

- Upon arrival at the property, treat the animals for internal parasites and lice.
- Keep new arrivals isolated from the rest of your stock for at least two (and preferably four) weeks. If any illness appears in this period, get the animals inspected by a veterinarian.

Keeping Horses Healthy

As with most things, avoiding problems is the best approach and horses are no exception. Animals in good condition have strong immune systems and fight off disease more effectively. You can do this by:

1. Providing plenty of good quality feed
2. Control of intestinal worms
3. Providing any deficient trace elements
4. Providing plentiful clean, cool, low salt water
5. Providing shelter from sun and wind
6. Vaccination against certain diseases

Exotic Disease

Exotic diseases are diseases that do not normally occur in Australia. Symptoms may, initially, appear similar to common diseases in Australia. If there is an outbreak it is vital that it be detected as soon as possible.

If you are ever in doubt, contact your vet, Biosecurity animal health officer or phone the

Exotic Animal Disease hotline:

Phone: 1800 675 888

Hendra Virus

Horse owners need to be alert to the possibility of Hendra virus. For further information visit:

www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa

Further Information

Further information on matters discussed in this brochure is available from:

- **Biosecurity SA –**
phone: 8207 7900
or 1800 654 688
or www.pir.sa.gov.au/biosecuritysa
- **Exotic Animal Disease hotline**
(open 24/7) – phone: 1800 675 888
- **Meat & Livestock Australia –**
www.mla.com.au
- **The Animal Health Australia website –**
www.animalhealthaustralia.com.au/
- **In depth information on horse management can be found on the Horse SA website: www.horsesa.asn.au**
- **Your local private veterinarian**



When to Call for Help with your Horses

What to Look for

An important part of owning horses is knowing when they are unwell and need help. Let's start by looking at healthy animals, which:

- Are alert, inquisitive and aware of their surroundings
- Have bright and alert eyes
- Stand on all four feet and can move freely
- Produce firm droppings
- Graze as groups

No matter how well you manage your horses, some will occasionally get sick. What signs should you look for?

See over



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Start to be concerned if you see change.

Noticing change is a key skill of a horse manager. Of special concern are:

- **A change of behaviour.** For example, animals standing on their own with heads low (see photo 2).
- **Off their feed.**
- **Loss of condition.** Is its coat glossy? Has the horse lost weight suddenly?
- **Lameness, swollen joints or legs.**
- **Excessive rolling, pawing, grinding teeth, turning to look at belly or kick at belly, swishing tail.**
- **Sweating or raised temperature.** The normal temperature for a horse is 37.5°C. **A temperature above 38.5°C may indicate sickness** and you should contact your vet. Measuring an animal's temperature can be easily done using an inexpensive digital thermometer.



Photo 1. Healthy horses are alert and inquisitive.



Photo 2. Sick horses are often in poor condition, lethargic and disinterested.

- **Panting and in more extreme cases gasping or coughing; also unusual discharge from the nostrils.**
- **Drooling.** If your horses are drooling excessively this may be a serious matter.
- **Very runny faeces (scouring).** This indicates a digestive tract problem. There can be many causes, some serious, some quite minor.
- **Staggering, tremors or fitting.** These symptoms indicate poisons or a neurological disease.
- **Dull eyes.** Was it Shakespeare who said that the eyes are the window to the soul? Dull eyes can indicate illness and/or fever.
- **Dead animals.** If more than one animal dies in an “unexplained episode” call your vet.

What Not to Do

Don't wait and see how things turn out. If any animals are sick, early intervention is critical

in their recovery – and in minimising their suffering.

What to do

If you are concerned about your horses and not sure of the cause of their problem, then seek help.

Neighbours can often give a second, perhaps more objective, opinion. The most reliable option, however, is to call your local veterinarian.

Other Help is Available

Biosecurity SA is interested in investigating unusual deaths or symptoms in livestock.

When a number of animals in a herd are sick, Biosecurity SA has funding that may be available to help you cover on-farm investigation and laboratory costs.

Longer Term

In the longer term, educate yourself on goat management. Attend courses and field days. There are many excellent local events run by independent groups (e.g. your local Natural Resource Management Board, Horse SA or your local Agricultural Bureau).

Introducing Stock onto your Property

To minimise the chance of bringing disease onto your property with new animals, there are a number of things to do:

- Your property **must** have a registered Property Identification Code (PIC). This is required for all farmed species including horses.