

Serial Sampling at FEI Events

The FEI offers guidance on the serial sampling of horses at FEI event venues should an outbreak of infectious diseases be suspected or confirmed.

Serial sampling, the sampling of individual horses one after another, must be carried out by an FEI Treating Veterinarian or an Official Veterinarian such as the Veterinary Services Manager or Veterinary Delegate. The veterinarian may require help from an assistant in the collection and labelling of samples, who must also follow the same biosecurity precautions. Sampling may be requested by the FEI Veterinary Department and all athletes must submit their horses for sampling.

In the event of a suspected or confirmed infectious disease outbreak, the FEI expects the event's stabling to have been divided into small zones according to their disease risk to optimise management of the situation e.g. each barn may be considered a single zone.

Sampling order

Horses must be sampled in order of increasing infectious disease risk to avoid the potential for disease transmission as follows:

1. Healthy horses that may not have been in-contact with infected and in-contact horses
2. In-contact horses that show no clinical signs of disease
3. Horses showing clinical signs of disease

The FEI strongly advises that one veterinarian and one assistant, where required, is allocated to the care and sampling of horses housed in each stabling zone, where possible. Biosecurity considerations must be given to the maximum number of horses that one veterinarian can sample.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. The veterinarian and assistant must wear disposable PPE (e.g. overall and shoe covers), supplied by the VSM, if they are working in more than one stabling zone. PPE must be changed between stabling zones and disposed of immediately after use, according to local regulations.
2. Disposable gloves must be worn when sampling horses.
3. Gloves must be changed and hands washed with soap and water or sanitised between sampling each horse. Hands may be sanitised using 62% ethyl alcohol hand gel.

Sample Collection

Respiratory samples

Wherever possible, long nasopharyngeal swabs should be used to take nasopharyngeal samples. The swab should be inserted as far as possible into the ventral meatus, ideally to reach the nasopharynx. Swabs must be transported to the laboratory in appropriate transport media.

Blood samples

The FEI advises the use of closed blood collection systems e.g. needles attached to vacutainers, are used for the collection of blood samples. The sample material should be as requested by the analytical laboratory. If a closed blood collection system is NOT used, you must change needle and syringe between each horse. This is to prevent any possible transmission of infectious disease via contaminated blood and blood collection equipment. Needles must be appropriately disposed of immediately after use.

Restraint

The FEI strongly recommends that the horse's PR or groom holds the horse for sample collection and is consulted on any methods of restraint, if required.

If a twitch is used to restrain a horse for sample collection, it must be washed and disinfected between horses.