

W.A. Horse Council News

February 2008



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Representing a united horse community in Western Australia.

President's Report

Diane Bennit

Although Western Australia has been spared the devastating consequences of Equine Influenza (EI), our horse industry has still been seriously affected with the cancellation of a number of events and competitions, many equestrian companies that rely on business from across Australia, cases of loss of wages and income, increased expenses due to purchased international horses having to remain in quarantine and other horses that have not been able to comply with the justifiably strict conditions to return to WA.

The Council has been working closely with a number of government departments and working groups, developing biosecurity procedures, holding EI information evenings, producing a contingency plan template for event organisers and generally keeping the horse industry up to date with the status quo.

The development of a data base containing all clubs, associations and equine businesses within the state for an Emergency Communication Process is proving very successful. With nearly 8000 contacts registered already, this will give access to a large percentage of horse owners in this state should information need to be dispersed in emergency situations.

I would like to make mention of the Council's hardworking committee and our secretary who has really involved herself in all the activities. When you think the WA Horse Council does not have a permanent home, is made up of volunteers and has previously never received any funding, what has been achieved by this group of dedicated horse owners and riders, is really astonishing.



Equine Influenza Information Workshop. L-R: Mike Caplehorn (Equestrian Federation of Australia), Ashley Mercy, Ross Goulden (Riding for the Disabled), Diane Bennit (WA Horse Council), Brad McCormick, Tara Della Bosca (Royal Agricultural Society).

Awareness Program for Event Organizers and Stewards

While WA has not been affected by Equine Influenza and the disease is well and truly on the decrease on the east coast, all horse owners still need to be aware that just one incident could cause the spread of this very infectious disease in any state.

The Horse Council is co-ordinating an Equine Influenza Awareness Program for horse event organizers and racing industry stewards for a comprehensive look at preparing a contingency plan. The working party will include representatives from the Equestrian Federation WA (EFAWA) and Racing and Wagering WA (RWVA).

This program is needed to ensure everyone fully understands the requirements of the contingency plan and key communicators in the horse industry will be invited to send representatives to the series of workshops planned to start early 2008 in Perth and Regional areas.

Participants will be provided with information on;

- Preventing the spread of EI from an event.
- How to handle a suspect case at an event.
- What to do in the case of a state equine standstill.
- A template for a Contingency Plan

Transport Qualifications

Transporters or attendants in England, using road vehicles for transporting farm animals, poultry or horses in connection with an economic activity, must have received appropriate training and also hold a certificate of competence. This new legislation, which will effect everyone who transports horses with the potential for 'economic gain' starts from January 5th. Failure to comply with the legislation could result in a fine and/or prosecution. Is this a regulation that Australia should also consider introducing?

National Industry Advisory Committee

The Australian Horse Industry Council (the parent body of the WA Horse Council) is establishing a national Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). The principal role of the IAC will be to enable various sectors of the horse industry to provide direct input to the AHIC Board, on any matters they consider important for their section of the horse industry.

Once established, this committee will enable a ready exchange of ideas, the needs of the various groups and the sharing of information between an ever wider membership of the horse industry.

A greater input from the various groups represented will contribute to the development of a united national front for approaches to government on horse industry issues. Support from the entire industry to individual sectors can also be achieved.

The WAHC has been invited to nominate a member to participate in this committee.

Database and Website for Clubs, Groups and Industry Providers

The non-racing sector of horse owners - that is all those involved with equestrian disciplines, competitions, events, pony club, adult riding, western, harness, pleasure/trail horses, polo, polocrosse and many other activities - is the largest group of horse owners in WA, yet historically, communications with this sector are difficult. This is because there is no single set of records that contains the necessary details to be able to contact and provide those involved in all the groups with information. Each group keeps their own records of membership, unlike the other major sectors such as racing or pacing - where comprehensive record keeping for racing and breeding allows for immediate contact with all members in event of an emergency.

Continued

HORSES VOTE TOO



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Database and Website continued...

The Council has started developing an Emergency Communication Process data base, which has already recorded over 8000 registrations from individuals and organizations.

The comprehensive contact data base is to include key communicators in the equestrian governing bodies, associations, clubs, saddlers, transporters, health care providers, breeds and feed merchants, who will then disseminate the information to their members and customers.

