



WHY 1 JUNE TO 31 OCTOBER FOR AHS VACCINES

Before you decide to carry on as normal and vaccinate in November/December, read about the risks of doing so, and why DAFF strongly recommends this period for vaccinating.

AN EXPLANATION FOR THE RECOMMENDED AHS VACCINATION PERIOD

As per the notification from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) in March 2015, the following applies to the dates for administration of African horse sickness vaccinations:

Area	Adjustment
AHS Free Zone	Permission for vaccination will only be given from 1 June to 31 October each year.
AHS Surveillance Zone	Permission for vaccination will only be given from 1 June to 31 October each year.
AHS Protection Zone	All equines in this area must be vaccinated within the period 1 June to 31 October each year.
AHS Infected Zone	Strong recommendation is made to vaccinate during the period 1 June to 31 October each year

The manufacturer's recommendations advise that vaccination with the AHS live vaccine be done in early summer. The Manufacturer has further supported the restriction of vaccination time between 1 June and 31 October each year. In the past most horse owners have tried to time AHS vaccinations to fit in with competition commitments, with many vaccinations done in November/December. Why should we change now?

There is a very valid reason for DAFF's strong recommendation that all horses in the infected zone be vaccinated between 1 June and 31 October. Research on the Porterville outbreak of AHS in 2014 revealed that AHS vaccine virus transmission may have been implicated in the outbreak and that the vaccine virus seems to have been transmitted by midges between horses, some of which had never

been vaccinated. This is a recognised occurrence when modified live virus vaccines are used and it means that modified live virus vaccines should be used responsibly. It does not make sense to risk vaccinating at a time when the vector is most active, i.e. during the high vector season of November to May.

Says Professor Ian Sanne, Founding Director of the Equine Health Fund, "This is an important breakthrough in the understanding of the live attenuated vaccine, and outbreaks in the 'control zone' in the Western Cape. It is important that equestrian sport and racing organizers consider the impact of the new vaccination schedule on the calendar planning and sports events. A period of low or no competition in the winter months of July and August will help support the competitors and trainers to complete the vaccination schedules. The traditional vaccination time in December/January forms part of the high transmission risk period and is not suitable for safe vaccination. It is conceivable that a change in vaccination timing, and an improvement in vaccine coverage will reduce the incidence of AHS disease significantly."

Benefits of vaccinating during the recommended period

- Horses vaccinated between 1 June and 31 October will have had sufficient time to respond to the vaccine ahead of the high risk period.
- By vaccinating between 1 June – 31 October, i.e. during the time when vectors are much less active, there will be a significantly reduced risk of infection resulting from the involvement of AHS vaccine virus and therefore transmission of the virus to other, possibly more vulnerable horses.
- Horses vaccinated during the period 1 June to 31 October, will be able to move into the AHS Controlled Area following a 40 day post vaccination movement restriction.

<http://www.equinehealthfund.co.za/News/Vaccinationperiodarticle.aspx>

EHF INTRODUCES THE HORSE IMPORT EXPORT TASK TEAM (HIETT)

Read about the important role that this Team is playing for the good of our horses.

THE HORSE IMPORT EXPORT TASK TEM

In light of the current obstacles to importing and exporting horses mostly due to African horse sickness (AHS), and particularly with the intention of Government to bid for the 2024 Olympics, it became necessary to set up a task team that will address these obstacles in an urgent manner. HIETT is facilitated by EHF.

It was agreed that members of the task team should consist of veterinarian representatives from

- Government (DAFF and W Cape Veterinary Services. Other provincial veterinary services would be included as and when required);
- Equine Health Fund (EHF);
- Equine Research Centre (ERC);
- South African Equine Veterinary Association (SAEVA);
- South African Equestrian Federation (SAEF)

Additional veterinary/non veterinary members may be co-opted when it was felt they would benefit the HIETT.

The HIETT is chaired by Dr Bev Parker.

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the HIETT are as follows:

- To exchange information on equine diseases in South Africa with emphasis on trade and international movement of horses;
- To assess the practical problems of surveillance, control and eradication of infectious diseases of equines in South Africa;
- To assist with scientific guidance on the development of policies relating to control of equine diseases with the potential to affect trade in equines;
- To assist with improving the collection, use and interpretation of statistical information on equine diseases in South Africa to facilitate disease reporting.

The members of HIETT are, with the exception of the secretary, veterinarians who have knowledge of the major diseases of equines, as well as experience in international trade in equines. Members from industry may be co-opted as required. The HIETT was established in August 2014 and meets quarterly.

Issues being addressed by HIETT include :

- AHS Outbreaks
- AHS vaccination: Change in the AHS vaccination policy arising out of ERC research findings from the 2014 Porterville outbreak; liaison with AHS vaccine manufacturer re vaccine supply
- Movement control: policies- high risk areas, low risk areas, elite performance horses, imported horses, approval of new stop-over facility en route to Surveillance Zone
- Surveillance: Sentinels, post outbreak surveillance, national reporting of AHS cases
- AHS Diagnostics: Validation of RT-PCR tests;

<http://www.equinehealthfund.co.za/News/HorseImportExportTaskTeamarticle.aspx>

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST AHS?

Please visit the Equine Health Fund website to find out more :

<http://www.equinehealthfund.co.za/News/YouWanttoHelpintheFightAgainstAHS.aspx>