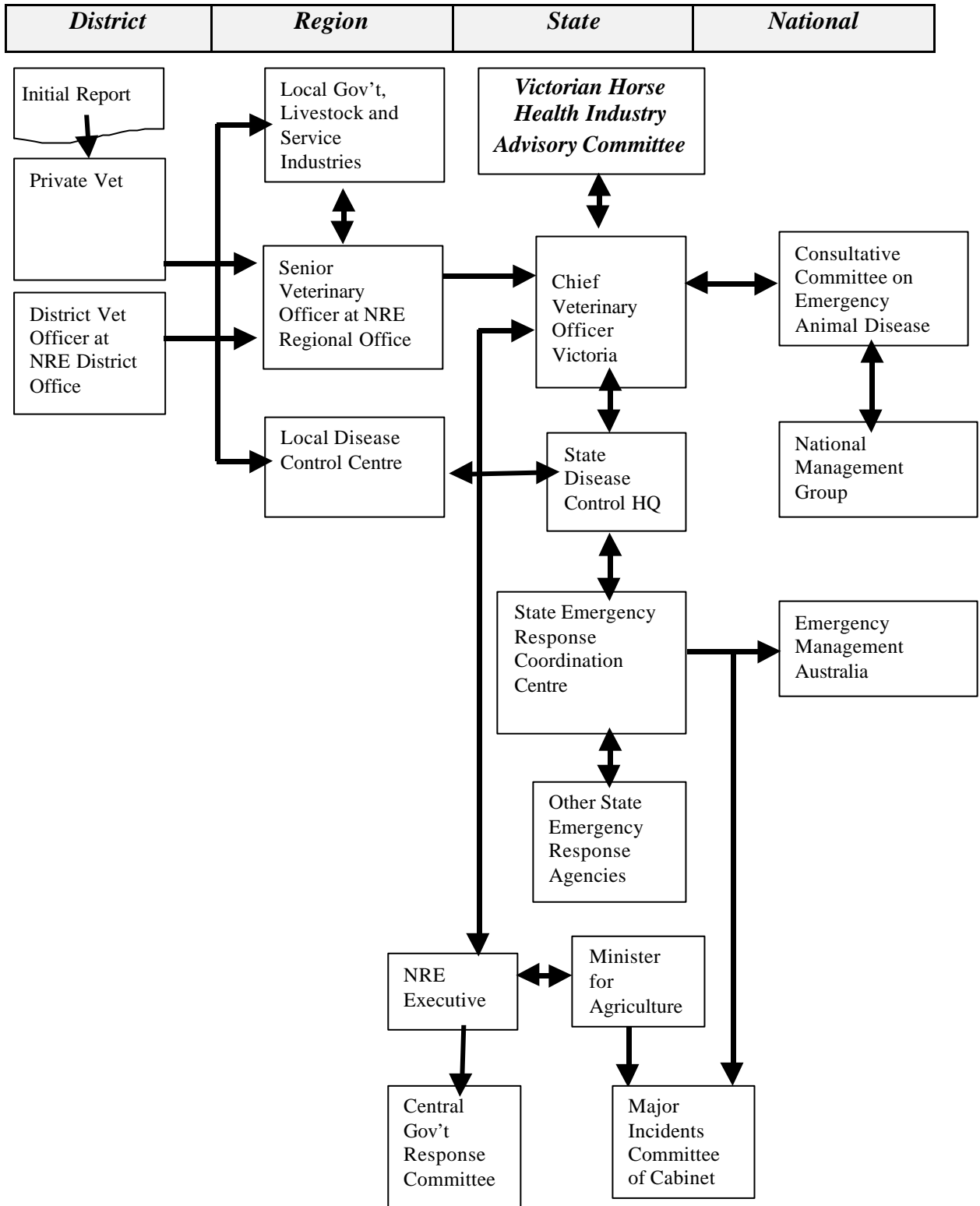
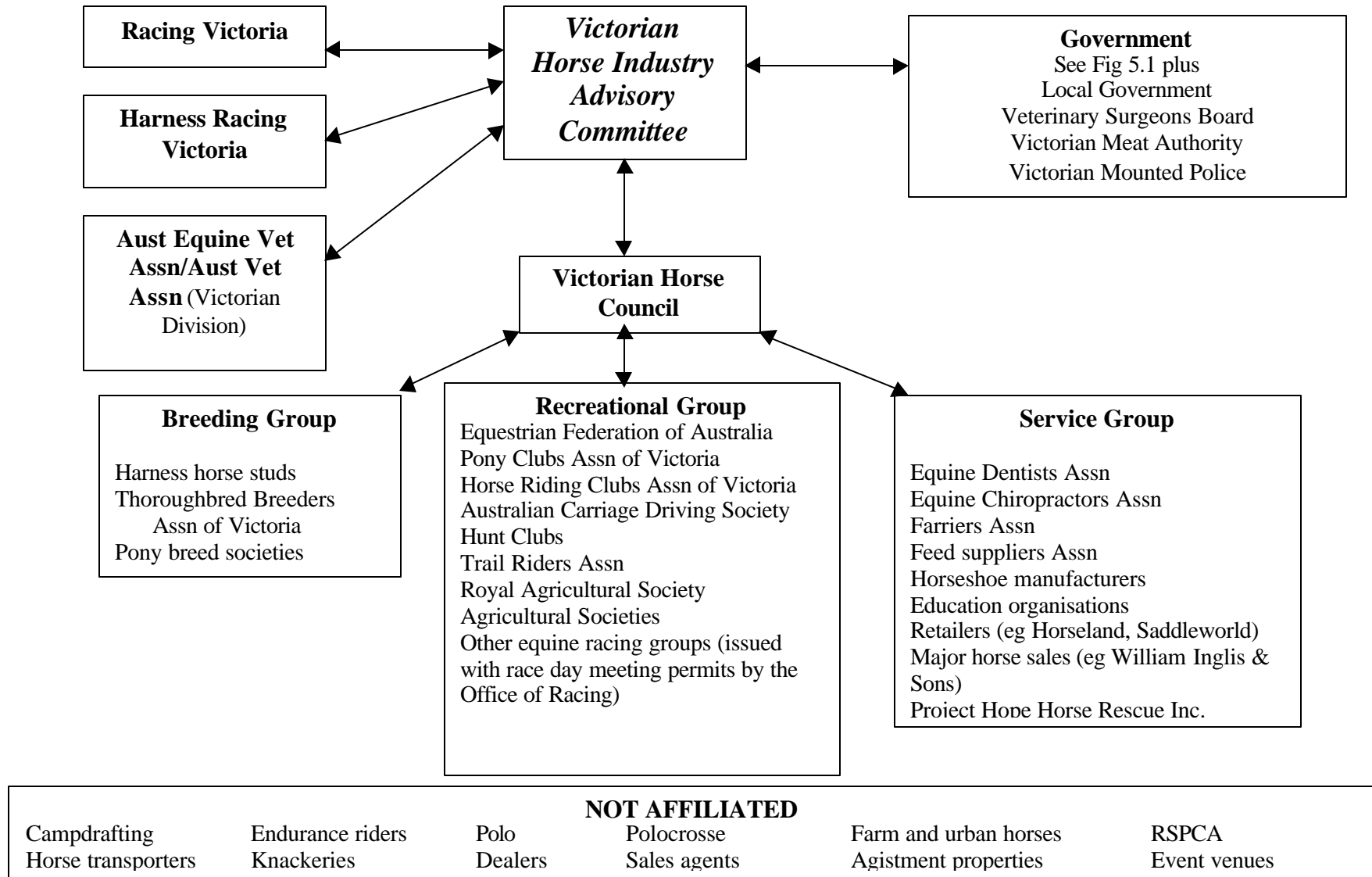


Figure 5.2 Relationships within the Victorian horse industry in the event of a horse disease emergency.



Horse owners and other people having control over horses have responsibilities under the Livestock Disease Control Act. Diseases that have economic and/or human health consequences are listed in the supporting Regulations. Listed diseases that must be notified to a state government veterinarian or animal health officer are divided into three categories: exotic diseases requiring notification immediately; those to be notified within 12 hours of suspicion or detection; and others within seven days.

All exotic disease are notifiable immediately. Information on the main exotic diseases of horses is included in Appendix A.

Notification to authorities allows agreed control measures to be implemented to reduce the economic, human health and social consequences. The Victorian Act has counterparts in all States and Territories and a serious disease outbreak in one State or Territory may result in the banning or the placing of severe restrictions on the movement of animals and products to others.

The Victorian Act provides for strong powers to be used to control exotic animal diseases:

- Movement controls may be imposed on animals or products on a property (quarantine) or within a specified area.
- Inspectors have powers to enter properties and examine animals.
- Livestock may be ordered to be treated or, rarely in the case of horses, humanely destroyed and disposed of appropriately.
- Animals products, feedstuffs etc may be ordered to be destroyed.
- Compensation may be payable for livestock that die or are ordered to be destroyed and for items that are destroyed.
- Buildings and facilities may be ordered to be disinfected.
- People may be required to submit to a disinfection procedure when leaving a property where an infectious disease exists.
- Animals may be required to undergo specified testing procedures, usually involving the collection of biological specimens for analysis.
- Livestock owners are required to provide assistance to muster stock and assist with disease control measures.
- Inspectors are empowered to take measures to control disease such as implementing vaccination, examining documents, controlling animal movements and controlling insect vectors.

