

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR EQUINE COMPETITORS**

Information issued by the Animal Health Trust 29 Jul 19 regarding Equine Influenza (EI) has confirmed that the total number of laboratory confirmed outbreaks of EI has now reached 213 (at 25 July 2019). Whilst cases in Lincolnshire have not seen a recent rise, Revesby Country Fair is conscious that we should not be complacent.

Due to this new national outbreak, Revesby Country Fair has decided to take a responsible stance and amend the advertised vaccination requirements for equines attending the event. We appreciate the lateness of this decision and have been as relaxed as possible to minimize the effect to our competitors.

**No** Horse may compete unless it has a current vaccination against equine influenza which complies with the following conditions:

- Two injections for primary vaccination, not less than 21 days and not more than 92 days apart, are required before being eligible to compete;
- A first booster injection must be given within seven months after the second injection of primary vaccination;
- Subsequent booster injections must be given at intervals of not more than one year, commencing after the first booster injection.

Passports will be checked, and **any equines found to not be appropriately vaccinated will be asked to leave the show ground** and will not be allowed to compete. We hope that this decision has not been taken lightly and we hope everyone will understand our reasons and if unable to attend we look forward to welcoming back in 2020.

Below is some advice issued by the Animal Health Trust that you may find useful.



### **Animal Health Trust** *helpful guide to attending equine events*

The following advice is designed to provide some help to horse owners and competitors to reduce the risk, both to your horse and other horses, acquiring and spreading equine flu through attending any equine event.



**1**  
Ensure your horse has been vaccinated within 6 months and allow 1 week between vaccination and going to the show



**2**  
If you have any concerns about your horse's health (fever, cough, lethargy etc.) do not go to the competition



**3**  
Do not let your horse graze at the competition, an infectious horse may have grazed in that field too!



**4**  
Do not share water or feed buckets or use communal water troughs



**5**  
Do not share tack, such as bits and bridles



**6**  
Don't let your horse make contact with other horses



**7**  
Ensure if you're stabling away, that the stable has been cleaned and disinfected - including feed mangers and water drinkers before you use it



**8**  
Isolate your horse when returning to your home premises. Carefully monitor incl. taking its rectal temperature twice daily. Any concerns call your vet

**Finally, if you are concerned about your horse's health, please consult your vet for advice.**

*To find out more about the work of the Animal Health Trust, go to [www.aht.org.uk](http://www.aht.org.uk). Charity number 209642*

How far can equine influenza spread?

It spreads rapidly with the virus being released into the atmosphere as droplets by infected animals coughing. The virus can spread over longer distances than some other diseases, so any infected animal needs to be isolated by 100m to distance to reduce the risk of airborne spread.

How does equine flu affect horses?

Equine influenza is caused by several strains of the influenza A virus endemic to horses. ... The equine-1 virus affects heart muscle, while the equine-2 virus is much more severe and systemic. The virus is spread by infected, coughing horses in addition to contaminated buckets, brushes, tack and other stable equipment.

What is the incubation period for equine flu?

Other horses in the vicinity then inhale the virus and then become infected. The incubation period for equine 'flu' is typically only 48 hours and horses can remain infectious for approximately a week after the onset of clinical signs.

Can vaccinated horses still get flu?

Although vaccines increase the protection against infection, they cannot completely prevent it. Vaccinated horses may still get mild signs of flu, as viruses can mutate and become different from the vaccine strains.

Does this mean flu is resistant to the vaccines?

No, the virus is not resistant to the vaccines. Vaccines boost immunity against infection but cannot always prevent it if there is a strong challenge from the virus (usually from unvaccinated horses). Vaccines do not become resistant to viruses in the same way as bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics.

Is there any point in vaccinating?

Yes, vaccinating is essential. Only a small number of vaccinated horses have shown mild signs of infection whereas unvaccinated horses can become very sick. The vaccines are showing to be effective in reducing the severity of clinical signs, reducing the length of time that equines are sick and importantly, reducing the spread of infection.

What if other people are not vaccinating? Should I still have my horses vaccinated?

Yes, we would strongly advise vaccinating your horse regardless of what other people do. The more people who vaccinate their horses, then the better protected everyone will be. If others on your yard are unvaccinated then the risk of disease is higher so it is even more important you vaccinate to give your horse the best possible protection and encourage others to follow your example.

Will my horse be protected as soon as they have been vaccinated?

If you are boosting an up to date vaccination then your horse may already have reasonable protection but it will take 7-10 days for them to benefit from a booster.

How often should I be vaccinating?

Protection reduces as the time between vaccination and infection increase so more frequent vaccination is better and this is the why the FEI recommend every six months and the BHA insist on every six months for racehorses. Under normal circumstances 12 months is sufficient but when the risk is greater (as it is currently) then you can increase the level of protection by vaccinating more frequently. If you are at all concerned then do talk to your vet as they will be best placed to advise on how frequently you should be vaccinating based on the local risk.