Equine Influenza Virus

Definition
Equine influenza virus is a RNA virus that occurs sporadically in epidemic form in horse populations worldwide (except in Iceland, Australia or New Zealand).

Clinical Signs
Fever
Coughing (sometimes paroxysmal)
Mucopurulent nasal discharge
Distal limb edema may occur
Cardiac myopathy has been reported in affected animals

Incubation: Potentially as short as 24 hours and up to 3 days.

Transmission
Aerosol transmission (most common)
Inhalation of droplets from coughing and snorting (may be able to spread as far as 50 yards by this route).

Respiratory shedding typically lasts for 7-10 days in naïve animals; much shorter shedding periods occur for partially immune horses.

Indirect transmission can occur.

Diagnostic Testing
Virus isolation
PCR
Immunoassay—stall-side kit
Serology—paired titers may be of use

Shedding Time of Organism Past Resolution of Clinical Signs
Probable for 7 days, possible up to 10 days.

Environmental Persistence
Virus can remain viable for up to 2 days on fomites.
In water, virus viability has been reported up to 3 days.

Specific Control Measures

Biosecurity Guidelines

Vaccination
Booster vaccination of healthy animals in primary and secondary contagion control perimeter is likely to be of value, and is not known to lead to complications.

If animals are unvaccinated prior to the outbreak, the use of a modified live intranasal vaccine is recommended as this can achieve protection within 5 days of primary administration.

Release of animals from isolation:
Maintain isolation procedures (primary perimeter) for 21 days after resolution of last suspected new infection.

Biosecurity Issues for Receiving Animals

For horses having been housed within primary perimeter:
Isolate from the general population for 14 days

For other horses:
Vaccination requirements may be considered when disease risk is elevated.
Certificate of Veterinary Inspection specifications—disclaimer regarding disease exposure within a specified interval.

Zoonotic Potential
None known.