Victoria has a corps of well trained government veterinarians and inspectors who are also experienced in the recent control of emergency diseases in other animals (for instance, avian influenza, Newcastle disease in poultry in Victoria and NSW, and foot and mouth disease in Britain). It also has a highly skilled private veterinary profession, including accredited equine specialists.

5.3 Victoria horse industry arrangements

There are two sections of the Victorian Government that have responsibility for horses. The Department of Tourism, Sport and the Commonwealth Games (including Sport and Recreation Victoria and the Office of Racing) works with Racing Victoria and Harness Racing Victoria and a number of equestrian groups. The Department of Natural Resources and Environment relates with the horse industries through the Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee (HHIAC) for which the terms of reference and representation are currently being reviewed (see Appendix E).

The relationships between HHIAC and industry groups for the purposes of managing and communication during a horse disease emergency are shown in Figure 5.2. Note that Racing Victoria and Harness Racing Victoria not only comprise the authorities themselves but also the respective Victorian associations of owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys and drivers, their racing and training centres and their education centres.

Racing sectors

Under the Australian Rules of Racing and the Australian Harness Racing Rules, articles prescribe actions that must be taken with respect to registering horses (AR.15 and Harness Racing Rule 95, 95A, 96 and 108) and licensing trainers, jockeys, drivers and stablehands (under AR.80 & 81 and Harness Racing Rules 90 and 90A). Licensing of owners, trainers, drivers, jockeys and others in the racing industries gives Racing Victoria and Harness Racing Victoria considerable authority to help manage the risks of emergency diseases occurring and spreading in horses in Victoria.

Stewards have broad powers to enter premises, inspect and secure animals and items (AR.8B. and Harness Racing Rules 15, 15A and 16) and the controlling bodies require records of movements through the lodgment of stable returns.

Harness Racing Rule 104 (1) requires that 'If a horse contracts or is suffering any contagious disease or condition specified by the Controlling Body, the connections of the horse must immediately, and in any event within 24 hours of the horse being diagnosed as suffering from the disease or condition, notify the Controlling Body in writing of that fact.'

The Racing Industry Competency Standards (RGR098) were endorsed in 1998 under the auspices of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA). These set the competencies and training requirements for a range of certificates and diplomas for trainers, stablehands, track riders/drivers, jockeys and drivers. Competencies such as RGR016B *Maintain greyhounds, standardbreds or thoroughbreds in a healthy state and safe environment* and RGR021A *Train and race greyhounds, standardbreds or thoroughbreds* already include some aspects of health management and biosecurity.

Other horse organisations

Standards for events and coaching requirements present groups such as the Equestrian Federation (EFA) and Pony Clubs Association (PCAV) with means that could assist the management of some aspects of a horse disease emergency.

For instance, at the highest level, elite equestrian events that involve international horses or which have international recognition that are run under the auspices of the EFA are required to comply with the Veterinary Regulations (9th Edition Jan 2002) of the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI). The first two points in the Code of Conduct state that the horse is paramount in all equestrian sports and that its health and welfare is more important than the demands of people such as breeders, owners, riders, officials and sponsors. The Veterinary Regulations require that, among other things:

- a health examination is conducted on arrival,
- a veterinarian is available to provide emergency care,
- isolation facilities are available, and
- a 24-hour security system checks the entry and exit of horses and people.

The reality at most high level equestrian events in Australia is that many horses are already on site before health checks are undertaken.

The Regulations applied internationally also require that horses from different countries be held separately wherever possible and venues have separate stabling for horses vaccinated against EI and for non-vaccinates. Horses that compete internationally have passports that also include the animals' vaccination history for equine influenza. (See <http://www.horsesport.org>).

EFA has 'National Show Horse Rules & Guidelines for Competitors & Judges' but at this stage there are no specific Australian rules or guidelines for disease control. At an equestrian event, organisers have records of horses and contact details of owners/riders attending. Records do not however include the origins and destinations of horses before and after an event.

5.4 Victorian government/industry response to an EAD incident

When an emergency disease in horses has been declared by the CVO or there is sufficient reason to suspect that an equine disease emergency exists, the CVO will initiate the responses that are required under AUSVETPLAN, the EAD Response Agreement and Victorian legislation. This will include communicating with organisations responsible for the implementation of emergency responses nationally (eg Consultative Committee on Emergency Animal Diseases, CCEAD) and in Victoria (as outlined in Figure 5.1).

On behalf of the industry and government, the CVO (or representative) will also call a meeting of the Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee (HIAC; See Appendix E membership and terms of reference) as soon as practicable, but at least

within 24 hours. This may be an in-person meeting or by teleconference. This Committee will form the main management and communication link with industry (See Figure 5.2).

The CVO (or representative) should brief the committee on such matters as:

- The disease suspected/confirmed, its epidemiology, treatment and control as outlined in the AUSVETPLAN strategy where one has been developed.
- The funding category of the disease under the national EAD Response Agreement.
- Situation report on the current incident, including the location(s), number and type(s) of premises and horses affected and under restrictions, the suspected source and possible means of spread.
- Control action taken already.
- Control action proposed.
- Constraints to success.
- Messages for communication, including the media.
- Actions required of and recommended for industry organisations.

Industry organisations should brief the committee on the following:

- Horse events and movements that have occurred and are planned or likely to occur that may have affected spread or would impact on future control.
- Likely impacts of control/eradication program.
- Key stakeholder groups.
- Means of communicating with stakeholders.
- Industry contingency plans that are already in place that will assist the response.

Matters the meeting should consider, and may agree on, include:

- Actions to be undertaken and who will be responsible (see section 5.4)
- A communication strategy including a communication manager, spokespeople, stakeholders, key messages and means of communication.
- Other actions to be undertaken and who will be responsible (see section 5.4)
- An industry liaison person to communicate with the CVO or nominee about all aspects of the emergency and to be attached to the Operations Section of the State Disease Control Headquarters as the Industry Liaison Coordinator (ie Position No SRD 104 in the SDCHQ, Appendix F). One or more Industry Liaison Representatives to be attached to the Technical Section of the Local Disease Control Centre (ie Position No LRD 506 in the LDCC, Appendix F).
- Date and time of the next meeting.

The SDCHQ and LDCC industry liaison officers are roles described in AUSVETPLAN. They are to be filled where possible by people who have been trained and accredited under National EAD Competency Standards for the role. The SDCHQ Industry Liaison Coordinator would communicate with national and State industry bodies and with the relevant committees and groups under the Emergency Animal Disease Response

Agreement (such as CCEAD and the National Management Group) to facilitate industry's role and decision-making within these hierarchical structures.

These roles are described at Appendix F (from AUSVETPLAN Control Centres Module part 2, Edition 2 1996, pages 55 and 116-117).

PART 3
RELATED MATTERS

6. Overview of related threats to the Victorian horse industry

6.1 What is threatened by an emergency horse disease?

A horse disease emergency in Victoria or in another part of Australia that might affect Victoria represents a significant threat to the well being of the people and horses of this State. The horse industries are major contributors to the Victorian economy.

Thoroughbred Racing

There are about 7,000 broodmares and stallions in Victoria and about 2,800 horse breeders. Some 9,500 horses start annually, belonging to more than 20,000 owners. Racing Victoria Ltd manages thoroughbred racing in Victoria on behalf of the three metropolitan and 54 country racing clubs that run over 500 race meetings on more than 50 licensed racecourses. The racing industry employs the equivalent of 16,300 full time positions, including over 1,500 trainers, 1,700 stable hands, 370 jockeys and 200 farriers as well as stewards, administrators, veterinarians, wagering clerks, track staff and others. The industry contribution to the Victorian economy is \$1.2 billion annually.

Harness Racing

Harness Racing Victoria manages an industry that has 25 clubs that hold more than 500 meetings a year on 37 tracks. There are over 5,600 horses in training and about 20,000 registered owners, 1,750 trainers and 1,200 drivers. Its total economic impact is about \$600 million and it creates an estimated 11,000 full-time and part-time jobs, the majority of which are located in regional Victoria.

Other sectors of the horse industry

The non-racing sector of the horse industry covers such diverse activities as equestrian events, trail and endurance riding, pony clubs, Riding for the Disabled, polo and polocrosse, rodeos and on-farm work. The activities of many of these groups are overseen by organisations such as the Victorian Horse Council, the Victorian Branch of the Equestrian Federation of Australia, the Pony Club Association of Victoria, the Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria, the Australian Trail Horse Riders Association, a wide range of breed societies and agricultural societies.