To support this Communication Process system, and ensure a more complete database of horse owners and service providers the Council is coordinating a website (under construction) to integrate with the database, which will facilitate communication with horse owners and service providers.

We encourage all groups, associations and individual service providers to participate by downloading forms from the WAHC's existing website: www.hoofbeats.com.au/WAHorse/index.html or by contacting Diane Bennit 9291 0202 Fax: 9291 0206 or email: bennit@optusnet.com.au

This is a free service the Council is providing for the horse industry and it is anticipated it will be a positive step in uniting the largest section of the horse industry, as well as enabling everyone involved to be contacted in the event of an emergency, bio-security procedure or a standstill.

TRACKS AND TRAILS NEWS - Top Ten Trails

Included in this newsletter is a nomination form for the Top Ten Equestrian Trails in WA. The Department of Sport and Recreation were seeking the Top Ten Trails in WA to promote for potential visitors to WA and some equestrian trails were included. However, to promote equestrian trails to all horse owners and riders in this state the WAHC, with the help and 'hands-on' input from horse riders, is developing a comprehensive list of trails and highlighting the Top Ten Equestrian Trails. This information will then be available for visitors or general enquiries from the horse owning public.

The aim is to list the nominated trails on the WAHC website, so anyone seeking to use trails in this state will have easy access to information and location.

Please complete the form on page 6 and forward as soon as possible. Any photographs of the trail will also be welcomed.

HAVE YOUR SAY AT THE TRACKS AND TRAILS WORKSHOP

A strategy for Recreational Tracks and Trails in WA is currently being developed. Have your say at a facilitated workshop conducted by the Department of Sport and Recreation in your area during the month of February.

A workshops was held at the Dept. of Sport and Recreation in Leederville on **14th FEBRUARY** and will be held on other dates in February in **Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury**.

A member from WAHC attended the Leederville workshop, however, representation at the regional workshops from individuals interested in equestrian Tracks and Trails would be very beneficial for the whole horse industry.

If you are planning to attend and require more information you could contact Janet Cameron (email: camos@westnet.com.au), the WAHC Tracks and Trails working group co ordinator.

In order to maintain and expand on the existing trails network in this state the equestrian community - and that means all horse owners and riders - needs to be represented at all levels to show that there is a demand for having these tracks and trails available for our use. If we do not become involved in the planning stages

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or development of strategies then it may well be perceived that there is insufficient interest from horse owners and equestrian trails and funding for building, maintaining and developing any trails to include equestrian activities will no longer be available.

Contact Hugh Maclean at Department of Sport and Recreation on 9492 9841 for more information.

TRAIL BIKES ON WALK AND RIDE TRAILS?

Users of tracks and trails should be aware that a State Trail Bike Strategy has been produced. This can be downloaded from <http://www.tbma.com.au/stbs> This document suggests that trail bikes should be enabled to use the trails normally set aside for walkers and horses. It is important, if horse riders have concerns regarding sharing trails with bikes, to attend the DSR workshops for Recreational Tracks and Trails.

LOTTERY WEST GRANT

Any groups or organizations interested in applying for a Lotterywest Trails Grant, the program is now open and applications close 28th March 2008. Contact Department of Sport and Recreation for details.

EQUINE INFLUENZA - KEEP WA FREE

In response to the Equine Influenza (EI) outbreak, the WAHC has worked closely with the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) in the development of bio-security procedures, protocols and guidelines. In order to allow Western Australian equestrian activities to continue, but still give us protection against the spread of EI, Biosecurity Procedures for Horse Events have been developed. These procedures require the Event Organisers to develop Contingency Plans in the case that a horse at the event shows suspected signs of EI.

Contingency Planning Assistance

Developing good Contingency Plans can be quite difficult, especially for organisers who may never have done it before or are not completely familiar with the processes and requirements that will be placed on them if a suspected case of EI occurs.

A contingency plan would involve the show or event organisers being prepared should EI be diagnosed during an event. The document would include exactly what happens once the diagnosis has been established, whose job it would be to close and guard the gates, the name of a stock feed merchant to deliver feed to the grounds for the 'locked down' horses, food and facilities for the owners, water for showers/horses etc, etc. Contact phone numbers and planning strategies need to be in place for all aspects of an extended enforced 'lockdown period....JUST IN CASE.

