



Emergency Response Plan

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Prepared by

Queensland Horse Council Inc.

2009



Qld Horse Council Inc.

Emergency Response Plan

This plan is a live document. Accordingly it will be reviewed regularly and amended as required to update any changes in treatments, preventions or the diseases themselves. Suggestions and recommendations for amendments should be forwarded to:

Email: president@qldhorsecouncil.com

Postal address:

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Gatton QLD 4343**

DISEASE WATCH HOTLINE 1800 675 888

The Disease Watch Hotline is a toll-free telephone number that connects callers to the relevant state or territory officer to report concerns about any potential emergency disease situation. Anyone suspecting an emergency disease outbreak should use this number to get immediate advice and assistance

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1 OBJECTIVE

The Queensland Horse Council Inc (QHC) has prepared the following Emergency Response Plan (ERP) to ensure that the Pleasure & Performance Horse Industry (HI) is well prepared for and able to recognise and respond effectively to future emergency disease outbreaks. The ERP will be enacted in future emergency disease situations and is supported by plans developed by both state and federal government agencies.

The Primary Industries and Fisheries sector of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) is the lead combat agency for emergency animal diseases that occur in Queensland. The QHC ERP has been developed to work within Primary Industries and Fisheries (QPIF) guidelines whilst supporting the HI.

The plan ensures that the lessons learned from the Equine Influenza (EI) crisis of 2007 are heeded and implemented. A process of continuous improvement through checks, reviews, practical application and testing, will ensure that Queensland's HI remains prepared for any future Emergency Animal Diseases (EAD).

Our success in emergency response management will depend on the early recognition of threats to the HI and our readiness to convert that information into rapid and effective action.

Individuals within the HI can reduce the potential effects of an emergency disease by keeping alert, knowing the clinical signs to look out for and knowing what to do if an emergency disease is suspected.

The Emergency Response Plan is similar to the AUSVETPLAN, however it focuses on procedures to achieve optimum outcomes for the performance and pleasure horse sector.



2 ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

2.1 QLD HORSE COUNCIL INC ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

ERP	Emergency Response Plan
HOSS	Horse Owners Signal System - QHC Database for Horse Owners
ILO	QHC Industry Liaison Officer
ILOC	QHC Industry Liaison Officer Coordinator
MC	The Management Committee of Queensland Horse Council Inc as defined in section 4.2.2 of the QHC Inc Constitution.
MLO	QHC Media Liaison Officer
MS	QHC Media Spokesperson
QHC	Queensland Horse Council Incorporated
QG	QHC Quarantine Groom
RM	QHC Response Manager
RT	QHC Response Team which consists of the QHC-RM, QHC-MC, QHC-ILOC, QHC-MLO, QHC-MS and QHC-VO.
VO	QHC Veterinary Officer

2.2 INDUSTRY

AHIC	Australian Horse Industry Council Inc.
AHIC HECD	AHIC Horse Emergency Contact Database
AUSVETPLAN	Australian Veterinary Emergency Plan
Biosecurity QLD	A business group of the Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation-Primary Industries and Fisheries.
CVO	Chief Veterinary Officer, the Veterinary Officer who has responsibility for animal disease control in Queensland
DDMG	District Disaster Management Group



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DEEDI	Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation
Disease Category	Grouping of diseases with similar characteristics and response techniques as outlined in QHC Disease Schedule (an accompanying document)
QPIF	Primary Industries and Fisheries (previously Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries)
EAD	Emergency Animal Disease
EDRP	Emergency Disease Response Plan
EMQ	Emergency Management Queensland
HI	Pleasure and Performance Horse Industry – non racing horse industry
Movement Controls	Legal restrictions placed on the movement of specified animals, people, products, materials, vehicles etc.
QPS	Queensland Police Service
QT	Queensland Transport
SDMG	State Disaster Management Group
Standstill Zone	An area defined by the Minister wherein animals of a defined species or class, animal products, pathogens, carcasses etc, persons, vehicles, vessels etc, may not be moved out of that area.
SDCG	State Disaster Coordination Group – comprises nominated representatives and liaison officers from all Government and non-government agencies. They assist in the coordination of State level support to disaster affected communities.
SZMG	Standstill Zone Management Group - coordinates the implementation of a Standstill Zone once the decision to activate a Standstill Zone has been taken by the CVO.