The sector is large, extensive and diverse, for example:

- the Equestrian Federation has about 4,000 members in 300 clubs with 24,000 horses,
- the Horse Riding Clubs Association of Victoria has 3,000 adult riders in about 130 clubs, and
- the Pony Club Association of Victoria has 8,000 members in over 200 clubs.

These and other horse organisations hold thousands of events every year across Victoria. There is also significant movement into and out of the State for major events at which Victorian horses are in contact with horses from other parts of Australia.

6.2 Consequent risks faced by industry

Regardless of whether we are considering a single horse under the control of a teenager, a pony or equestrian club, or an organisation associated with professional racing, the common denominator is that all of them involve horses. Horse diseases can spread rapidly. Therefore, all components of the horse industry in Victoria must be involved in maintaining the health of horses under their control.

The horse industry in Victoria is extremely varied involving many organisations and supporting services. This complexity adds to the risks of failure in one or more areas with consequential implications for the whole industry. The types of risk that could occur are grouped under headings in the following paragraphs. The threats that industry has identified as the highest priority are noted with an asterisk (*)

Health management

- Deficiencies in or the absence of best health management plans*.
- Movement of sick horses to races, training tracks and events*.
- An inability to isolate sick horses in some stable complexes*.
- A potential emergency disease may not be recognised by a supervisor or veterinarian*.
- Lack of knowledge of best health practices for control and eradication of horse diseases*.
- The high density of horses in small areas across the State.
- Potential for contaminated facilities such as communal stalls, washes and sand rolls.
- Complacency.
- Lack of awareness and surveillance.
- People may not know who to contact.
- People may be reluctant to report illness because of uncertainty and fear about what might happen to them and their horses.
- Delays in diagnosis thereby jeopardising successful control.
- Lack of timely access to vaccines.

Education and training

- Inadequate training of licensed people in the racing industries and of equestrian and pony club officials.

Communication

- Difficulty in informing all horse owners of risks and courses of action to take in the event of an emergency animal disease *.
- Poor communication between different sectors of the industry. This is exacerbated by a lack of information about the identities of horses, their owners and locations, particularly in the recreational sector.
- Inadequate dissemination of information on disease awareness and good health practices.
- Media may cause unnecessary concern on a disease outbreak or be unhelpful in disseminating factual information.

Policy and Funding

- Full financial responsibility will be carried by the horse industry and associated service industries for the costs of responding to a disease emergency as the horse industry is not currently a party to the government-industry EAD Response Agreement.

Business Continuity and Recovery

- Lack of plans to ensure business continuity and business recovery.

Many of these threats are covered in *Horse Alert Victoria*.

Others threats require further consideration by the Victorian horse industry organisations and government. These include business continuity planning and training which will require commitment and associated funding. Guidelines to biosecurity and health management are in Section 7, and Appendix C outlines the content of a contingency plan for specific premises or events.

To assist the development of more specific plans, such as for a race course, an organisation like Racing Victoria could sponsor the development of a model plan for a medium size club and others could then adapt this for their own venue.

Individual people in the industry have a major role to play by keeping alert to the potential for an emergency disease to occur at any time and knowing what to do if that eventuates. They can reduce the potential effects of an emergency disease and, in fact, other diseases by implementing best health practices on their properties and stables every day of the year.

7. Twenty simple steps to healthy horses

The 20 basic steps that can be taken to reduce the risk of a disease emergency are simple! But even simple measures can often be overlooked or ignored.

Putting them into practice will reduce the chance of a horse contracting a serious disease and of introducing a serious disease to the property. It will also reduce the chance of a horse being affected by or spreading more common infections like 'coughs and colds' that cost the horse industry millions of dollars every year.

Training

1. Train staff in disease prevention, identification and control procedures.

Preventive Measures

2. Control insects. Good drainage and manure management help prevent insects like mosquitoes and March flies from breeding.
3. Control rodents and keep food in rodent-proof containers.
4. Give a full course of vaccinations and regular boosters for diseases like tetanus, strangles and equine herpesvirus.
5. Use a fresh needle and syringe for every horse when vaccinating or giving medicine.
6. Verify proof of vaccination for new arrivals
7. Isolate new arrivals from resident horses for 5 days or introduce horses only from premises with known high health status. Pay particular attention to horses that have come from sales complexes, have been transported over long distances by commercial transport or recently returned from events. (Where space limits isolation of introductions, pay more attention to good hygiene, handling them last and checking their temperatures daily.)
8. Isolate horses at the first sign of sickness until contagious disease has been ruled out. Keep their gear separate.
9. Handle, feed and water sick horses last or use separate staff and equipment.
10. Do not move sick horses except for veterinary treatment or under veterinary supervision.
11. Avoid the use of communal watering troughs when away from home.

12. Contact a veterinarian or government officer immediately if unusual sickness or unexplained death occurs, especially if it is something you have not seen before.

Horse Management

13. If horses are stabled, take daily rectal temperatures. Fever immediately suggests the presence of disease.
14. Group horses, by use and ages, in as small groups as practicable, eg keep yearlings separate from older horses and pregnant mares, and competition horses away from stay-at-home horses.
15. Keep records of movements of horses and semen so contacts can be traced in the event of a disease outbreak.

Cleanliness

16. Regularly clean and disinfect stables, equipment and transport vehicles. Remove as much soil and organic material as possible before disinfecting.
17. Clean, then disinfect equipment such as tooth rasps, stomach tubes, endoscopes and twitches between use on different groups of horses.
18. Wash hands between handling groups of horses and use separate protective clothing and footwear when handling any sick horses, or handle them last.

Property Management

19. Keep boundary fences in good condition. Barriers such as double fencing and tree plantations increase perimeter security.
20. Avoid locating horse operations in swampy areas, near bat colonies or intensive piggeries as these may be carriers of some viruses that affect horses.

8. Communication strategy

Successful management of a horse disease emergency will require:

- Clear and established lines of communication.
- Clear messages.
- People designated to deliver them.
- Effective means of delivering them

These have to be in place before an emergency:

- between government and industry,
- between sectors of government,
- between sectors of the horse industry,
- within each sector of the horse industry, and
- with the public.

8.1 Lines of Communication

Government-Industry

The principal disease control authority, the CVO, will link with the horse industry through the Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee (HHIAC, Appendix C). The CVO also maintains an emergency fax list to contact the main sectors of the horse industry (Appendix B).

For emergency diseases that affect more than one animal industry, government will provide the link between the affected industries.

Within Government

The lines of communication in the Victorian Government services are highlighted in Figure 5.1.

Within industry

HHIAC will also provide a first point of contact for the major sectors of the horse industry, which will in turn communicate with members and affiliates in their sector or organisation.

The relationships within the Victorian horse industry, as they relate to emergency disease management, are illustrated in Figure 5.2. For the purposes of communicating during an emergency, however, the following Key Industry Communicators need to take the responsibility as the providers of information to their members and affiliated organisations as shown in Figure 5.2.

Key Industry Communicators

- Racing Victoria
- Harness Racing Victoria
- Australian Equine Veterinary Association/ Australian Veterinary Association (Victorian Division)
- Victorian Horse Council
- Equestrian Federation of Australia
- Pony Clubs Association of Victoria
- Equine Centre, University of Melbourne

These organisations should maintain current databases and means of rapid communication to large numbers of people, such as fax-stream and/or email address lists.

Some duplication of contact will occur but this is preferable to people not knowing what is going on.

As well as conveying information, organisations will undoubtedly receive feedback from members. Some of this feedback will be important for the success of the response and should be relayed quickly to the Industry Liaison Coordinator in the State Disease Control Headquarters (Appendix D).

Organisations and groups that are not affiliated (see Figure 5.2) and the large number of individual horse owners in urban and rural Victoria will be informed through their informal contacts with other organisations and through the media.

A significant unaffiliated group are the horse transport operators.

Public

The public identifies with horses and their welfare. Many people have a keen interest in racing and other equine events. It is critical to keep the public informed through the media.

8.2 Key messages

Different people and groups have different information needs. Some points will be common, others different.

NOW, it is important that all people in the horse industry and government know about *Horse Alert Victoria* and the prevention of horse diseases.

In an emergency, controlling panic and misinformation will be a major task. Depending on the circumstances and audience, the key messages may include:

Key messages

- What the disease is.
- What are the health risks to people.
- What signs to look for.
- Who people should contact if they suspect a problem.
- How serious it is and why.
- How it spreads.
- How it is diagnosed and what is the process.
- What control will involve, how will it be applied and by whom.
- What control strategies are in place and their success or otherwise.
- What the effects will be on particular groups such as trainers, transport operators, etc
- What specific action different groups should take.
- When normal activities are expected to resume.
- What plans there are in place to continue business and recover from the emergency

8.3 People responsible

For each emergency, HHIAC will nominate a communication manager.