WAHC has developed a Contingency Planning Template, endorsed by DAFWA, which makes it much easier for Event Organisers to develop good Plans and will be running training for Event Organisers in WA on how to use the template and develop a Contingency Plan.

Please register your interest in receiving further information on the Training sessions for Event Organisers by emailing Diane Bennit <bennit@optusnet.com.au>.

\$100,000 FOR HORSE ALERT PROGRAM

Horse Alert is a joint industry and government operational plan for exotic disease and awareness in the equine industry. The major benefit of Horse Alert is to increase awareness of emergency equine disease and biosecurity practices to key equine industry stakeholders.

A working party comprising Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA), WA Horse Council (WAHC) and Dept. Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) have been progressing a combined document which encompasses response arrangements, industry responsibilities, biosecurity messages, disease fact sheets, contingency plans and communication channels to be activated.

The lack of designated funds for this plan has caused serious delays.

Funding of \$100,000 has now been obtained, and the employment of a consultant to finalise development of the Horse Alert plan, means that a summary of the key components of the plan with details as to where to access the complete package, will soon be mailed to key industry stakeholder groups.

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Emergency Horse Preparedness
For Groups/Organisations or individuals working in the Industry
COMMUNICATIONS LIST



Name of Group/Organisation <i>or individuals working in the horse industry</i>	
Name of Contact Person	Mr/Mrs/ Ms/Dr. First Name:
	Surname:
Position of Contact Person	
Postal Address	PC
Actual Address	PC
Email: <i>Please print clearly</i>	Web:
Telephone:	Mobile: Fax:

Number of Affiliates (*other groups that are members of your organisation*) *Please attach list of Affiliate groups*
 Number of members (*of your group/organisation*)
 Number of members of Affiliates (*if known*)

How do you want WAHC to provide you with information?	sms <input type="checkbox"/>	fax <input type="checkbox"/>	How do you disseminate information to your members?	sms <input type="checkbox"/>	fax <input type="checkbox"/>
	email <input type="checkbox"/>	phone <input type="checkbox"/>		email <input type="checkbox"/>	phone <input type="checkbox"/>
	post <input type="checkbox"/>	other <input type="checkbox"/>		post <input type="checkbox"/>	other <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Please specify other</i>			<i>Please specify other</i>		

This Communications List is being prepared for dissemination of information and advice. It is intended that contact details of organisations, groups or individuals working in the horse industry be included on the Communications List. In the event of Emergency Disease information requiring to be circulated, the WAHC would arrange for entities on the Communications List to be passed the information, with the express purpose of having those entities forward the information onto their membership.

With respect to the information contained on the Communications List, the WAHC:

1. has no intent to collect/retain individual membership information with respect to the various entities who are detailed on the Communications List;
2. has no intent to make information contained on the Communications List available to any other parties; and
3. intends on using the list solely for the dissemination of information on Emergency Disease preparedness.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

I acknowledge I have read and understand the purpose and functions for which the WAHC is collecting information to use in the Communications List.

Signed: _____ Name: _____
 Position: _____ Date: _____

Post to: 29 Ashurst Drive, Lesmurdie, WA 6076; scan and email to: bennit@optusnet.com.au; or fax: 9291 0206

Bruce Scott Past President WAHC

The first in our series of short profiles on past and present WA Horse Council committee members and their involvement with the equestrian community.

Bruce Scott was involved with the WAHC for ten plus years and during this time he took on the roles of both President and Vice President. A problem with access to trails and his love of riding was what prompted Bruce to first become involved as a WAHC committee member representing the Endurance Riders of WA. As well as his involvement with WAHC, Bruce was on the committee for State Trails, Peel Trails and was also President of the Peel Horse Council. Always ready to attend official functions, conferences or meet with ministers when horse issues were under discussion, Bruce brought many skills to the WAHC. He felt that during his time on the council the most rewarding achievement was being instrumental in achieving a change in attitude within some government departments and replacing traditionally held perceptions about horses and horse owners with a better understanding of the horse industry and the people involved within it.

Bruce's interest in horses started in 1957 when he was stationed in Geraldton as a young Constable with the WA Police Force. Learning to ride with the Marsden brothers, he competed in showjumping and a little hacking and then didn't ride competitively again until into his 50's. It started with a social ride and he was hooked on horses again, and has been competing in Endurance even since. He has competed in five Tom Quilty 100 mile events, two in the east and three in WA, to win two of the coveted Quilty buckles. His current horse is the pure bred Arabian gelding, Dinawini Limited Edition, who he describes as a 'character'. Bruce rose to the rank of Assistant Commissioner of Police and headed the Crime Portfolio before retiring in 1992. At 71 years young, he is still riding at Endurance events and has no plans to give it up.



