

Helping horse owners plan, prevent and protect

THE LAUNCH OF the UK's first equine biosecurity booklet, *Plan Prevent Protect*, is set to help bring the equestrian world in line with farm and human health disease prevention, according to collaborative authors XLEquine and the Animal Health Trust (AHT)

The result of "months" of development between the AHT and XLEquine practice members, the booklet provides a step-by-step practical guide for horse owners and yard managers to minimise disease risk and maintain the health and welfare of their horses.

Speaking at the launch, Mark Tabachnik of XLEquine member practice Wright and Morten Veterinary Surgeons, said biosecurity "is just not on the radar" for many yards.

"It only becomes important after an outbreak," he said. "Strangles, in particular, can have devastating effects that impact not only on horse welfare, but the disruption and paralysis of animal movement has significant consequences with relationships on the yard, not to mention the financial costs.

"We wanted to develop a practical guide that pre-empt these issues by helping owners to set in place simple, and in many cases common sense, plans and procedures to prevent a disease outbreak, along with practical steps should the worst happen, and an outbreak occurs."

He added "It's about changing people's mindsets. Vaccination is important, as is having a policy for new arrivals, but simple things like designated headcollars and regular hand washing can all help."

Richard Newton, head of epidemiology and disease surveillance with AHT, said changing the

thinking and habits of horse and yard owners was crucial.

"Practical biosecurity measures are an insurance policy, but contrary to many beliefs most of it is simple, inexpensive and common sense," he said.

"Large multi-horse owner yards with a 'hands off' yard owner are the most challenging because usually there is no one to drive things forward collectively."

Visit www.xlequine.co.uk/content/plan-prevent-protect to view the booklet.



Feed tops menu at conference

CURRENT LEGISLATIVE ISSUES and the challenges of regulation compliance were the hot topics at the annual British Equine Trade Association (BETA) Feed Conference, held last month at Whitelebury Hall Hotel near Towcester, Northamptonshire.

More than 60 delegates from the equine feed sector – including representatives Allen and Page, Baileys Horse Feeds, Dengie Horse Feeds, Dodson and Horrell, Spillers, Saracen Horse Feeds and TopSpec – heard a diverse range of presentations by key industry speakers (pictured).

Ray Smith of the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Animal Feed Unit, discussed ways companies need to meet the requirements of feed legislation while Ron Cheesman, of the agency's local delivery division, explained who was responsible for enforcing claims.

Elsewhere, BETA executive director Claire Williams supplied the association's guidance on regulatory claims justification, while consultant Ruth Bishop reviewed claims and how they might be substantiated. Catherine Dunnett of Independent Equine Nutrition looked at