Credible, experienced spokespeople should be nominated before any emergency and trained for their roles. They should be open, honest and accessible to all enquiries. In the initial stages of an animal disease emergency, the CVO (or representative) will be the principal spokesperson. HHIAC will develop with the communication manager, the key messages and may nominate key spokespeople on the following issues of interest:

- The disease, its epidemiology and effects and diagnosis.
- The approach to control and controls in place.
- Effects on horse industry and plans to reduce the impact of the emergency response and to resume normal activities.

These may include supporting, possibly high profile, spokespeople or advocates from outside the organisations and groups that are directly affected. These people would be seen as authoritative and unbiased by the public.

Where a number of sectors of the horse industry are directly affected joint statements should be considered.

As the emergency progresses and circumstances change, it may be appropriate that someone other than the CVO (or representative) is the principal spokesperson.

8.4 Means of communicating

In an emergency the following communication media may be used:

For notification of suspicion

- The Emergency Disease Watch Hotline: 1800 675 888.

For other enquiries from the public

- A Frequently Asked Questions 1800 Hotline, established and promoted for the purpose.

For general information

- Daily progress bulletins to primary communicators for onward fax distribution (eg for display at training centres and harness racing clubs).
- NRE Emergency Diseases website bulletin board (or link to similar)
- Horse websites linked to NRE site (see below)
- Media releases.
- Interviews with media.

Websites

The following websites have been identified as key sites accessed by people in the horse industry. Some of them have chat rooms through which rumours and misinformation may gain credibility. As part of the communication strategy during an emergency, these sites should be monitored and authoritative messages posted and attributed to a credible, named spokesperson. Readers should be redirected for information to an authoritative site such as the NRE Emergency Diseases website.

Racing Victoria	http://www.racingvictoria.net.au/
Racing Services Bureau (of Racing Victoria)	http://www.rsb.net.au/Publishing/Downloads/scratchings/scratch.htm
Harness Racing Victoria	http://www.harness.org.au/vic/
Equestrian Federation of Australia – Victoria	http://www.efavic.com.au
Pony Clubs Association of Victoria	http://ponyclubvic.org
Thoroughbred Breeders Victoria	http://www.tbr.com.au
Equine Centre, University of Melbourne	http://www.equinecentre.com.au
<i>Thoroughbred Village</i>	http://www.thoroughbredvillage.com.au
<i>Cyberhorse</i>	http://www.cyberhorse.com.au/
<i>Go Gallop</i>	http://www.gogallop.com.au/
<i>Sports Radio 927AM</i>	http://www.sport927.com.au/

The Australian Horse Industry Council also has access to extensive web-based horse industry contact lists.

Mass media outlets

All mass media will play an important role in conveying key messages to a wide audience. Many will also seek information from other sources. These may vary in the accuracy of the information provided and in the way it is presented, depending on degree of support of the media source for the horse industry, government and the particular disease response in place.

The following outlets have been identified as key media for the horse industry in the event of a disease emergency:

Daily publications

Herald-Sun

Weekly publications

Harness Weekly

Winning Post

The Weekly Times

The Stock and Land

Monthly publication

Inside Racing

Harness Racer

Horse Deals

Sports Radio 927 AM

ABC Rural Radio, especially morning rural sessions and *the Country Hour*.

Regional and local radio.

Local newspapers and supplements.

Materials

Resource materials that should be prepared, in advance where possible, to assist communication through the media may include:

- Fact sheets about the disease and its control.
- Photographs and video footage of the main clinical signs.
- Maps of the distribution of the disease emergency and Restricted and Control Areas.
- Graphs of number or cases/premises.

These will help the media cover the story more completely and accurately and meet deadlines.

High quality posters for display at stables, racing clubs, agricultural shows and other horse venues will increase awareness of *Horse Alert Victoria* and especially of the 20 Simple Steps to Healthy Horses (Section 7) and how to respond when a disease emergency is suspected (Section 3).

Ongoing promotion of horse health

As well as training spokespeople and preparing materials, the communication strategy should be an ongoing activity and not be left on the shelf until an emergency occurs. It

should be updated and ‘greased’ regularly by providing information on horse disease prevention and preparedness with a view to:

- Increasing awareness of emergency diseases of horses and what to do if one is suspected.
- Increasing awareness of *Horse Alert Victoria*.
- Promoting the need for continual biosecurity in horse management.
- Developing trust and confidence with the media and key journalists.
- Developing a profile for the spokespeople.

Opportunities may arise when:

- Major equine events are being held such as *Equitana*, the Spring Racing Carnival (especially in relation to imported horses), the Royal Melbourne Show or national equestrian events.
- Emergency equine diseases occur overseas.
- Disease emergencies occur in other Australian animal or plant industries.
- Media coverage occurs of other incidents of other equine disease outbreaks, like strangles or equine herpesvirus abortion.
- Emergency disease training activities are conducted in Australia.

APPENDICES

- A** Factsheets on major emergency diseases of horses
- B** Contact Lists
- C** Outline for a Contingency Plan
- D** Codes of Practice for Horse Welfare in Victoria
- E** Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee
- F** Role Descriptions for Industry Liaison Officers at Disease Control Centres

Appendix A

Factsheets on major emergency diseases of horses

These fact sheets present a brief overview of high priority infections for the information of horse owners and handlers. The signs that may be seen and the likely means of spread are described.

- 1. Equine influenza**
- 2. Japanese encephalitis**
- 3. Hendra virus**
- 4. African horse sickness**
- 5. Anthrax**
- 6. Contagious equine metritis**
- 7. Surra**
- 8. Rabies**

The information on exotic diseases has been summarised from the following references from which more detail, including information on tests and post-mortem findings can be found:

Exotic Diseases of Animals
by W Geering, A Forman and M Nunn,
Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995

This text and information on anthrax and other infections is also available on the web by highlighting and 'retrieving' information on each at:

<http://www.brs.gov.au/usr-bin/aphb/ahsq?dislist=alpha>

The Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC) also published *Equine Exotic Diseases – a manual for horse owners* by Dr Jennie Hodgson, July 2002.

1. EQUINE INFLUENZA

May be indicated by **explosive spread, fever, severe coughing and nasal discharge.**

Cause

- Equine influenza is caused by subtypes of a type A orthomyxovirus.

Natural hosts

- Mainly horses, but other equid species are also susceptible, especially donkeys.

Clinical signs

- A very high proportion of exposed horses would be affected.
- Fever (to 41°C) develops after a 1–5 day incubation period.
- Coughing is frequent, dry and hacking during the first few days.
- Later becomes less frequent, more moist and stops after 1–3 weeks if horses are well rested.
- Nasal discharge that is initially clear but becomes mucous or thick.
- Affected horses are lethargic, easily fatigued, and lose their appetite.
- Vaccinated horses however may show only very mild signs.
- Most recover completely within a couple of weeks, given good care and rest.
- May be some deaths in foals from pneumonia, especially if they don't get colostrum.
- Horses that are worked while sick may be susceptible to secondary bacterial bronchitis or bronchopneumonia.

World distribution

- Endemic or occurs as occasional severe outbreaks in Europe and North and South America. Has never occurred in Australia and New Zealand.

Occurrences in Australia

- Never.

Epidemiology

- Rapidly spread by close direct contact between horses, via the respiratory route.
- Infected horses excrete the virus in their exhaled air before they show any signs and for up to 8 days after initial infection, but recovered horses do not become carriers.
- Coughing may project virus many metres, and under favorable conditions wind could spread virus.
- Contaminated horse transport and other equipment can spread infection as the virus can survive in the environment for up to 36 hours and maybe longer.
- Outbreaks are most likely when horses are congregated together.
- In Australia's susceptible horse population an outbreak would spread explosively.

Control

- Quarantine, movement control and vaccination.

2. JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS

May be indicated by **fever, weakness, nervous signs and death.**

Cause

- Japanese encephalitis virus is an insect transmitted flavivirus, related to West Nile virus and Murray Valley encephalitis virus.

Natural hosts

- Water birds (herons and egrets) are the main reservoir and amplifying hosts.
- Pigs are also important amplifying hosts (sows may abort and piglets have nervous signs).
- Humans and horses may suffer severe disease but they are incidental, dead-end hosts that do not spread the virus.
- Inapparent infections occur in livestock and other animals.

Clinical signs

- After an incubation period of 8-10 days, signs can vary from a passing fever through to violent nervous signs and death.
- Mild cases may be off feed, sluggish and have reddened or jaundiced mucous membranes.
- More serious cases may be lethargic with a fluctuating fever, have difficulty in swallowing, jaundice, pinpoint haemorrhages in membranes.
- Nervous signs include incoordination, staggering and falling, transient neck rigidity and radial paralysis.
- The most seriously affected horse may show aimless wandering, mad behaviour, blindness, profuse sweating, muscle trembling, before collapsing and dying.
- Death rates may be as high as 30–40% in severe outbreaks.

World distribution

- Widely dispersed areas in eastern Asia and sporadic in northern Australia.

Occurrences in Australia

- In early 1995, JE was found in dogs, pigs, horses and people in the Torres Strait islands.
- Evidence of the virus was detected at the top of Cape York Peninsula in 1998 and it now appears established in the Torres Strait.

