

Horse News and Views



The first line of defence in preventing the spread of disease in horse barns is hand washing. Often, from the time and place where a handler has worked with an infected horse (e.g., one with a respiratory virus) to the time and place where they can wash their hands, they have infected every stall and tack room door handle they came in contact with, as well as the faucets. No wonder viruses spread rapidly through barns! Hand-washing facilities should be suitably located around the barn/farm to encourage the frequent washing of hands. Research at a human hospital showed that, as the access to a hand-washing facility increased, the hand-washing compliance increased (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol7no2/boyce.htm). Thorough hand washing with soap is adequate in most cases. Antiseptic soaps (e.g., chlorhexidine) or iodophor shampoo/washes (e.g., Betadine scrub) may also be used and should be located at the sink in an easy-dispensing container. The use of alcohol-based hand gel disinfectant may be an alternative or adjunct to hand hygiene in horse barns. Dispensers can be attached to the handler's belt or on the outside of stalls, allowing horse handlers the opportunity to disinfect their hands after working with an individual horse. These products require 15 seconds for the disinfectant to dry and provide good hand disinfection. For further information, see *Preventing Disease Spread - Personal Hygiene and Disinfectants around Horse Barns*, www.gov.on.ca/OMAF/english/livestock/horses/facts/info_preventing_disease_spread.htm

A lame foal, with or without a fever, should be looked at very closely for the presence of septic arthritis. Foals can have normal blood work, yet have high white cell counts in one or more joints. (Pierce SW. Foal care from birth to 30 days: a practitioner's perspective. AAEP Proceedings 2003; Vol. 49: 13-21.)

For further information contact Dr. Bob Wright (519) 846-3412 or visit our website: <http://www.gov.on.ca/omaf/english/livestock>



Ontario Association
of
Equine Practitioners

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Horse News and Views is prepared by
Dr. Bob Wright, Veterinary Science,
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food,
Wellington Place, R.R. #1, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W3
Telephone: 519-846-3412 Fax: 519-846-8101
Email: robert.wright@omaf.gov.on.ca

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