

MARENA STUD & RIDING ACADEMY

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Maureen, Bruce and Lindy Walker

Newsletter - Spring 2007- Equine Flu

Hi Everyone,

We are home from our trip to England and how wonderful it is to be back at Marena Stud in a later newsletter I will tell you all about our wonderful trip. However we arrived home to the shocking news that the Equine Influenza is in Australia and that is what I want to talk about.

Australia has been very lucky, with it's position as an island protected by a barrier of water and being so far away, it has had very few of the problems that have plagued the rest of the world. These days with quick air travel the danger of bad things entering Australia is very great. So we must all be very vigilant and careful to keep Australia safe and clean.

The equine flu has already cost people who make their living from horses a lot of money. We hear a lot about the racehorse industry which is losing millions of dollars, but there are all other horse people – Dressage, Eventer's, Showjumpers, Show, Riding Schools, Harness racing, rural properties and anybody who owns a horse are suffering and of course you are all missing your riding lessons.

We are all very sorry about that but it is for the good of all horses that we MUST all try to stop this dreadful disease whilst we still have the opportunity to do so and you ALL can help save our horses.

There is a total lock down on all movement and that means NO horses can be moved by horse truck, float, riding or leading. All horses must remain on the property where they are to try to beat the equine flu. Even empty floats can not be moved. This total lockdown also affects horse gear such saddles, bridles, saddle clothes, brushes, bandages, riding helmets, riding boots, anything that has been used on a horse can not be moved. Even saddlery items on eBay have been withdrawn.

It may take weeks because if a horse gets sick, the property becomes an infected area and quarantined until the last infected horse on that property has passed the 40 days Quarantine period.

The symptoms take 1 – 5 days to show up so other horses may be infected before you know that a horse is sick. The virus is spread by human contact on hands, clothing, shoes etc. and on car tyres – so you can see why we have had to cancel all riding lessons and visits to Marena Stud.

This highly contagious virus can live up to 48 hours and is air born and can travel up to 8 kilometres by air, so with diagnosed infections already in the district we must be very, very careful.

People cannot catch Equine Flu: however they have been shown to be a major factor in carrying the virus from one property to another.

To help to stop infection people are not allowed on horse properties. Vets, unless to very sick horses, Farriers, Chiropractors etc. are restricted but must follow very strict guidelines if they have to attend a horse.

We do not have the virus and we must do all in our power to prevent it getting into Marena Stud.

Symptoms: are runny nose, cough, high temperature, lethargic behaviour. If you horse shows any symptoms contact a vet and have a blood test done – early diagnosis and treatment is essential.

It is best not to visit any horses; if you just pat one and go to another you could spread the infection.

The influenza virus can survive on skin, fabrics and the surface of contaminated equipment. It can survive on hard surfaces, plastics, stainless steel for up to 48 hours and also on cloth and paper. The virus is easily killed by cleaning and disinfection, washing powder and bleach. All equipment must be disinfected – saddles, saddle cloths, bridles, rugs, grooming gear, helmets clothes, gloves, whips, spurs, anything that has come in contact with a horse. Use different equipment on different properties. Keep your horse away from other horses.

You can help by keeping away from horses and telling other people how to help too. If you have a horse at home observe strict hygiene principles. Most of the news is about racehorses and some people think only the racing industry is involved, but it is **ALL** horses – so spread the word not the virus.

Most countries in the world have E I and the restriction on horse owners are severe. Every horse has to be vaccinated with a booster 6 or 12 monthly – if a booster is 1 day late the whole process of vaccination has to be started all over again. In England each horse has to carry its passport and is not allowed to compete in any event if its vaccinations are out of date.

Imagine having to vaccinate all the horses in such a country as big as Australia so you can see we must all make a huge effort to stop this outbreak and contain it if we possibly can.

A strict regime of care must be maintained. All workers entering the property must wash their hands, change their clothes and disinfect their shoes and car tyres. When they leave they shower and change their clothes to go home. This is recommended to stop the virus being spread from place to place

We are hoping to start lessons again as soon as the authorities tell us it is safe to do so. Even people who have their horses agisted here are not coming to see them. We plan Three Day Schools and One Day Schools in the school holidays and start lessons, but more news about this when we know.

We appreciate your co-operation, we are doing our best to protect not only our horses and your horses but all horses in Australia.

Love and Best Wishes from all at Marena Stud. We Miss You!

Maureen and Lindy Walker

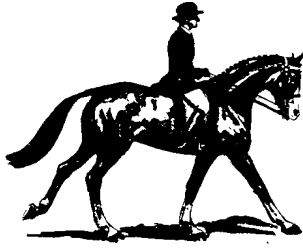
STOP PRESS - GOOD NEWS – LESSONS START ON SAT. 22ND SEPTEMBER
Horse Council Bulletin - 16.9.07

“Some people have been asking about riding their horses, and with the school holidays approaching, this will probably be an important issue. Horses may only be ridden on the property on which they are kept. You must not leave the property at all, including into neighbouring public land such as roads, reserves, parks and forests. Horses that are, or have recently been, infected with equine influenza should be rested.

As well as not moving horses, people needed to ensure that they themselves did not spread the disease ---- ‘People who come in contact with horses need to shower with soap, shampoo their hair, blow their nose on a tissue, disinfect boots, hats and clothes and stay away from other horses’, he said.”

NSW equine influenza hotline: 1800 675 888 or email hotline@dpi.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza



MARENA STUD

Pin This sheet up to Remind You

SPECIAL HYGEINE STEPS FOR PEOPLE ARRIVING AND LEAVING

People cannot catch equine flu but they can carry the virus from one property to another.

1. Keep clean by washing hands and arms thoroughly with soap and hot water before and after contact with horses.
2. Wash carefully and change into clean riding clothes before you come to riding.
3. Park all vehicles down at the road. All people entering the property must disinfect their boots in the baths provided. Siblings should not come onto the property.
4. Do not touch horses unnecessarily when at riding lessons. Blow your nose on a tissue, discard then wash thoroughly after your riding lesson.
5. Disinfect footwear, horse gear, equipment and wash your clothes after riding lessons.
6. Keep away from unnecessary contact with other people's horses. The horse may be sick, not showing symptoms yet, and you can carry the virus on your person and infect another horse.

It is a good that the lockdown is working and we take very care to keep our horses safe. In infected areas the Equine Flu is spreading rapidly so people from those areas must be very cautious and horse people must make sure they do not bring the virus into clean areas.

~~**Lessons will begin again at regular times from Sat, 22nd September 2007.**~~ Please ring to confirm your booking time. ~~**Schools in the holidays.**~~ We know you will all be pleased to hear that they should progress as usual. However if there is still a restriction on horse movement, pupils with their own horses, will not be able to bring them so as they will have to use our horses. We may have to have smaller numbers of riders and more Schools to fit everyone in. Please ring early with your booking.

HURRAH! -- MAUREEN AND LINDY WALKER