Epidemiology

- In temperate areas, infection usually occurs in late summer and autumn.
- Infection builds up in water birds and then spreads by mosquitoes to pigs in late spring and early summer, and finally to humans and horses.
- Cases in humans and horses tend to be sporadic or occur in small clusters, but serious outbreaks could occur in a large susceptible population exposed to mosquitoes.

- Infected horses are dead-end hosts as there is not enough virus in their blood to infect mosquitoes.

Control

- Reducing insect exposure, mosquito control, vaccination and movement control on infectious animals such as pigs.

3. HENDRA VIRUS

Safety Precautions

Human infection is presumed to occur through either inhalation of infected aerosols or contact with body fluids such as nasal discharges, saliva or blood from infected horses. Persons in close contact with such animals should wear protective face masks, goggles and gloves and should take care with personal disinfection.

May be indicated by fever, depression, breathing difficulty and copious frothy nasal discharge.
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Cause

- Hendra virus is a morbillivirus.

Natural hosts

- Only horses and humans are known to have been infected in the Queensland outbreaks.
- Subsequent research has found that some fruit bats carry the virus.

Clinical signs

- The disease is very acute with death often occurring within a couple of days
- Initially off-feed and depressed, then develops a fever.
- Shallow, rapid and laboured breathing, sweating, reddened membranes, general uneasiness and incoordination.
- Copious, frothy nasal discharge develops.
- Some horses exhibited head-pressing or had swelling under the skin.

In people, Hendra virus has caused a fatal, influenza-like illness.

World distribution

- No outbreaks have been identified in countries other than Australia.

Occurrences in Australia

- Hendra virus was first identified as the cause of an outbreak of acute fatal respiratory disease of horses in Brisbane in 1994 in which 13 horses, associated with two thoroughbred training stables, died. Two people at the stables also contracted the disease, and one of them died.
- It was subsequently confirmed that, in a separate incident earlier the same year, one person had died near Mackay after contact with two affected horses that died.
- A third recorded incident occurred in a single mare near Cairns in 1999.

Epidemiology

- Fruit bats are a reservoir of Hendra virus and may spread the virus in uterine fluids when delivering their young.

- Very close contact appears to be required for spread between horses and to people.

Control

- Quarantine and movement controls, hygiene, supportive treatment.

4. AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS

May be indicated by **fever, swelling, breathing difficulties, frothy nasal discharge, death.**

Cause

- Nine serotypes of AHS virus (1–9) belonging to the orbivirus group of insect transmitted viruses.

Natural hosts

- Horses and mules are highly susceptible and cases often die.
- Dogs show severe clinical disease.

Clinical signs in horses

- Signs of AHS reflect the effects of the virus on the lungs or on the, heart and circulatory system, or a combination of both.

Lung form

- Peracute, generally fatal in horses infected with highly virulent strains of virus.
- Sudden fever (to 41°C) with panting and coughing, which are at first dry but later the nasal discharge may be copious and frothy.
- Typically forelegs spread apart, head extended, ears drooping and nostrils dilated, sweating.
- Collapses and dies within 4–24 hours of the onset of signs, literally drowning in its own fluids.
- Similar signs seen in dogs.

Heart and circulatory form

- Less acute with fever of 39–41°C persisting for 3–4 days before swelling above and behind the eyes. The eyelids are warm and swelling may cause them to close and bulge out.
- Later pinpoint haemorrhages of the conjunctiva may occur.
- Swelling often extends to the lips, cheeks, tongue and throat area and to the neck, brisket, and lower chest and abdomen.
- Swelling gradually subsides over a week or so in horses that recover.

Horse sickness fever

- Temperature may be above 40°C for a day or two.
- Conjunctivae may be inflamed and there may be some breathing difficulty and an increased pulse rate before a rapid recovery.

World distribution

- Endemic in all parts of Africa south of the Sahara, but epidemics have spread further north to Egypt, the Middle East and Spain.

Occurrences in Australia

- Never.

Epidemiology

- Transmitted by midges that feed on horses between dusk and dawn, so not directly contagious. Mosquitoes and flies are of minor importance.
- More likely to occur in warm, moist, low-lying or coastal regions in summer or warm, wet seasons.
- Spread is by movement of infectious animals and by wind dispersal of infected insects.
- Recovered horses have a strong immunity to the serotype that infected them, but remain susceptible to other serotypes.
- Average duration of viraemia in horses and mules is about 4–8 days (and very rarely as long as 18 days). Midges could pick up virus during this period.
- Dogs generally become infected by eating virus-contaminated horse meat, and mortality rates up to 30% have been recorded in dog packs. There is also some evidence of insect transmission to dogs.

Control

- Quarantine and movement control, euthanasing infected animals, decontamination, insect control and reducing exposure to insects, vaccination.

5. ANTHRAX

Safety Precautions

Care should be taken when handling suspected anthrax cases as human infection can result from bacteria entering cuts or abrasions and, unusually, inhaling spores. Carcasses of suspected cases should not be opened as the highly resistant spores are formed when blood is exposed to air.

May be indicated by fever, colic, swelling and sudden death.

Cause

- *Bacillus anthracis*, a bacteria that survives indefinitely as a spore in the environment.

Natural hosts

- Anthrax can affect a wide range of animals, including people.

Clinical signs

- Horses are usually sick and ‘colicky’ for 1-3 days beforehand and may have extensive swelling of the lower parts of the body.
- Other animals can die very suddenly of the overwhelming septicaemia that occurs, often with few other signs.
- People usually develop an angry sore at the site of infection before getting very sick.

World distribution

- Endemic in many countries, particularly in tropical and sub-tropical areas.
- Commonly occurs in well defined areas where conditions favour the survival of the spores.

Occurrences in Australia

- Introduced and spread widely in NSW in the middle of the 19th century and first recognised in Victoria in 1886.
- Now largely sporadic, especially in central western plains of NSW.
- A major outbreak occurred near Tatura in 1997 and further cases occurred there in 1998.
- Most incidents occur in sheep and cattle and occasionally pigs. Cases in horses occur rarely and even more rarely in people.

Epidemiology

- Incidents in grazing animals occur from consuming spores in soil, feed or water or from chewing old bones.
- Scavengers may be infected directly from carcasses.
- In Australia, people are most likely to be infected through cuts and abrasions when handling the carcass of an affected animal.

- Most cases occur during summer and especially in seasons that are drier than average.

Control

- Removal from likely source of spores, quarantine and movement control, antibiotic treatment, careful handling and disposal of carcasses, decontamination of contaminated areas.
- DO NOT vaccinate horses as they react to the vaccine.

6. CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS

May be indicated by **vaginal discharge and infertility in mares.**

Cause

- A bacteria, *Taylorella equigenitalis*.

Natural hosts

- Horses.
- Originally detected in thoroughbreds but now rare.
- Cases still occur in warmblood and Arabian horses.

World distribution

- First diagnosed in 1977 in UK and spread initially in thoroughbreds to many countries.
- Recently occurred in Europe and Japan.

Occurrences in Australia

- First identified in Australia in 1977, but eradicated and free since 1980.

Epidemiology

- Venereal transmission by both mares and stallions.
- Mechanical spread may occur if good hygiene is poor when examining the genital tracts of mares or stallions.
- Both stallions and mares can remain chronic carriers.
- Occasionally, an infected mare conceives and may produce a congenitally infected foal that becomes a long-term carrier.

Clinical Signs

- Stallions show no clinical signs
- Mares typically develop an inflamed vagina and mucopurulent but odourless discharge from their genital tract 1–3 days after mating but may be later.
- Discharge may be copious or only an accumulation of grey or grey-white fluid in the vagina.
- Discharge usually disappears after 3–4 weeks.
- Mares may return to heat a few days after infection.
- Some infected mares show no signs.

Control

- Ceasing breeding activities on infected premises, quarantine and movement control, screening horses for infection, strict hygiene, treatment of cases and animals in contact.

7. SURRA

May be indicated by **chronic weakness, swellings and death.**

Cause

- A blood parasite, *Trypanosoma evansi* that is spread by biting flies.

Natural hosts

- Surra is most severe in horses, donkeys, mules, deer camels, llamas, dogs and cats, but also occurs in cattle and buffaloes.
- Also occurs occasionally as a chronic, mild or inapparent infection in sheep, goats, pigs and elephants.

Clinical signs

- Usually fatal in horses, donkeys and mules after a prolonged illness of weeks or months.
- After an incubation period of 5–60 days, intermittent fever, weakness and lethargy.
- Pinpoint haemorrhages of the membranes and often around the eyelids, nostrils and anus.
- Swellings of the legs, brisket and abdomen.
- Progressive loss of weight, anaemia or jaundice.

Surra produces similar signs in many species but is usually acute and fatal in dogs and cats. Dogs occasionally exhibit nervous signs suggestive of rabies.

World distribution

- Surra occurs in South America, and from northern Africa, through the Middle East and Asia to Indonesia.

Occurrences in Australia

- Found in imported camels at Port Hedland WA in 1907 but eradicated.

