

Merck Biosecurity Webinar Transcript

Hi I'm Fairfield Bain, and I'm a member of the Merck Animal Health Equine veterinary Technical Services team. I'm here to talk to you today about a biosecurity program for your practice. Three areas that I'd like to focus on are the use of vaccines as part of the biosecurity program, looking at horse traffic and how it can influence biosecurity, and also having the conversation with your clients—and not only your clients, but your staff—and how it can make your biosecurity program successful.

CONVERSATION

You as the veterinarian in your practice and your practice members are viewed as the credible authorities in dealing with and setting up a plan for preventing disease; preventing infectious disease specifically.

Having the conversations, starting with the owners and the people who work on the farm or ranch, and putting into place mechanisms that are workable for their facility, because there is no “one size fits all” kind of biosecurity program.

You are the one who is on and off their premises. You know them well. You know their activities and how they handle their horses. So you can create value and add to that relationship by starting to have the conversation before an event occurs.

Communicate not only with the owner of the property, but train your staff in the practice because this can apply to the practice facility as well as the farm or ranch property. Having the conversations, and having the staff training so that they understand the importance of a biosecurity program, will add a lot. That conversation extends not only between you and the owner, but between your staff and the owners as well.

Any opportunity you have to help them protect the health of their animals and maintain performance levels that they want...there is your opportunity to add value to your client.

TRAFFIC

The next component of looking at biosecurity in general—and it is something that we don't often think about—is horse traffic. We think about how these infectious disease events start, and oftentimes horse traffic is really the first the entry point of an infectious disease into a group.

We are accustomed by tradition for horses traveling to events, to shows, to races and returning home—and you can think of a variety of events in the news media. And when you look at those things, managing that horse traffic is often your biggest control point.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of looking at horse traffic and how you segregate the different populations that have different levels of risk factors. You want to start thinking about, “Well, how do I start handling horse traffic to minimize disease risk and transmission of disease in my facility?” In thinking in terms of the “sick horse” versus the “elective procedure horse” versus the “outpatient horse.” How can I minimize their contact with each other? That's really a big part of the game of biosecurity.

VACCINES

Let's also talk about vaccines as a part of the biosecurity program. They are an essential part of the whole package. Owners often view them as the one thing that does prevent disease, and they are important. It's important to understand which group of horses needs which vaccine program. That becomes a part of your conversation, and sometimes maybe even the entry point of the biosecurity program conversation in the first place.

RESOURCES

One of the other components of this is having in place a network of resources. One very valuable resource is Merck's biosurveillance program that we do in conjunction with the faculty at the University of California, Davis. That's where we support the PCR swabs looking for respiratory pathogens, and we monitor these pathogens around different regions of the country. And we make that information available back to the practitioners so that they can be aware of what's going on in their areas.

The bottom line is that Merck takes this very seriously. We do have a team of experts that can be a valuable resource to your practice. And we're always ready to talk to you, to help you design a program that will work for your clients, and for your practice. If you contact our customer service number, they'll put you in contact with the right person, and we will get you a biosecurity program that will work for your practice.

Editor's note: “Health Matters: To You, Your Clients, and Your Business,” is a new section on EquiManagement.com sponsored by Merck Animal Health where you can find this video as well as downloadable/printable infographics, client information documents and supporting materials on biosecurity, equine influenza and other topics that will be covered in the months to come. This video topic was presented by Fairfield Bain, DVM, MBA, Diplomate ACVIM, ACVP, ACVECC. Make sure to check back on Equimanagement.com/HealthMatters often to see what new educational videos and supporting materials have been added.