
Tuesday, 1 July 2008

EI – NO RESTRICTIONS FROM JULY 1

All equine influenza restrictions will be lifted in South Australia from today, Tuesday, July 1 2008.

Agriculture Food and Fisheries Minister, Rory McEwen said the decision reflected the recent national declaration of freedom from the disease

“It has been an extensive campaign, even for unaffected states like South Australia, and the declaration that Australia is free of equine influenza (EI) signals the end of the emergency response,” Mr McEwen said.

“I’d like to thank all horse owners in South Australia for their cooperation and support in ensuring we remained free of horse flu during the period of restrictions.

“However, while the emergency is over, we must continue to be vigilant and use the knowledge we have gained to continue to protect the industry.”

Mr McEwen said that when EI was first detected a consistent Australia-wide problem was the lack of understanding about where horses outside of the racing system were located and how to contact their owners.

“Unlike other livestock industries where all animals are registered, we had little understanding of the horse population and how to get the message out about the stock stand still,” he said.

“I believe that we should be moving towards a property registration system so that in the event of another disease outbreak we know where horses are and we can contact property owners quickly.

“I am hoping that we can introduce a system within the next 12 months.”

South Australia’s emergency response was led by Chief Veterinary Officer, Dr Rob Rahaley.

“A meeting with horse industry representatives has supported our plans to drop all movement restrictions, but they are keen to continue to voluntarily maintain an events register,” he said.

Executive Officer, Julie Fiedler said Horse SA would continue to encourage organisers to register their events.

“Event organisers need to register their events with their peak body or Horse SA (www.horsesa.asn.au),” she said.

Event organisers are encouraged to keep a log of competitor’s names and addresses in the event that animals need to be traced.

The animal disease hotline 1800 675 888 will continue for people to report any suspected animal diseases.