Epidemiology

- Transmitted mechanically by large biting flies, like March Flies.
- Spread to new areas by movement of infected animals and can cause heavy losses in susceptible animal populations.

Control

- Quarantine and movement controls, control of flies, strict hygiene on instruments and needles, treatment

8. RABIES

Safety precautions

Potentially rabid animals should be approached and handled with extreme caution. If the animal cannot be safely captured or confined, and therefore constitutes a risk to people or other animals, it should be destroyed immediately in such a way that the brain is not damaged..

If a person is bitten by a suspected rabid animal, or if a fresh wound or skin abrasion is contaminated with its saliva or tissue fluids, the wound should be washed immediately and flushed with soap and water, detergent, or water alone. A disinfectant should then be applied. Puncture wounds should be gently probed with antiseptic, taking care to minimise further trauma. The patient should then seek immediate medical attention with a view to obtaining a post-exposure treatment course of vaccine and antiserum.

<p>May be indicated in horses by a change in behaviour, colic, nervous signs, incoordination, paralysis and death.</p>

Cause

- Rabies is caused by a lyssavirus that is comparatively fragile and does not retain infectivity for long outside the body.

Natural hosts

- All warm-blooded animals, including humans, are susceptible but to varying degrees.

Clinical signs

- Incubation period usually 2-12 weeks.
- Change in behaviour and varying nervous signs.
- Horses are usually depressed and quiet, but can be irritable and excited.
- May suddenly appear lame, staggy, unable to eat, drool saliva or have colic.
- Later become incoordinated and paralysed.
- Invariably die, usually within 10 days of showing signs.

World distribution

- Rabies is present in most countries but does not occur in the UK, Japan, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands.

Occurrences in Australia

- There was one probable occurrence of rabies spreading in Tasmania in 1867.
- There have also been two recent cases of rabies in children (in 1987 and 1990) who were infected overseas and developed the clinical disease in Australia after long incubation periods.

Epidemiology

- Many species, including horses, are effectively 'dead-end' hosts.

- The main spreaders are animals like dogs and foxes and other small wild carnivores, most of which do not occur in Australia.
- Urban rabies is a transmission cycle sustained principally in domestic and feral dogs and accounts for 99% of all human rabies deaths, mainly in developing countries.
- Sylvatic or wildlife rabies is now the dominant transmission cycle in Europe and North America.
- Vampire bats have long been recognised as a major source of rabies in South America.

Control

- Euthanasia of cases, vaccination.

Appendix B

Contact lists

Chief Veterinary Officer: Dr Hugh Millar	03 9217 4246
24-hour Emergency Disease Watch Hotline:	1800 675 888

The following pages include:

- 1. Key Communicators**
- 2. NRE Veterinary Offices**
- 3. NRE CVO Unit horse industry emergency fax list.**
- 4. Horse Transport Companies**

1. Key Communicators

The following organisations and people have been nominated as the key horse industry contacts in the event of a horse disease emergency.

These people will be responsible for ensuring that information is passed on to affiliated organisations as requested at the time. Where appropriate a reserve contact person is also listed.

Updated October 2002

Organisation	Person responsible	Phone	Mobile	Fax	E-mail
Australian Equine Veterinary Assn /Australian Veterinary Assn (Victorian Div)	Barry Smyth Matthew Makin	9375 7776 9387 3706	0417 549 189 0427 322282	9375 7778 9388 0112 9388 0112	gsmyth@melbpc.org.au avavic@ava.com.au
Equestrian Federation of Australia – Victorian Branch	Carl Wood	9974 0511		9974 0577	carl@efavic.com.au
Harness Racing Victoria	Richard King	9375 4255	0417 140 334	9370 3624	hrvic@harness.org.au
Pony Clubs Association of Victoria	Stephen Coffey	9596 4778	0418 341 165	9596 1132	pcav@vicnet.net.au
Racing Victoria (Veterinary Services)	John McCaffrey	9258 4774	0412 191 828	9258 4785	j.mccaffrey@racingvictoria.net.au
University of Melbourne Equine Centre, Werribee	Andrew Clarke	9731 2314	040 755 1289	9731 2246	afclarke@unimelb.edu.au
Victorian Horse Council	Hilary Pope	9217 4248	0411 402 557	9569 0047	hilary.pope@nr.e.vic.gov.au and vichorsecouncil@ozemail.com.au

2. NRE Veterinary Offices

Updated Sept 2002

Location	Position(s)	Office Phone	Fax
Attwood	Chief Vet Officer/PVOs	9217 4246	9217 4322
Bendigo	Mgr Animal Health Ops	5430 4444	5430 4520
Benalla	PVO Exotic Disease	5761 1610	5762 1685
Bairnsdale	DVO	5152 0600	5152 6865
Ballarat	DVO	5333 6784	5333 6540
Benalla	SVO	5761 1611	5762 1685
Bendigo	SVO/DVO	5430 4444	5448 4982
Box Hill	DVO	9296 4400	9296 4720
Camperdown	DVO	5557 5888	5593 3367
Colac	DVO	5233 5533	5231 3823
Echuca	DVO	5482 1922	5482 5405
Ellinbank	DVO	5624 2222	5624 2200
Geelong	SVO/DVO	5226 4716	5226 4725
Hamilton	DVO	5573 0700	5573 0706
Horsham	DVO	5362 2111	5382 5622
Leongatha	DVO	5662 9900	5662 9999
Maffra	SVO/DVO	5139 0122	5139 0120
Seymour	DVO	5735 1240	5792 3230
Swan hill	DVO	5033 1290	5032 9682
Tatura	SVO/DVO	5833 5222	5833 5299
Wangaratta	DVO	5720 1766	5721 8499
Warrnambool	DVO	5561 9900	5561 9988
Wodonga	DVO	02 6055 6111	02 6055 6211



Natural Resources and Environment

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475-485 Mickleham Road, Attwood Vic 3049 tel (03) 9217 4237 fax (03) 9217 4322

Updated Oct 2002

	ORGANISATION	CONTACT NAME	FAX NO
<i>Autodial Number</i>			
017	Australian Equine Veterinary Association	Barry Smyth (Vic Rep)	9375 7778
018	Australian Equine Veterinary Association	Jan Eagleton	02 9413 3765
019	Australian Horse Industry Council	Paul O'Callaghan	9258 4785
020	AQIS (Victoria)	Denis Hayes	9338 0844
021	Australian Veterinary Association (Vic Div)	Matt Makin	9388 0112
022	Australian Trainers Association	John Alducci	9372 1699
100	Australian Racing Board	Andrew Harding	02 9697 9425
023	Centre for Equine Virology	Michael Studdert	8344 7374
024	Harness Racing Victoria	Richard King, CEO	9370 3624
025	Office of Racing	Acting Manager	9666 4355
026	NSW State Equine Veterinary Officer	Rod Hoare	02 4640 6300
028	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia	Richard Turnley	02 4868 1327
084	Thoroughbred Racehorse Owners' Association	Greg Buckingham	9372 1699
029	University of Melbourne Equine Centre	Andrew Clarke	9742 8246
030	Thoroughbred Breeders Victoria	Mike Becker	9376 4051
014	Victorian Horse Council	Hilary Pope	9569 0047
163	Victoria Mounted Police	Greg Williams	9682 1117
031	Racing Victoria (Director Veterinary Services)	John McCaffrey	9258 4785
032	Racing Victoria (Country Racing)	Mark O'Sullivan	9258 4695
033	Racing Victoria (Communications)	Peta Credlin	9376 5349

4. Horse Transport Companies

(Source: P Ellis and NRE, 2001)

Company	Town	Phones	Fax
A1 Horse Transport	Berwick VIC 3806	03 9702 1084	
All Breeds Horse Transport P/L	Wolffdene QLD, 4207	07 5546 4666	
Australia Wide Horse Transport	Lockrose QLD	015 125 879	
Ballarat Horse Transport	Delacombe VIC, 3356	03 53360071	
Barry Carmody Horse Transport	Winchelsea VIC, 3241	03 5267 2670 018 370 282	
Barry Flynn Livestock Transport	Chifley ACT, 2606	02 6281 5936	02 6281 5936
Bass Strait Horse Transport	Quoiba TAS, 7310	018 140 643	
BEC Horse Transport	WA	08 9525 1048	08 9525 1338
Berwick Livestock Transport	Ringaroma TAS, 7263	03 6353 2316 018 131 594	03 6353 2303
Bloom Horse Transport	Tugun QLD, 4224	07 5534 2906	
Bremervale Horse Transport	Marburg QLD, 4346	07 5464 4344	07 5464 4538
Brisbane Livestock Transport	Clayfield QLD, 4011	07 3268 2262	07 3268 1154
Bruce Harding	VIC	03 5369 4369 0408 839 608	
Byford Equine Services	Byford WA, 6201	08 9525 1048 0417 170 967	
Cabot's Horse Transport	Wagga Wagga NSW, 2650	02 6922 7268 018 578 024	02 6922 7821
Cardinia Float Service Pty Ltd	Pakenham VIC, 3810	03 9707 5191 0418 340 160	03 9707 5191
Carneggan Park Horse Transport	Bayles VIC, 3981	03 5997 7308	
Cessnock Horse Transport	Quorrobolong NSW, 2325	02 4998 6226 0407 951 975	02 4998 6278
Cleland Horse Transport		08 8556 9006 0418 826 007	
Combined Horse Transport	Wungong WA, 6112	08 9497 7177 1800 998 157	08 9497 7179
Coromandel Horse Transport	Heathmont VIC, 3135	03 9879 3606	
Corston Bros Transport Pty Ltd	Virginia SA, 5120	08 8380 9164	
Dalzell's Transport	Boyne Island QLD, 4680	07 4973 8275 0419 743 446	
Dan Sutherland Horse Transport	Windsor NSW, 2756	02 4977 5409 018 213 337	02 4977 5962
Dandenong Valley Horse Transport	Keysborough VIC, 3173	03 9798 6868 0412 036 045	
Darling Downs Horse Transport	Cambooya QLD, 4358	07 4696 1826 0408 289 272	07 4696 1245
Darwin Horse Transport	Moorooduc VIC, 3933	03 5978 8438 0418 148 879	03 5978 8438