3 QHC DISEASE SCHEDULES

It has been identified that some emergency diseases have features in common and many of the plans to eradicate/control are similar. There are five specific disease schedules that have been identified to cover the responses. They are available in a separate document – **Appendix 1 - QHC Disease Schedules.**

Schedule A	Low Risk Highly Contagious Viral Diseases
Schedule B	Serious Risk Low Contagion Viral Diseases
Schedule C	Low Risk Bacterial, Fungal or Protozoan Diseases
Schedule D	Serious Risk Bacterial, Fungal or Protozoan Diseases
Schedule E	Vector Borne Diseases

4 QHC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT REGIONS

- South East Queensland
- South Central Queensland
- Central Queensland
- North Queensland
- Far North Queensland
- North West Queensland
- Central West Queensland
- South West Queensland

See map in Appendix 2

5 AUSVETPLAN

AUSVETPLAN is the resource used by the Government to provide coordination of the scientific, logistic and managerial resources necessary to prepare for, and respond to, an EAD. For more detailed information see **Appendix 3.**



6 EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE (EAD)

Emergency animal diseases have the potential to cause serious disruption to Australia's livestock industry, the national economy and to adversely affect human health. For more detailed information see **Appendix 3**.

7 MANAGEMENT OF EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE

When an emergency disease in horses has been declared the appropriate governmental response will be initiated. For more detailed information see **Appendix 3**.

8 DISEASE CONTROL AND COORDINATION CENTRES

LOCAL DISEASE CONTROL CENTRE, STATE DISEASE CONTROLS HEADQUARTERS AND NATIONAL COORDINATION CENTRE. For more detailed information see **Appendix 3**.

9 NATIONAL COORDINATION CENTRE

Department of Agriculture Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF) fulfils its emergency roles under the DAFF Emergency Management Plan, which focuses on the coordination of the department's areas to ensure an effective input to the national response. For more detailed information see **Appendix 3**.

10 QHC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The QHC Management Committee will appoint suitable persons to fulfil designated Emergency Response roles. The QHC Management Committee will fill the core roles. Each role will be an honorary position, however in the event of an EAD outbreak some individuals **may** be seconded to QPIF positions and therefore receive remuneration from DEEDI.

- 10.1** Each officer must have direct and private email access (ie not through an employer), be easily contactable via telephone (preferably by mobile) and be able to commit to any EAD response for the necessary period of time.
- 10.2** A current Emergency Response Contact List will be maintained by the QHC Secretary detailing all relevant names and phone numbers.



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- 10.3** Some roles will need to be filled by individuals in South-east Queensland to allow regular, potentially daily, meetings with relevant Government departments and emergency response groups. Such roles will include, but are not limited to, the RM and MLO.
- 10.4** Each role will have a back-up person should the incumbent be unavailable.
- 10.5** Each year after the QHC Annual General Meeting the Secretary will advise the relevant Government Departments and Agencies in writing of the incumbent officers are and their relevant contact details. Any mid-term amendments will also be advised also be advised.

11 EMERGENCY RESPONSE ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

11.1 RM: The QHC Response Manager is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the QHC's response to any EAD. It is preferable that this role is filled by the current President of the QHC as relationships with the relevant key stakeholders and officials will already have been established. If the President's circumstances make the fulfilment of this role impossible, another person may be appointed.

11.1.1 Backup: Vice President

11.1.2 Responsibilities include:

- Effective leadership of the Response Team.
- Ensure effective two-way communication is established and continued between the QHC and the relevant Government Agencies.
- Ensure effective two-way communication is established and continued to the RT.
- Manage the implications of the EAD response to the QHC and its finances.
- Determine possible alternative control strategies
- Evaluate, analyse and present information to the RT to ensure they are adequately updated.
- Ensure adequate support is provided to the RT.



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11.2 MLO: The QHC Media Liaison Officer is responsible for liaising and communicating with Government, Queensland horse owners, equine related businesses and the AHIC.

11.2.1 Backup: to be appointed.

11.2.2 Responsibilities include:

- Liaise with the RM
- Participate in RT meetings
- Liaise with the QPIF Strategic Communication and Marketing (SC&M) unit.
- Provide accurate and timely communication material to the ILOs.
- Coordinate communication to QHC members and general industry through QHC's Horse Owners Signal System (HOSS).
- Other communications will include but not be limited to postings on the QHC website, issuing QHC's newsletter eQuiNEWS, preparing QHC press releases, posting to the AHIC HECD and posting on Web Forums.

