

# Template yard agreement<sup>1</sup> for the prevention and management of infectious disease

The document below is an example of an agreement<sup>1</sup> between YARD MANAGER<sup>2</sup> and HORSE OWNER<sup>3</sup> to ensure common understanding and the level of compliance expected to reduce risk of outbreaks and protect horses from infectious disease. This agreement is developed specifically for, but not limited to, the prevention and management of *Streptococcus equi* (strangles). It can be used in relation to any *livery agreement or contract* and is designed specifically for use as a template for adaptation to any livery yard or establishment (regardless of the level of service provided by the yard owner or manager) where horses mix or share facilities.

Think RASPS when using this template:

- **Read.** The agreement should be read alongside guidance such as the vet-endorsed *Strangles – Speak Out* information Pack, available free to download from [www.redwings.org.uk/strangles](http://www.redwings.org.uk/strangles)
- **Adapt.** Look for '(Adapt)' throughout the document to identify some of the key decisions you need to make. Your vet can help you assess risk and advise adaptations to establish workable practices in the context of your own yard activities, client-base and horse movements.
- **Share.** Use communication platforms such as websites, Facebook or WhatsApp groups to share your agreement and any updates over time. The latest version should be clearly available online and offline.
- **Publicise.** All new clients should receive the agreement on enquiry for a livery space - alongside the standard livery agreement. Existing clients will need to be brought up-to-date and reminded periodically.
- **Store.** New and existing clients should provide a signed copy with any documents requested prior to arrival. When signed by both parties, a copy should be stored securely until it needs to be revised.

The agreement applies to all horses under the care of the HORSE OWNER, including new equines bought or loaned in the future.

This document has been developed in collaboration with Redwings Horse Sanctuary. Redwings is the UK's largest horse sanctuary caring for over 1,500 horses. Between 2011 and 2016 their quarantine protocol enabled the identification of 37 asymptomatic carriers for treatment and clearing before introduction to resident horses. The charity has had one strangles outbreak in 25 years, the communication and management of which was applauded by the Animal Health Trust as "a great example for others in the horse sector" (AHT Annual Review 2015). Redwings is calling for horse owners and yard managers to come together in their commitment to 'Stamp Out Strangles'. One way to show your support is to take the Yard Manager Pledge and encourage your livery clients to do the same.

For more advice, guidance and resources to support your infectious disease policy, and details of the Yard Manager and Horse Owner Stamp Out Strangles pledges, please visit [www.redwings.org.uk/strangles](http://www.redwings.org.uk/strangles)

## Yard agreement for the prevention and management of infectious disease

Aims:

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as a biosecurity *protocol or policy*. The aim is to reduce risk of infection to animals kept in close proximity to others.

<sup>2</sup> In this agreement the 'YARD MANAGER' refers to the person responsible for the acceptance of new livery clients and/or the operations of the yard and can include yard owner/proprietor/freelance equine service provider/head groom. There is space at the end of the agreement for more than one manager to sign if this is deemed necessary. Not all managers need to sign.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this agreement "HORSE OWNER" includes and refers to owner/loaner/keeper/sharer of equines (horse, pony, donkey or hybrid) kept on the property owned or managed by the "YARD MANAGER".

- **To reduce risk of disease finding its way onto our yard**
- **To ensure that in the event of an outbreak, we respond as quickly, effectively and responsibly as possible**

This agreement is designed to protect horses from strangles, as the most commonly diagnosed equine infectious disease, however the steps outlined here can also be helpful in relation to other contagious illnesses.

Please read this document carefully to ensure you are happy with the terms of the agreement before signing in the space provided. Feel free to seek clarification or discuss any points with your yard manager before signing.

This agreement applies to all current and future equines under the responsibility of the signatory/ies below. This includes horses housed or grazed on these premises on either a temporary or permanent basis.