Bruce Scott - centre - crosses the finish line with companions at Woky Creek Endurance ride.

photo courtesy Chris Ros

Department of Agriculture and Food WA (DAFWA) Equine Influenza Update 15/2/08

The National Management Group (NMG) remains committed to the eradication of equine influenza (EI) from Australia. It is anticipated that all zones should be eligible to be reclassified to white by the end of June.

Both NSW and Qld have declared all properties free of EI but targeted surveillance is on-going to ensure isolated pockets of disease have not been missed. It is likely this surveillance will continue for some time to progress proof of freedom from EI.

Biosecurity Australia and AQIS are negotiating with Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Iran, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates to recommence exports of equines to these countries.

Despite the good news, it is important that horse owners remain vigilant with regards to biosecurity issues on-property and when attending events or moving their animals. Signs of respiratory illness must be reported to a veterinary surgeon or the emergency animal disease (EAD) Hotline 1800 675 888. EI is a notifiable disease and it is an offence not to report any suspicion.

National Situation

It is 66 days since the last detection of EI and there are no known infected properties in either New South Wales or Queensland. However, there are still a number of Suspect Properties and Dangerous Contact Premises that need to be resolved.

As of 1 February, the green zones in NSW and Queensland changed to white recognising that these zones have the equivalent status to uninfected states. This has enabled horses to move within the white zone and to uninfected states with fewer restrictions. Destination states may require different protocols including Travelling Horse Statements, Permits and isolation periods. Western Australia still requires isolation periods (see below for details).

Gradual rezoning of areas from red to amber and amber to white is continuing in NSW and Qld. Testing of a nationally agreed number of properties with negative results must be undertaken in order for the rezoning to occur.

Compliance with biosecurity protocols at events held in both NSW and Qld has generally been good.

Vaccination

EI vaccine has been allocated to Racing and Wagering WA to enable racehorses, standardbreds and other horses to travel to regions that require vaccination. Currently this includes the purple zone in NSW and vaccination buffer zones in QLD.

Three equine veterinarians have been accredited by DAFWA to use the vaccine under the emergency permit conditions. Only horses that have successfully applied to move to zones in NSW and QLD that require vaccination will be vaccinated.

Enquires regarding vaccination of WA horses should be directed to Dr Jenny Cotter 9368 3349 or jcotter@agric.wa.gov.au

The situation in Western Australia

Movement of horses, horse equipment and reproductive material into WA

A new Import Restriction Order (IRO) was gazetted on 12 February 2008 and remains in place.

Conditions were modified effective from Monday 4th February 2008 and are published on the Department of Agriculture and Food's website. See www.agric.wa.gov.au/content/pw/ah/equine_influenza.htm for full details.

The entry of equines DIRECTLY from a state where EI has been detected (ie NSW and QLD) remains PROHIBITED. Horses that have moved from NSW or QLD to Victoria, SA or the NT under PERMIT may be imported into WA subject to the completion of all requirements.

A 3 day pre-embarkation quarantine (PEQ) period in Victoria, SA or NT with a negative PCR test and veterinary certification is required before entry into WA.

On arrival in WA a further 3 days post-arrival quarantine (PAQ) period in an approved facility with veterinary certification is required.

The conditions for the importation of used horse equipment into WA remain unchanged.

WAEIIG is currently considering a proposal from

RWWA to allow horses to move into WA from uninfected states and the white zones of NSW and QLD without any isolation periods or testing, provided there are no new cases of EI.

Surveillance

A total of 71 horses in WA have been tested for EI since August, all were 'low index of suspicion' cases and returned negative results.

There are now 15 approved isolation facilities in WA, three in the Kimberley and 12 in the South West. Approval has been given for 491 horses to enter WA from uninfected jurisdictions, of which 484 have arrived.

Maintaining EI Freedom

It is important to be prepared for the possibility of EI being detected in WA.