11.3 ILO: The QHC Industry Liaison Officers are responsible for the two way communication between the RT, horse owners and equine related businesses as well as assisting horse industry members where ever possible.

11.3.1 Backup: seconded from the relevant regions and trained as required.

11.3.2 Responsibilities include:

- Advise on the nature of the local industry to aid disease risk assessment.
- Help develop and implement plans for disease eradication/control.
- Advise on the consequences to Industry of proposed response actions.
- Act as a focus for consultation and advice to the local industry.
- Advise on resources available from industry.

11.4 ILOC: The QHC Industry Liaison Officer Coordinator – to be appointed from the Industry Liaison Officers in the affected region.

11.4.1 Responsibilities include:

- Communication between ILOs and the RT.

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- Coordination of ILOs.

11.4.2 Perform a fundamental role in the recovery period which would encompass:

- ensuring local businesses are used in the recovery
- Ensuring affected businesses are aware of opportunities to assist in the response/recovery:
- where necessary, provide immediate individual assistance to those affected.
- consult at the community and municipal level to encourage a cooperative approach to local relief and recovery.
- encourage the formation of local community recovery committees to identify needs and resource requirements.
- help local government provide information about counselling, financial and other services that may be available.

11.5 MS: The QHC Media Spokesperson role may be filled by the MLO, the ILOC or could be seconded specifically for the purpose of media interviews.

11.6 VO: The QHC Veterinary Officer

11.6.1 Backup: to be appointed

11.6.2 Responsibilities include keeping Disease Schedules up-to-date and reporting to the RT any changes to disease characteristics and treatment that could have an impact on EAD responses.

11.7 QG: QHC Quarantine Grooms are individuals specifically trained in the care and handling of equines. QGs will be able to be called into situations where an event or competition is under quarantine lockdown or stock standstill and likely to be for an extended period. After a hand over, QGs will allow competitors to return home and resume day-to-day life while their animals are being well cared for. For response refer to the **Appendix 1**.



12 COMMUNICATION

12.1 REGIONS – eight regions have been identified (refer **Section 4** and **Appendix 2**) - Definite boundaries have been identified using:

- council regions.
- horse populations.
- climatic conditions.

12.2 The map and the listing of councils applicable to each region are in **Appendix 2**.

12.3 Recruit ILOs for all eight regions to ensure the whole of Queensland has access to all resources available through the Emergency Response Plan.

12.4 Utilise HOSS to electronically communicate to the horse industry.

13 RISK MITIGATION

13.1 Promote sound biosecurity and disease prevention practices - on farm, at competition and disease quarantine.

13.2 Maintain and circulate Biosecurity schedules throughout the horse owning public and the general public.

13.3 Maintain and circulate Disease Schedules and Disease Fact Sheets.

13.4 Encourage the adoption of Risk Mitigation Plans for Equestrian Centres, Showground Managers and Venues that host Equestrian Events.

14 TRAINING

14.1 QGs – Develop, implement and maintain training programs.

14.2 ILOs – Develop, implement and maintain training programs.

14.3 MLO - Identify and train key personnel in media and communication skills.



- 14.4** Maximise the use of the QHC Portal as a training and communication tool.
- 14.5** Implement and promote the widest possible use of HOSS to ensure greatest possible contact with grass roots industry.

15 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

15.1 The RM will immediately call a meeting of the RT to identify the Disease Category and implement the relevant plan according to the Disease Schedule. Conferencing will be conducted by email, telephone or face-to-face meetings. All meetings must be documented and records kept.

15.2 The QHC will be able to establish effective communication with the HI through its Portal and HOSS. This will also help to establish horse numbers and concentrations in affected areas, and to or from where these horses may have travelled.

15.3 The RT will establish communication lines with EMQ, QPIF and Local Government.

15.4 The RT will initially have a minimum of weekly conferencing. Conferencing will be conducted by email, telephone or face-to-face meetings. All meetings must be documented and records kept.

15.5 Financial Assistance - The RT with the assistance of the ILOs will identify areas of need and make sure access through both government and volunteer groups is available eg. – Government programmes, Community Centres and Volunteer groups.

