

SNHSA Pigeon Fever Policy

With the high rate of Pigeon Fever in the Washoe County area, the SNHSA Board has decided on a series of protective measures to protect the safety of the competitors and the host facility.

Pigeon Fever is a bacterial infection that causes abscesses in horses from flies biting them. The bacteria lives in soil, where it can survive for long periods of time. Horses (both domestic and feral) and other animals including elk, antelope, goats, range cattle, etc. are infected when the bacteria gains access to the body through small scrapes or wounds in the skin. Transmission likely occurs via insect vectors, direct horse-to-horse contact and contaminated soil. The “pus” is what is “contagious” because there is a high concentration of bacteria in the abscesses. Thus, no horse may come to the Franktown Meadows Facility property with open wounds.

All horses coming to SNHSA horse shows must not enter the show facility if they have or have had Pigeon Fever, or have been at a facility with a Pigeon Fever case(s) or have a neighboring facility with Pigeon Fever, including wildlife areas near or bordering your facility, or had any known exposure to Pigeon Fever in the four (4) weeks prior to the event.

The incubation period is 3-4 weeks and horses can harbor the bacteria 3-4 weeks prior to showing clinical signs.

The internal variety of Pigeon Fever in horses has a fatality rate of 30% to 40%.

For more details, see the attached fact sheet from the Equine Disease Communication Center.

Bio-security measures that attendees must observe:

1. Complete a 360-degree check of your horse for 3 days before the competition date, checking for any swelling, open sores, scabs, pus, or wounds
2. On the day of the event, create a spray bottle with diluted bleach spray and pick your horse's feet before entering the trailer, then spray their hooves with the bleach spray.
3. Stop enroute to the event do a "fly-check" to make sure you are not carrying any flies with you from your facility to the host facility.
4. If you live at, are neighboring, or have recently visited an infected facility, do not attend the show. There is a chance of carrying flies or dirt from the infected facility to the host facility.