HORSE ALERT VICTORIA

Company	Town	Phones	Fax
Diamond Horse Transport	Ipswich QLD, 4305	07 3201 1746	
Diamond Valley Horse Transport	Doreen VIC, 3754	03 9717 4440	
East Coast Horse Transport	Jimboomba QLD, 4280	07 5547 8866 0412 233 083	
Eclipse Equine Chauffeurs	Coldstream VIC	03 9739 0170 0427 102 566	
Equine Courier Service	Ashmore QLD, 4214	0408 304 019	
F R Mathews	Mowbray TAS, 7248	03 6326 6613 018 131 014	
First Class Transport	Penfield SA, 5121	08 8284 7773	
G & C Transport	Kellyville NSW, 2155	02 9627 4562 02 9627 5170	
Garrett & Griffith Racehorse	VIC	03 9676 2211	03 9676 2188
Goulburn Valley Horse Transport	VIC	03 5825 4655 0419 127 777	03 5831 7455
Greg Collins Horse Transport	Jimboomba QLD, 4280	07 6642 6714 015 785 975	
Hann's Horse Transport	Bolivar SA, 5110	08 8280 8111 0412 834 165	08 8283 0266
Higgins Thoroughbred Transport	Toowoomba QLD, 4350	07 4634 1350 0407 879 728 0407 717 526	07 4634 7169
Horse N Around	Buninyong VIC	03 5341 3444	
Idano Horse Transport	DEERGUN QLD, 4818	07 4778 6241 0417 627 844 0417 737 449	07 4778 7153
Interstate Horse Transport Service	VIC, 3199	1800 035 691	
Iris Pastoral Holdings Horse	Ransome QLD, 4154	07 3245 5009 0412 873 752	07 3245 5009
J G Goldner Bloodstock Transport	Somerton Park SA, 5044	08 8295 3486 0411 865 873	08 8276 1970
Jones Horse Transport	Moruya NSW, 2537	02 4474 3526	
Keirs Canberra Bloodstock Transport	Dickson ACT, 2602	02 6247 8707	
Kings Horse Transport	Murray Bridge SA, 5253	08 8531 3008 0409 300 700	
Knightsdale Horse Transport	Riverstone NSW, 2765	02 9627 1434	
Lark Hill Horse Transport	Byford WA, 6122	08 9525 1698	
Lasstoll Horse Transport	Gidgegannup WA, 6083	08 9574 6358	
Live Stock Transport (Sydney) Pty	Kensington NSW, 1465	02 9663 0539 02 9663 0530	02 9662 7442
McIroys Horse Transport	Forestville NSW, 2807	02 9451 6885 0418 160 268	

HORSE ALERT VICTORIA

Company	Town	Phones	Fax
Melbourne Horse Transport	Doreen VIC, 3099	03 9717 4440 0408 591 036	
Mills Bros	Queanbeyan ACT, 2620	02 6297 2828 018 487 828	
Mornington & Cranbourne Float Hire	Moorooduc VIC, 3933	03 5978 8205 0438 152 851 0438 152 853	
Nantucket Enterprises	NSW	02 9653 2092 0418 412 859	
National Horse Transport	Nagambie VIC, 3608	03 5794 2144 0417 852 204 1800 644 220	03 5794 2996
Newcastle Thoroughbred Horse	Swansea Heads NSW, 2281	02 4972 1369	02 4972 1510
North Coast Horse Transport	Bundall QLD, 4217	0417 856 007	
Notable Horse Transport	Hazelmere WA, 6055	08 9454 3313 1800 063 313	08 9454 4773
Officer Racehorse Transport	Officer VIC, 3809	03 5943 2236	
Overland Horse Transport	Jimboomba QLD, 4280	0418 858 338 07 5547 7788	07 5547 8478
Page Horse Transport Pty Ltd	Tullamarine VIC	03 9338 1485	
Parsons Horse Transport Services	Kangaroo Flat VIC, 3555	0407 522 382 1800 015 258 03 5447 9569	03 5447 2149
Patrick Horse Transport	Mylor SA, 5153	08 08 8388? 0419 817 334 0411 115 437	
Peninsula Racehorse Transport	Dromana VIC, 3936	03 5981 8133 0413 211 190	03 5981 8233
Peter Brazil	Craigieburn VIC, 3064	03 5995 3908 0418 549 135	
Peter Johnston Horse Transport Pty	Kensington NSW, 2033	02 9662 0088 0418 118 420 02 9904 9472 ?	
Premier Bloodstock Transport	Benalla VIC, 3672	008 032 087	
Prestige Horse Transport	Diamond Creek VIC, 3089	03 8300 7861 1300 131 930	
Prews Horse Transport	QLD	07 4697 9560 0418 870 811	
Queensland Horse Transport	QLD	018 755 189 07 5535 4814	
R & R Horse Transport	Newcomb VIC, 3129	03 5248 6958	
Ramsay's Horse Transport	Ascot WA, 6104	08 9277 5779	

HORSE ALERT VICTORIA

Company	Town	Phones	Fax
Ray Hollier Horse Transport		07 5535 4814 0428 455 557	
Riverina Horse Transport	Theresa Park NSW, 2560	02 4651 2501 0412 440 384	
Rudd's Horse Transport	QLD	07 5496 2555 0408 002 783	
Russell Horse Transport	VIC	03 5444 1300 0412 001 045	
Southern Cross Horse Transport	Bacchus Marsh VIC, 3340	0419 503 363 0500 544 200	03 5369 4387
Statewide Horse Transport	QLD	0412 740 213	
Steve's Floating	Quakers Hill NSW, 2170	02 9626 3201	
Suncoast Bloodstock Transport	Caloundra QLD, 4551	07 5494 5347	07 5494 5304
T & L Horse Transport	QLD	07 4698 2020 0438 507 797	
Tamworth Horse Transport	Attunga NSW, 2345	02 6769 5858 0428 667 406	02 6769 5910
Tasmanian Horse Transport Pty Ltd	Sheffield TAS, 7306	03 6491 1316 0428 141 419	03 6491 2191
Terry Smith Horse Transport	Scone NSW, 2337	02 6545 3699 017 156 721	02 6545 1162
Tony's Horse Taxi	Yellingbo VIC	0418 543 348	
Toowoomba Livestock Carriers	Highfields QLD, 4352	07 4630 8142 0412 716 720	
Topline Horse Transport Pty Ltd	Ascot Vale VIC, 3032	03 9743 8143 0412 354 536 1800 032 465	03 9743 0880
Tropical Horse Transport	Mundingburra QLD, 4812	07 4775 1140 0419 709 167	
Warwick Farm Transport Pty Ltd	Warwick Farm NSW, 2170	02 9821 4619	02 9600 8840
Yarra Valley Horse Float Service	Yarra Glen VIC, 3775	03 9730 1524	

NOTE: The accuracy of details in this list will need to be checked at regular intervals.

Appendix C

Outline for a Contingency Plan

An outbreak of a serious disease, such as equine influenza, at a race track or horse event requires rapid action. A contingency plan to cope with such an outbreak could be structured as follows:

Cover page	Title Statement of purpose of the plan Authority for the plan
Table of contents	Lists the contents of the document
Event log	Structured means of recording actions taken for subsequent review and improvement of procedures.
Approach	Identifies broadly the approach to be taken and roles and responsibilities of teams and individuals
Actions	Lists actions that might be necessary with associated responsibilities, timings and resources. Covers such items as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit controls • Disinfection • Isolation • Treatment • Care of animals • Waste disposal • Records • Public announcements • Media liaison • Advice to others organisations
Disease fact sheets	Provides indications of disease and immediate treatment
Hygiene	Identifies special measures to control spread of infection
Contact list	Comprehensive list with after-hours numbers and identifies responsibilities for keeping up to date
Inventory	Supplies on site Additional resources required and sources
Testing and maintenance of plan	Testing arrangements Review timetable

Appendix D

Codes of Practice for Horse Welfare in Victoria

by

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See <http://www.nre.vic.gov.au>

(Follow the prompts to *Farming and Agriculture* → *Animal Health and Welfare*
→ *Animal Welfare* → *Legislation and Codes of Practice*)

Horses have been domesticated and selectively bred by man for about 5000 years. They are socially organised and have been utilised by man for food, transport and work, but are used more commonly now as a companion animal for pleasure and competitive sports.