15.6 Practical Assistance – The RT with the assistance of the ILOs will identify areas of need and make sure access through both government and volunteer groups eg. Community Centres, Volunteer groups and Counselling Services. Away from home quarantine areas will be treated like AQIS facilities where all animals are cared for by QGs.

15.7 Forms – The generic forms and guidelines for financial assistance and vaccination etc. currently in place will be adapted to fit the time and circumstance of an EAD.

15.8 If the disease affects other species in addition to equines, immediate lines of communication will be established by the RT with the relevant authority for that species.

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16 NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Everyone who deals with horses has responsibilities under the *Stock Act 1915*. All exotic diseases and some emergency diseases of horses are notifiable. If a notifiable disease is suspected it must be reported to:

Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23 or

Emergency Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888 (after hours number).

It is important that people working with or around horses should be aware of the basic clinical signs or things to look out for with notifiable diseases. Information and Disease Fact Sheets on notifiable horse diseases in Queensland can be found on the QHC portal www.qldhorsecouncil.com.

Notification to authorities allows agreed control measures to be implemented to reduce the economic, human health and social consequences.

16.1 Possible Signs of an Emergency Disease

- Large number of sick horses
- Rapid spread of disease
- Unexplained deaths
- Blisters, ulcers or erosions
- Profuse bloody diarrhoea
- Respiratory distress or persistent hacking cough
- Unusual neurological signs
- Rapid progression of signs resulting in death within several days
- Unusual ulceration or insect invasion at site of wounds

There are no government charges for investigations into suspect notifiable diseases, including negative diagnoses. All reports are treated confidentially.



17 STOCK STANDSTILL

Any immediate plan required to stop equine movements will be in accordance with the Standstill Zone Management Plan – QPIF and is not limited to only equine diseases.

The QHC is automatically part of the Standstill Zone Management Group (SZMG) and will be immediately advised of any disease outbreak requiring a stock standstill.

A priority in a lockdown would be to find agistment centres and suitable care for horses caught in transit.

The SZMG will immediately notify the RM of an Emergency Animal Disease.

18 ANIMAL WELFARE POLICY

QHC policy on animal welfare is that all equines are treated in line with accepted industry standards and their generally accepted use.

Specific welfare issues will be addressed if necessary in accordance with the guidelines set out in each Disease Schedule.

19 VETERINARY MANAGEMENT

There needs to be a coordinated plan developed between the QPIF, Veterinary Associations and the QHC that allows a workable policy of veterinary care to be available during times of crisis. This should be in place BEFORE an EAD and updated or confirmed on a regular basis. This plan should include:

19.1 Identification of multi-vet practices within affected regions.

19.2 Identification of vets or vet practices who are willing to deal with sick animals on Infected Properties (IP), Suspect Properties (SP) or Dangerous Contact Properties (DCP) and during an Emergency Response, their details made prominently available to the horse community in affected areas.

19.3 Identification within the affected regions of clinics with surgical capabilities that sick or injured animals may travel to, under permit, for emergency treatment.

19.4 Policy for emergency movement to veterinary facilities for emergency care needs to be established at the beginning of any emergency response.

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It needs to be made clear that no prejudice should be attached to the acquirement of emergency treatment during an EAD situation (whether the treatment is related to the emergency disease or NOT) – no questions should arise about client loyalty in times of emergency response.

20 QUARANTINE CENTRES

The QHC should identify potential quarantine centres – large stabling centres and properties with appropriate facilities. Some of the requirements would be:

- A 100mtr minimum buffer zone free of any animal that could transfer the disease.
- Limited access – to be able to lock down all but one access point so suitable quarantine practices could be established.
- Ample access to washing facilities and water supply to be able to maintain excellent biosecurity.
- Management and staff agreeable to follow quarantine procedures exactly.

21 REVIEW PLAN

Immediately after each QHC AGM when the roles for the ERP have confirmed and established, the RT will meet to review the ERP. Such review will include:

- Check that the QHC is in possession of the latest versions of the various AUSVET plans and Disease Response Policy Briefs.
- Check for any additions to notifiable diseases and any changes in their treatment or management protocols.
- Review Disease Schedules
- Review Disease Fact Sheets
- Check State and Federal Government for Departmental, Committee and key position name changes.
- Check the response organisational structure for changes.