

COVID-19 – Equine Activities

Version en español

To: Equine Industry Representatives

From: E.S. Rusty Ford, Equine Operations Consultant – KY Office State Veterinarian

Date: March 21, 2020

The threat that COVID-19 virus poses is impacting each of our lives daily. The efforts to contain the virus by mitigating further transmission is dependent on each of us practicing the guidelines issued by Kentucky's Department of Public Health and the actions/restrictions initiated by Governor Andy Beshear. Specifically, limiting individuals from unnecessarily congregating and maintaining space (i.e. social distance is the phrase of the week and is defined as a 6' perimeter/space) between individuals when it is necessary to be together is a critical component of the mitigating strategies. Commissioner Quarles, Dr. Stout and I genuinely appreciate the proactive steps our agricultural industries have taken thus far.

BREEDING SHED ACTIVITY: Throughout the week I have spoken with and/or visited a number of breeding sheds to review the practices in place. With vans and individuals visiting multiple facilities each day we do recommend adopting standard practices in how we manage people and horses visiting sheds. Dr. Stout and I are of the shared opinion that implementing the following practices will be advantageous to our maintaining breeding shed activity.

1. Submission of documentations for mares booked to be bred would best be done electronically.

We've seen numerous reports where handled paper can be contaminated.

2. Eliminate outside individuals (van drivers and mare attendants) from coming into the prep area and shed. To accomplish this the van would arrive, the mare would be offloaded and handed off to a shed employee (using the shed's shank) who would handle the mare through the process. The van driver and anyone accompanying the mare to the shed should remain outside in the parking area while maintaining social distance with other individuals.

3. After cover, the mare would be returned to the loading area and handed off to the attendant for loading onto the van. If there is need for a mare's attendant to witness the cover, this should be accomplished from outside – looking in, videotaped or virtually.

4. The shank would be cleaned before returning to the shed or reuse and attendant would wash hands.

5. Breeding equipment (leg straps, collars, boots etc.) would be cleaned before reuse.

6. Additionally, maintaining enhanced biosecurity in our daily activity is essential to all of these mitigations.

Implementing these practices, and any other action you can take to eliminate people from congregating in common areas will be beneficial and could be critical in our ability to continue transporting horses to/from sheds.

For additional information regarding the COVID-19 status in KY please

visit <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>.

Guidelines, updates and information offered by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture can be viewed at www.kyagr.com/communications/covid-19-ky-agriculture-updates.html.