Funding proposals were approved by the WA EI Industry Group late last year. Money has been allocated to:

- finalise the 'Horse Alert'* program
- complete a horse industry database
- produce EI information sheets for horse owners
- organise training sessions for horse event organisers and racing industry stewards
- continue the biosecurity message advertising campaign in WA
- purchase veterinary equipment
- the training of equine veterinarians in recognising and reporting exotic equine diseases, EAD requirements and vaccination protocols.

Work has commenced on these projects. The Media advertising campaign in newspapers will commence the week beginning 21 January and run for four weeks.

**Horse Alert is a joint industry and government operational plan for exotic disease and awareness in the equine industry. The WA Horse Council, Racing and Wagering WA (RWWA) and DAFWA have been progressing a combined document which encompasses response arrangements, industry responsibilities, biosecurity messages, disease fact sheets, contingency plans and communication channels to be activated.*

WAHC MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Organisation Membership

Individual Membership

Organisations (per annum):

- 1) Under 50 members - \$40 per annum
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- 3) 100 plus members - \$100 per annum

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(per annum)

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Free Community Workshops

Equine Influenza Are you prepared?

Workshop is Restricted to Horse Event Organisers



Each workshop will host a guest speaker (Vet) outlining what Equine Influenza is and what that REALLY means to you.

Workshops participants will be encouraged to think about developing contingency plans for their particular areas of interest and will give attendees' some practical tools to assist you through that process.

These important workshops are for anyone who may be involved in horse related activities. Whether you are a horse trainer or breaker a farrier or feed merchant, involved in conducting horse clubs, shows and events, or transporting or agisting horses, these workshops will be of great practical value to you.

Locations and Dates

Albany 5th March

Busseton 12th March

Geraldton 19th March

Kalgoorlie 26th March

Perth 1st and 3rd April



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**For Further Information Please Contact Workshop Facilitator
Barry Hamilton 042 090 9937 or
Ms. Diane Bennit 08 9291 0202**

Which are WA's Top Trails?

The West Australian Horse Council is conducting a survey as to which are the Top 10 Equestrian Trails in Western Australia.

We are looking for WA's Top Trails – and invite you to nominate the trails that you believe provide the best experiences across the State for riders - they can be very short trails, gazetted stock routes or managed trails.

If you had a friend coming to WA for a few days – which trail would you recommend to provide them with a memorable and enjoyable experience?

The top trails, as nominated by users of the trails, will be promoted on the WA Horse Council website, so we invite you to send any photographs of the trail or riders on the trail for inclusion.

List your favourite trails

Rank	Trail Name	Suburb/Town
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

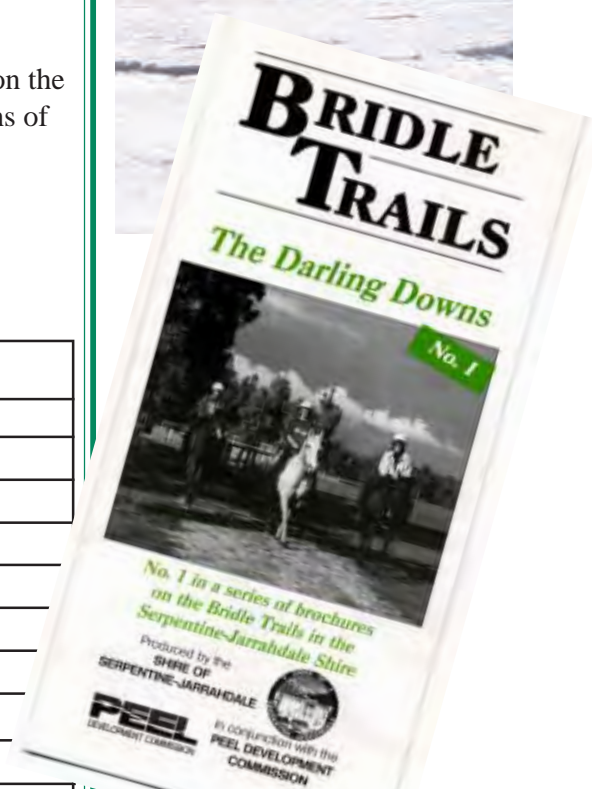
Contact name:

Email:

Phone:

If you can only think of one or two trails then just forward those details – all information on Western Australia's favourite trails is valuable.

Lists can be lodged either by email to camos@westnet.com.au or by fax to 9291 0206 if you don't have access to a computer.



HORSES VOTE TOO