## **NEW HORSES**

1. **Isolate:** Any new horse(s) to the yard will be kept separate from other horses, communal facilities or shared equipment for a minimum of three weeks.
2. **Health monitoring:** Horses in isolation will have their health monitored closely by the HORSE OWNER/S with particular attention paid to taking rectal temperature to spot the onset of fever (over 38.6°C/101.4°F). Temperature should be monitored daily and any increases brought to the attention of the YARD MANAGER.
3. **Prevent direct and indirect contact:** Isolation requires strict avoidance of contact with other equines either on the yard, at grass, during exercise or off-site. Persons on the yard must respect isolation procedures; HORSE OWNERS will disinfect, use overalls and keep equipment separate. Isolation equipment will be provided by the YARD MANAGER who can assist set up and demonstrate use as required. **(Adapt)**
4. **Strangles carrier testing:** Testing as directed by the yard's veterinary surgeon is required to screen for strangles carriers upon arrival. Results will be shared by the HORSE OWNER with the YARD MANAGER. HORSE OWNERS will be prepared to seek further tests and follow veterinary advice on interpretation of results. HORSE OWNERS will cover costs or, in the interest of protecting other clients' horses, they will meet veterinary costs according to terms agreed with the YARD MANAGER. **(Adapt)**
5. **Worming:** HORSE OWNERS will follow the yard worming programme. A FWEC (Faecal Worm Egg Count) and/or worm treatment shall be undertaken during this period at the cost of the HORSE OWNER. **(Adapt)**
6. **Documentation:** Within 48 hours of arrival, the YARD MANAGER needs to have viewed and received copies of the following from the HORSE OWNER: horse passport, vaccination record with up-to-date flu vaccination and a certificate of health from a veterinary surgeon. **(Adapt)**

## **ROUTINE MANAGEMENT**

7. **Know the signs:** YARD MANAGERS will keep livery clients updated regarding signs of infectious disease periodically. HORSE OWNERS will also maintain awareness of signs of infectious disease and endeavour to check their horse's health daily.
8. **Disinfectant:** Disinfectant used for any biosecurity measures must be effective at killing *Streptococcus equi* (strangles) bacteria on contact. Speak to the YARD MANAGER if you are unsure which product to use.

- 9. Cleanliness and hygiene:** HORSE OWNERS will reduce the risk of cross-contamination by;
- a) Disinfecting any equipment used by other horses (housed/used off the yard) before use
  - b) Disinfecting communal equipment (water tanks, tack, transport) between horses
  - c) Avoiding sharing personal tack or equipment without disinfection (**Adapt**)
- 10. Record horse movements:** HORSE OWNERS and YARD MANAGERS will keep the yard diary updated, including use of the school, movements on and off site, and visits from professional services and deliveries.
- 11. Sensible stocking arrangements:** The YARD MANAGER will endeavour to graze/house high risk horses separately from low risk horses.

## **EVENTS AND OFF SITE ACTIVITIES**

- 12. Precautionary isolation:** HORSE OWNERS should isolate horses for three weeks on returning from an event. Alternatively, minimise interaction with other horses, avoid equipment sharing, and the HORSE OWNER will take rectal temperature each day (ideally twice daily) for three weeks on return from an event. Isolation must be put in place immediately if fever is noted and the YARD MANAGER made aware. (**Adapt**)
- 13. Use high levels of cleanliness and hygiene:** HORSE OWNERS will avoid contact with unscreened or unknown horses, use their own tack and equipment, avoid the use of communal water buckets/troughs and grazing areas. The YARD MANAGER will provide guidance as required.
- 14. Check standards:** HORSE OWNERS will enquire about the biosecurity standards and disinfecting protocols of venues and take precautions if they are in doubt.
- 15. Transport:** HORSE OWNERS will use transporters with disinfecting protocols, avoid sharing transport with unscreened or unknown horses or disinfect shared transport after use.

## **CONTAINING AN OUTBREAK**

- 16. Isolate suspected horses immediately and stop all other horse movements:** HORSE OWNERS who notice any signs of an infectious disease such as strangles (eg: fever, nasal discharge, abscessation around the head or neck) will immediately inform yard management and isolate the horse. Horse movements will be immediately suspended and continue until the risk of spreading disease has been assessed and eliminated.
- 17. 'Traffic light' outbreak management:** YARD MANAGERS will implement this system with advice from their vet, based on mapping routes of possible contact with infection. If in doubt horses will need to be put in amber isolation and tested. HORSE OWNERS will comply with testing as required by the lead vet advising on outbreak management. HORSE OWNERS whose horses are in 'amber' or 'red' isolation will ensure their horse is comfortable and welfare is upheld. They will cover the cost of testing and veterinary care.
- 18. Veterinary advice:** A lead vet practice will be identified and assigned by the YARD MANAGER to support outbreak management and testing protocols required until the last quarantine is lifted (all infected horses are cleared of becoming a carrier). HORSE OWNERS affected by an outbreak and who use another practice are asked to support vets from different practices in communicating with each other so accurate and timely advice can be given. The YARD MANAGER is the point of contact during an outbreak. YARD

