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# STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

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## COVID-19 Guidance to Horse Owners

On March 26<sup>th</sup>, Governor Steve Bullock issued a Directive requiring Montanans to stay home and temporarily close all nonessential businesses and operations. This directive is consistent with federal guidance on the activities that are considered essential during the COVID-19 response. Importantly to Montanans, animal agriculture has been declared an essential activity by the Department of Homeland Security. The Department of Livestock supports the continued use of horses for agriculture activities but discourages all other equine activities that bring multiple people to one location at the same time.

More specifically, The DOL encourages equestrian facilities to consider the following guidelines:

- **Limit facility activity to husbandry practices necessary to sustain animal health and welfare.** These activities include feeding, watering, grooming, exercising when necessary, and maintaining a clean environment.
- Restrict access to essential personnel. This includes veterinarians and caretakers/owners.
- Individuals at risk for severe complications of COVID-19, such as those with diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and those who are immunosuppressed should avoid entering the facility.
- Do not permit access to anyone displaying clinical signs of the disease or to anyone who has been in direct contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus.
- Limit the number of people in the facility at one time. This may require owners use an online sign-up form.
- Individuals in the facility at the same time must maintain 6 feet of separation from one another.
- Have water and soap available for handwashing. Require everyone to wash their hands and/or apply sanitizer when entering and exiting the facility. Hand sanitizer is not effective if hands are soiled (dirt, manure, etc.).
- Strongly encourage individuals to wear face masks and gloves that can be cleaned or disposed of following use.
- Minimize the use of shared equipment. Any shared supplies should be properly cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Please note, local public health officers have the authority to require more restrictive measures than those described above. Please be aware of regulations specific to your local jurisdiction (city or county).

If you have any questions regarding the above guidance, please contact the Department of Livestock at (406) 444-2976.