

## Working through the Covid-19 situation is three-fold for horse professionals. Here is a quick outline to help you get started.

### Human Health

Take steps to protect your own health, the health of your employees and your clients. Keep in mind, a positive Covid-19 test at your barn could create a very difficult situation for you, your clients, the horses and your business.

- Stay up-to-date with Federal and Provincial recommendations.
- Set up hand washing, sanitizing stations.
- Implement extra cleaning protocol of touch zones. For example: Tack room doors, bathrooms, stall door handles, pitch forks, rakes, wheelbarrows etc.
- Set up separate grooming supplies for each employee. (Clients should use their own)
- Notify employees and clients that they should not come to the barn if they are sick. If you have large numbers of staff, consider setting teams so that if one person gets sick, it's only that team which needs quarantine.
- Post signs regarding best social distancing and health practices.
- If you have a large number of boarders, consider setting an appointment schedule to limit the number of people at the barn at one time.

### Horse Health

Most of you have probably already thought of your horses first. Here are a few things that come to mind that you may want to add to your list.

1. Protecting the health of the people that care for your horses is the first critical step.
2. Have at least 2 weeks of hay, feed and shavings on hand.
3. Create operations manuals so that if you need to replace any staff, their jobs have well defined practices that others can follow.
4. Check your horse first aid and medication supplies to be sure you are currently stocked.
5. Identify ways you can reduce labor if necessary. For example: Can you pasture some horses that are currently in stalls? Are your automatic waters set up and functioning well?
6. Have a back-up vet and farrier. Talk to your current vet and farrier and find out what their plan is.
7. Amazon and other delivery companies are somewhat backlogged. Expect some delays in receiving products or supplies you order online.

### Business Health

The current prediction is that the economy will be stalled for the next two quarters. Here are a few things to do now to help your business ride it out.

- Send your clients an email regarding your Covid-19 protocol plan. Uncertainty creates fear. Let them know you care and are prepared. Fulfill your role as a leader.
- Get on top of your accounts receivable and stay on top. Get aggressive with your collections now.
- Reduce expenses including your own personal expenses.
- Identify your current and potential income losses i.e. the lack of sales, horse show fees, client (and donor - if you have a non-profit supported by donors) and loss of income from events.
- Know your burn rate. Burn rate is the rate of depletion of your businesses' cash pool. In a new or growing business it's the amount of capital necessary to sustain your business during the time before you reach breakeven and then start turning a profit. Use your most recent Profit

and Loss statement and adjust any changes to your income to get the most accurate information about your burn rate.

- Look now for possible resources to help you meet your burn rate.
- Start exploring business model innovation and create multiple “if, then” scenarios.
- Be prepared for this situation to go on for more than three months.

*With files from Elisabeth McMillan, writing for “Equestrian Professional”, a web-based equestrian business advice community: <https://www.equestrianprofessional.com/public/main.cfm>*