MANAGERS will be allowed free communication with all HORSE OWNERS' vets who may be involved.  
**(Adapt)**

- 19. Unable to contact owner:** If the YARD MANAGER or their staff are unable to contact the HORSE OWNER within a reasonable time frame, the HORSE OWNER authorises, within reasonable belief of infection, that the YARD MANAGER may place the horse in isolation until such time as suitable advice can be sought, and may contact their preferred veterinary surgeon. Costs associated with call outs and diagnostic tests will be covered by the HORSE OWNER. ***(Insert veterinary practice details below)***
- 20. Changes to services:** The YARD MANAGER will decide on any changes or procedures with regards to horse welfare. This may involve changes to turnout, herds or stabling in order to contain any outbreak while continuing the day-to-day running of the yard in the best interests of the yard as a whole with as minimal disruption as possible. During and after an outbreak, HORSE OWNERS accept that there may be a period of adjustment necessary on the yard for services to return to normal.
- 21. Exercise during an outbreak:** No movement of horses off-site will be permitted for the duration of the outbreak. Exercise for horses in amber or green isolation areas will only be permitted after discussion with the YARD MANAGER, who will take advice from their vet if necessary.
- 22. Essential visitors:** Each HORSE OWNER is advised to minimise non-essential visitors to the yard during this time. The HORSE OWNERS will be responsible for ensuring that any essential visitors (such as vets, farriers, equine dentists) are aware of the outbreak prior to their visit, and are required to follow procedures outlined in this agreement should they need to attend, either accompanied or unaccompanied. The YARD MANAGER shall be made aware of any visitors to the yard during the period of outbreak prior to their arrival.
- 23. Costs:** YARD MANAGEMENT will cover costs of isolation equipment and those incurred related to communal use. However any diagnosis, testing or treatment shall lie solely with the HORSE OWNER unless otherwise arranged with the YARD MANAGER.
- 24. Communication:** The YARD MANAGER shall communicate openly with nearby equestrian establishments and businesses and keep such persons updated throughout. HORSE OWNERS should direct questions to the YARD MANAGER to ensure timely and up-to-date information is passed on.
- 25. Patience and cooperation:** HORSE OWNERS will appreciate that containing, treating and eradicating disease will take time and cooperation. Outbreaks are disruptive for all involved but future suffering can be prevented if they are responsibly eradicated at the time. The YARD MANAGER and HORSE OWNERS will work together to avoid and act against negative attitudes and ostracism of individuals to ensure reputations are built rather than undermined.
- 26. Carrier clear:** Any HORSE OWNER whose horse contracted strangles will be tested by a vet after their recovery to confirm they do not become a carrier with potential to cause future outbreaks. The YARD MANAGER may also choose to test uninfected resident horses to ensure they are not strangles carriers.

*Please ensure that you have read, understood and are prepared to abide by this agreement before signing below. Any owner not complying with the agreement may be asked to find alternative accommodation for their horse.*

*More details on isolation, testing, outbreak management and signs of disease are all available on request.*

**I have read and understood the terms of this agreement and agree to abide by its conditions**

**Horse Owner:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Vet's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Practice name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Names of friends, family or service providers who may have temporary caring responsibility for your horse:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact number \_\_\_\_\_

**Yard Manager:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

As well as verbal communication, yard management would like to update clients by (tick and provide contact details to give consent):

Email \_\_\_\_\_  WhatsApp \_\_\_\_\_

Facebook Group \_\_\_\_\_  Messenger \_\_\_\_\_

Post/letters by hand \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_

*You can update or change your contact preferences at any time by contacting [insert name and contact details of Yard Manager or person responsible for data management].*

**Additional yard personnel: (insert/amend as required to reflect terms of agreement)**

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**IMPORTANT**

**All the information in this document is intended to provide guidance for consideration by those who may wish to use such arrangements. Anyone proposing to enter into a written agreement should also consider taking their own legal advice in relation to their particular needs and circumstances.**

***(insert your yard's data protection statement and links to your privacy notice in relation to the details supplied by the HORSE OWNER here)***