In the now largely urban and mechanised society of Australia, few people possess the art of horsemanship or the knowledge of husbandry necessary to properly select, sustain and educate horses.

Horses are kept under a variety of conditions, from extensive grazing in unfenced wilderness to intensive housing in individual stalls.

It is recognised that there are certain basic needs of horses, irrespective of the husbandry system, including:

- readily accessible food and water to maintain health and vigour
- freedom of movement to stand, stretch and lie down
- regular exercise
- social contact with other horses or people
- accommodation that neither harms nor causes undue strain, and provides adequate protection
- protection from disease, and regular inspections to assess the need for attention to feet, teeth and parasite control
- rapid identification and treatment of vice, injury and disease

Any person responsible for the welfare of horses should acquire maximum possible expertise, because the well-being and usefulness of horses depend on the skill and attitude of the individuals who manage them. Assistance or advice on management of horses can be obtained from veterinarians or other qualified advisers.

Codes of Practice

In addition to seeking advice from professional advisers, a person in charge of horses should be aware of the various Codes of Practice, which set out the minimum husbandry standards for various animal species, or for animals subject to procedures where their welfare may be at risk.

A code of practice is developed following:

- needs analysis
- extensive consultation (including industry, government and animal welfare organisations)
- draft preparation and distribution for comment
- analysis of public comment

Codes are given status under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and, while a breach of a Code is not considered an offence in itself, animal husbandry conducted outside a Code of Practice could lead to animal suffering and a possible offence.

It is a defence against a charge of cruelty if an owner can demonstrate that the conduct was within the scope of a code of practice. The exception is the Victorian Code Of Practice For The Care And Use Of Animals For Scientific Purposes which is made under part 3 of the Act and for which a breach is grounds for prosecution without the need to prove cruelty.

In addition, Codes of Practice foster improved animal welfare through self-regulation, by promoting greater awareness of the features and benefits of good welfare practice and by acting as educational and discussion tools.

Victorian Codes of Practice relating to horses

Current Victorian Codes of Practice relating to horses include:

- Code of accepted farming practice for the welfare of horses
- Code of Practice for the land transport of horses (Victoria)
- Code of practice for the tethering of animals
- Code of practice for the public display and exhibition of animals
- Code of practice for the welfare of film animals
- Code of practice for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes
- Code of practice for the welfare of horses competing at bush race meetings

In addition, new Victorian Codes relating to horses are presently being developed, including:

- Code of Practice for horse hire and riding establishments

- Code of Practice for animals at saleyards
- Code of Practice for rodeos

Model Codes of Practice

At the Federal level of Government, a number of Australian model Codes of Practice have been produced which in the absence of a Victorian state code would act as guidelines.

The codes are developed by a National Animal Welfare Committee which receives input from state and federal departments with responsibility for agriculture and/or animal welfare, as well as industry and animal welfare groups.

Australian model codes are used as models for states to develop their own.

Current model codes relating to horses include:

- Air transport of livestock
- Animals at saleyards
- Land transport of horses
- Feral livestock animals
- Sea transport of livestock
- Care and use of animals for scientific purposes

Most of the model codes are available for a small fee from CSIRO publications (1800 645 051); some are on the web site of the Agriculture and Resource Management Council of Australia and New Zealand.

Further information

In the event of concerns regarding welfare of horses, to obtain copies of Codes of Practice, or to clarify the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, you may contact:

Bureau of Animal Welfare
Department of Natural Resources and Environment
475 Mickleham Road
Attwood Vic 3049
Telephone: 03 9217 4147
Fax: 03 9217 4331

Appendix E

Victorian Horse Health Industry Advisory Committee (HHIAC)

Members

The membership of HHIAC comprises one representative of each of the following organisations:

- Victorian Horse Council
- Racing Victoria
- Harness Racing Victoria
- Australian Equine Veterinary Association
- University of Melbourne Equine Centre
- Victoria Mounted Police

and from Natural Resources and Environment,

- Chief Veterinary Officer (Convenor)
- Principal Veterinary Officer (Policy Development)

The Committee is supported by an Executive Officer.

HHIAC may co-opt additional (temporary) members in the event of a horse disease emergency, or to assist with respect to any particular issue under consideration by the Committee.

Terms of Reference

1. To be a forum for discussion of priority equine health issues for the industry and government and to provide advice to NRE on horse health and welfare programs.
2. To provide joint industry and government coordination of a response to a horse disease emergency (as outlined in *Horse Alert Victoria* Chapter 5).
3. To be the primary link for timely and accurate communication between government and industry sectors in the event of a horse disease emergency (as outlined in *Horse Alert Victoria* Chapter 8).

Additional Terms of Reference are being considered.

Appendix F

Role descriptions for industry liaison officers at disease control centres

(Source: AUSVETPLAN Control Centres Module Part 2, 1996, pages 55 and 116-117.
<http://www.aahc.com.au/ausvetplan/index.htm>)

LRD 506: Industry Liaison Representatives

at Local Disease Control Centres

SKILLS

- Recognition (by industry) as *a representative of their local industry*.
- Extensive knowledge of the industry involved in the outbreak, especially the local industry.
- Good communication and negotiation skills.

LINE RELATIONSHIPS

- Responsible to their industry, providing advice to the LDCC Controller through the Technical Manager.
- Must liaise closely with the LDCC Risk Enterprise Officer(s) and local industry.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide advice on the nature of the local industry to assist with disease risk assessment.
- Assist with developing and implementing plans for disease eradication/control.
- Provide advice on the economic and other consequences of proposed actions.
- Act as a focus for consultation and advice to the local industry.

DUTIES

- Prepare comprehensive advice on the local industry which is affected. This should include advice on its size, distribution, sources of supply, marketing practices, industry organisations and all other factors which may affect the eradication/control program (ie assist with the risk assessment).
- Provide advice on the practicality and economic and other consequences of actions proposed for eradication/control purposes.
- Provide advice on plans for handling potentially contaminated material. Identify the steps required to pick up, handle, process and distribute this material and limit the spread of any infection.
- Consult with other local industry contacts about the campaign and act as a focus for contact with the local industry.

SRD 104: Industry Liaison Coordinator

at State Disease Control Headquarters

SKILLS

- A balanced knowledge of the scientific, political, legal and management aspects of the campaign.
- Highly developed communication skills, including the capacity to rapidly produce clear, accurate statements targeted at specific audiences.
- Ability to work under pressure for long periods.
- A working knowledge of the emergency-management arrangements in AUSVETPLAN.
- Extensive knowledge of the Statewide structure and operations of the relevant livestock industry, and familiarity with many of their key representatives. Recognised by industry as a credible contact.

LINE RELATIONSHIPS

- Liaises with representatives of affected industries.
- Liaises with the SDCHQ Public Relations Manager and other SDCHQ section heads.
- Supervises the activities of all SDCHQ and LDCC industry liaison officers.
- Reports to the SDCHQ Technical Manager.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Act as a focus for consultation with and advice to affected industries.
- Establish and maintain liaison with all livestock industries and risk enterprises involved in or affected by the outbreak.
- Ensure that affected industries are kept informed about policies, operations and the progress of the campaign, and are consulted about the commercial and other implications of operations.
- Ensure that the department is kept informed of industry factors which could affect the progress of the campaign.
- Provide advice on the nature of industries to assist with risk assessment and with developing and implementing plans for disease control and eradication.
- Provide advice on actions required to remove the risk of disease transmission via each risk enterprise.

DUTIES

- Provide advice on the practicality and economic and other consequences of proposed disease control actions.
- Provide advice on plans for handling potentially contaminated products, including steps to pick up, transport, process and distribute this material and limit the spread of any infection.
- In conjunction with the Public Relations Unit, prepare and disseminate information about the disease and campaign to industry groups and members.
- Invite/appoint Industry Liaison Officers to most effectively cater for the necessary industry liaison (see LDCC role description; LRD 506).

- Compile comprehensive information and advice on the affected industries, including size, distribution, sources of supply, marketing practices, industry organisations and all other factors which may affect the eradication/control program (ie assist with the risk assessment).
- Develop and maintain industry contact lists (name, position, address, phone, facsimile).
- Consult with industry contacts about the policies, strategies and progress of the campaign. Evaluate and summarise this feedback.
- Thoroughly brief new/relief staff before they commence duty.
- Familiarise relieving coordinator with the current situation before going off duty.