

# Public communication

Bruce Ward

Orange



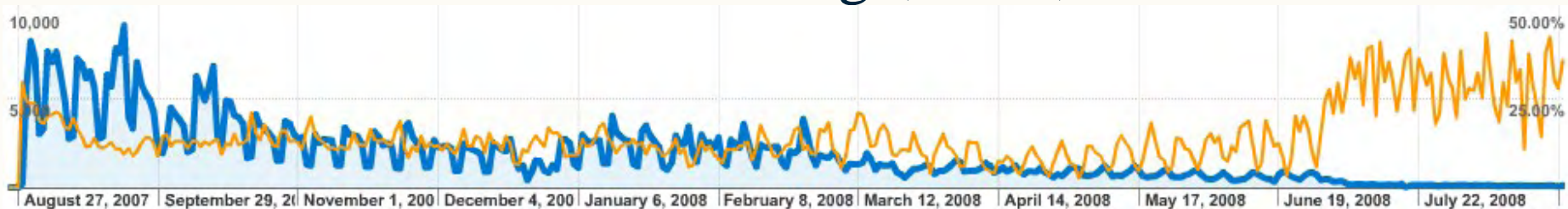
# Call Centre

- 60,000 telephone calls
- Peaked at 1500 per day
- Many calls also went to:
  - LDCC (particularly movements)
  - Industry Liaison
  - SDCHQ



# Website

- 680,000 page views
- Peaked at 28,000 per day on 21 September
- Single point of authority
- Interactive maps
- Text, audio and video
- Online forms – Horse rego, THS, Events



# Publications

## ■ Over 50 separate products

- Factsheets
- Flyers
- Signs
- Advertisements
- Posters
- Displays



NSW DPI EQUINE INFLUENZA OUTBREAK

## INFORMATION FOR HORSE OWNERS

### Caring for horses with equine influenza

11 October 2007

Equine influenza is an acute, highly contagious viral disease which can cause rapidly spreading outbreaks of respiratory disease in horses and other members of the horse family.

Some horses will show only minimal signs of illness with just an odd cough while others have much more severe symptoms, such as loss of appetite, a bad cough, thick nasal discharge and signs of depression.

Ring the Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 if you think your horse is infected with equine influenza. You should also tell your veterinarian and discuss with them appropriate supportive treatments. The following points are for broad guidance only.

#### Foals and high risk animals

- Take particular care with pregnant mares, stallions, foals, and older horses, as they are more vulnerable to disease.
- Your veterinarian may recommend anti-inflammatory drugs for stallions, to avoid testicular problems, or for pregnant mares with a very high fever, to avoid abortion.
- Please contact your veterinarian if you have any concerns about the health of newborn foals: they may be able to advise additional therapies.
- Foals can deteriorate quickly if they contract equine influenza. Prematurely born foals which are smaller in body size or foals in poor health are more prone to the virus.
- Complications following infection may occur, particularly if the horse is worked, transported or exposed to dusty conditions while they are still showing signs of disease (coughing or nasal discharge). These complications include bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, and damage to the heart. Foals, particularly those under 5 months, may be severely affected by pneumonia, which can be fatal.

#### Supportive treatment

- It is important to match the treatment for equine influenza with the severity of the infection.
- Supportive treatments such as cough suppressants can help reduce complications.
- Antibiotics may be an appropriate treatment of secondary bacterial infections, particularly if fever persists for longer than four to five days and is accompanied by abundant and thick nasal discharge.
- There is currently no specific antiviral treatment registered for use for treatment of equine influenza.

#### Managing horses with equine influenza

- Monitor your horses and contact your veterinarian for advice if the illness worsens.
- Rest infected animals in a dust-free, well-ventilated environment. Rest reduces the opportunity for secondary infection and speeds recovery.
- Horses with infection should be kept on pasture if possible and handled as little as possible to minimise stress. Bringing sick horses into a yard can increase stress by close contact with other horses or can result in more severe clinical signs through increased exposure to dust.
- For stabled horses, reduce dust in the feed by changing the feed type (soft mash) or by wetting the feed. Any significant changes to the feed should be made gradually to avoid gastrointestinal upsets. Any feed not eaten should be discarded.
- When feeding, place the feed bucket on the ground. This assists in clearing fluids and any dust particles from the horse's windpipe and nose.

#### EQUINE INFLUENZA HOTLINE

1800 675 888

#### WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/equine-influenza)
NSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIESNSW DEPARTMENT OF  
PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

# Daily update

- Prepared every week day
- Short and to the point
- Focused on information needs
- Provided facts and addressed rumours
- Emailed through AHIC lists
- Encouraged people to print and hand on



# Social media

- Email lists, blogs, chats
- ‘Unofficially’ monitored by industry staff
- Forum for extreme views
- Identified issues worrying people
- Identified rumours



# Social media

2007 Australian equine influenza outbreak - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by NSW Prim

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2007 Australian equine influenza outbreak

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

An outbreak of equine influenza (EI) in Australia was confirmed by the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries on 24 August 2007 in Sydney. Also known as "horse flu", the rapid outbreak was of the Influenza A virus subtype H3N8. While the virus is highly contagious, it rarely kills adult horses but the performance of thoroughbred racing horses can be affected for several weeks. It can be fatal to young foals and debilitated horses.

Because of strict quarantine procedures to reduce the risk of exotic pests and diseases entering Australia, this was the first outbreak of equine influenza in Australia had not been exposed to the virus and, not being vaccinated, were fully susceptible.<sup>[1]</sup>

A combination of control measures was successful in combating the outbreak. The last new infected property was identified on 22 December 2007. The zones which had been instituted to permit and restrict movements according to risk were progressively lifted from areas of New South Wales and Queensland. Following the provisional declaration of EI-free status for New South Wales and Queensland, ongoing surveillance and tracking measures are required until the international community recognises that the disease has been eradicated from Australia.

2007 Australian equine influenza outbreak - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by NSW Prim

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Location of initial outbreak, 24 August 2007

# Lessons

- Make sure we all sing the same tune.
- ‘Information’ coordinator.
- Website crashes impact whole operation.
- Move website onto its own server – maybe outside.
- Some people difficult to reach.
- Regional Directors to coordinate ‘community engagement’.
- Online forms worked, but usability is critical.
- Maintain capability to develop applications quickly – start small, start quickly, improve.
- Social media becoming more important.
- Dedicate resources to social media.



# The end

