

**FIELDSTONE FARM TRC
GUIDELINES FOR
EQUINE BARN HYGIENE**

Dear Member of the Fieldstone Farm TRC Community,

In light of recent events, we felt it was necessary to create a document to help educate our staff and volunteers to the importance of proper hygiene in and around an equine facility.

The measures listed here are for the prevention of all types of communicable diseases, not necessarily only for the Strangles bacteria. We hope that you will read this brochure carefully and follow the new plan we have put in place for our horses' health and safety. **These guidelines are especially important for those of you who are active in more than one barn.** Although these procedures will require more attention to personal cleanliness than we have asked in the past, we hope that you will understand that equine health, both at Fieldstone Farm TRC as well as out in the community, is our top priority. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to direct them to any member of our program staff.

"The horse industry is very lax when it comes to personal hygiene as a means of preventing the spread of disease. To prevent the spread of disease, the swine and poultry industries require that their employees "shower in and shower out" of their facilities. **Horse people, however, commonly go from barn to barn and from a show to home without any concern for disease spread.**"

(http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/livestock/horses/facts/info_preventing_disease_spread.htm)

Disease Transmission Overview

There are five main routes of disease transmission in horses. Here they are with their causes and ways to prevent them and Fieldstone Farm TRC's approach:

1. **Aerosol**—Insufficient ventilation in a barn combined with horses stabled in close proximity to one another means that germs pass through nasal cavities. Prevention: Adequate ventilation within the facility. Our facility was designed with proper ventilation in mind.
2. **Oral**—Contaminated food and/or surfaces that horses eat or lick. Prevention: Control the quality of feed and hay. Keep water troughs/automatic waterers clean. Test water supply yearly for contamination. Fieldstone Farm TRC cleans automatic waterers daily, troughs weekly and we test our water supply quarterly.
3. **Direct Contact**—As the name implies, this involves direct transmission of the germ from one animal to another either through open wounds, blood, biting, saliva or mucous membranes. Prevention: Isolating sick horses. It is our policy to require veterinary certification that all new horses have been vaccinated for all contagious diseases three weeks' prior to their arrival at Fieldstone Farm TRC. We also have isolation stalls for horses from our herd who become ill.

4. **Vector**—Transmission of a pathogen between two animals through an insect. (Flies, fleas, ticks and mosquitoes are all common vectors.) Prevention: Insecticides and vaccines. We use fly spray regularly throughout the summer months and vaccinate against all common insect-transmitted diseases.

5. **Fomite**—This is the transmission of germs from an inanimate object to the horse. This can be from common objects around the barn such as brushes, pitchforks, halters, tack, etc. Contaminated vehicles are also considered fomites. Dirt from a contaminated facility on the wheels of a vehicle can also transport the pathogen. **Humans can also serve as fomites! Germs can be easily transported on contaminated clothing and skin from one barn to another.** Prevention: See below!

As a community of staff, volunteers, parents and students, we are all responsible for controlling the human fomite transmission of disease. There are a few simple things we all can do to prevent the spread of illness. *****The number one rule for disease control is cleaning. Clean clothing, clean hands and clean barns.*****

Clothing:

Dedicate boots and clothing for use only at Fieldstone Farm TRC. If this is not possible, please make sure boots have been thoroughly cleaned in the anti-microbial footbaths at the barn entrances. Only freshly laundered clothing should be worn into the facility.

Handwashing:

WASH YOUR HANDS!!

Just as washing hands helps to reduce the spread of illness among humans, the same holds true for horse germs passed through human contact. We ask that anyone who enters our facility wash their hands, including fingernails, as well as skin underneath rings. **Please wash your hands using the anti-microbial Hibiclens product located at each sink before handling any horse in the barn.** There are also Steris hand sanitizers located throughout the facility. **Please use them.** It is recommended that you allow the sanitizer to dry on your hands for 15 seconds to benefit fully from the anti-microbial properties.

The few added moments you will dedicate to these guidelines will help us keep our horses healthy! Our goal is to do everything within our power to prevent another outbreak like the recent one.

Thank you for your help!