



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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To: Equine Industry Representatives, Yearling Consignors, Inspectors and Others

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

Date: May 5, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 Equine Activities – Yearling Inspections

The public health threat presented by COVID-19, otherwise known as coronavirus, is impacting all, and the equine industry has not been immune to it. Commissioner of Agriculture Dr. Ryan Quarles, State Veterinarian Dr. Bob Stout and I are appreciative of the proactive steps our agricultural industries have taken thus far. Continuing to work together as we are will help insure our own health and that of our industry. Protecting the health of ourselves, families, friends, employees and one another is of paramount importance.

As summer approaches, the attention of many in central Kentucky is beginning to focus on the upcoming summer and fall yearling sales, and in as much I have begun receiving inquiries from farms and others seeking guidance on procedures/protocols that will allow individuals to go onto farms for the purpose of inspecting and assessing yearlings. In light of the pandemic we have been living with, we do understand and appreciate the need for enhancing the level of biosecurity we practice daily and that the environment we are living in today does necessitate applying and expanding these basic principles to facilitate our needed yearling inspections. It is our mutual goal to see the standards defined below be adopted, implemented and practiced by all farms and horsemen working together in our industry here in Kentucky.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Office of State Veterinarian had previously developed and distributed guidance to farms and veterinarians on adjusting equine activities to better protect public health during this time. Below is the general guidance, and following that are guidelines that when implemented can allow yearlings to be inspected on the farm, while meeting the Governor's directives pertaining to minimizing individuals congregating, maintain social distancing and other applied safeguards when the Commonwealth begins Phase I of reopening on May 11th.

General Guidance: Source: [KY Dept Publ Health/Centers for Disease Control](#)

- Familiarize yourself and your employees about the [Coronavirus Guidelines For America](#)
 - **If you feel sick**, stay home. Do not work. Contact your medical provider.
 - **If your children are sick**, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.
 - **If someone in your household has tested positive** for the virus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.
 - **If you are an older person**, stay home and away from other people.
 - **If you are person with a serious underlying health condition** that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.
- Limit individuals from unnecessarily congregating and maintaining a responsible social distance between individuals. Social distancing is the phrase of the month and is defined as a 6 foot perimeter/space between individuals.
- Please keep up to date with the [Centers for Disease Control Guidance](#), which includes best practices during this time.

Yearling Inspections/Assessment:

Below are guidelines/best practices to allow inspection of sale yearlings while complying with the Governor's directions.

1. When feasible, the inspections should be conducted outside. Alternatively, barns should be open to allow as much exchange of fresh air as possible.
2. Equipment (leads, shanks, twitches, grooming etc.): Should be assigned to a barn/horse and not passed to different individuals. This equipment should be cleaned and disinfected daily.
3. Surfaces (desk, rails, gates etc.) having contact with individuals or equipment should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
4. Paperwork: Paperwork should be completed digitally and submitted electronically when possible.
5. Communication should be via phone call, email or text.
6. **Inspection Team Members** (and others who may visit for inspecting yearlings): Minimize the number of individuals going onto a farm at any given time by coordinating with the farm to insure no other guests will be on the grounds. Farms should schedule guests to arrive and depart without interacting and having time to wash hands on arrival and departure. Cleansing or sanitizing stations should be setup at or near the point of entry. Individuals who visit multiple facilities daily must understand and accept the additional steps they must take to avoid becoming contaminated and potentially transferring the contagion to other environments.
 - a. Yearling inspectors and others coming onto the farm should take their temperature 2x daily and not report to work if a fever is detected. Any fever detected should be reported to a supervisor or manager.
 - b. In accordance with the Governor's latest directions, yearling inspectors and others working indoors should wear a cloth face covering (mask) and should consider wearing the face covering outdoors when deemed appropriate.
 - c. There should be no physical contact and social distancing should be maintained between individuals presenting the horse(s) and inspectors. Our objective is to minimize the number of individuals working in close proximity.
 - d. Horse Assessment:
 - Physical contact with the horse should be minimized and if physical contact is made the individual will clean/sanitize hands afterwards or alternatively wear latex or nitrile gloves that are changed between horses.
 - Avoid transfer of paperwork – reports support contagions are easily transferred to/from paper products. All administrative processes should be completed electronically when possible. This includes your assessment forms/worksheets/summary reports.
 - e. Farm Employees:
 - There should be no physical contact between individuals and they should practice social distancing.
 - Farm employees should check their temperatures 2x daily and if an elevated fever is detected they should report the fever to their supervisor and not interact with veterinarian.
 - Where possible, employees working on the farm should be 'consistently compartmentalized', meaning individuals day-to-day routines should be that they work with the same people daily, and do not work different shifts having interaction with new or different individuals.
 - Ideally, there would be one farm employee per barn working with the Inspector's team. This individual should be at or near the head of the horse and away from the inspectors.

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 business in as normal manner as possible. I welcome any additional recommendations you might have.

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/covid19