

22 February 2024

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL ATHLETES

UPDATE ON EQUINE INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS

There are a large number of horses presented at Competitions with irregular passports. One of the biggest concerns is the number of passports, which do not comply with the rules on Vaccination. The SAEF Veterinary Committee has therefore updated the AHS and Equine Influenza Vaccines Directive for your urgent attention.

Please take note of this directive, especially regarding Equine Influenza Primary Vaccinations.

The Vaccination rules are contained in the FEI/SAEF Veterinary Regulations, which are in place for the Welfare of the Horse.

IN SUMMARY:

1. EQUINE INFLUENZA VACCINE

All horses competing at SAEF events must have an Equine Influenza Vaccine within 6 months and 21 days of competition. **All horses must have had a primary course of Equine Influenza** (Only exception are horses that have been vaccinated every year without a primary course since 2005)

Vaccine 1 (V1) First vaccine of the Primary Course. Horse is not eligible to compete.

Vaccine 2 (V2) First booster. Administered between 21 – 92 days after V1.

(From 2024 it will be 21–60 days) Horse will be eligible to compete after 7 days.

Vaccine 3 (V3) Second booster of the Primary Course, administered **within** 6 months after V2.

Thereafter, if the horse is not competing booster vaccines may be given every 12 months. BUT if the year is exceeded, a Primary Course must be repeated.

For competition purposes the horse must have an Equine Influenza vaccine within 6 months and 21 days of competition. E.g. Your horse has had V1 – V3. You do not compete, but 10 months later you decide to enter a competition. Ensure that an Equine Influenza vaccine is administered, and your horse will be eligible to compete after 7 days. It is not necessary to repeat the Primary Course if you have not exceeded a year.

NB: NO HORSE MAY COMPETE FOR 7 DAYS FOLLOWING ANY VACCINATION.

CONSTITUENT MEMBERS: All Discipline Associations, Associate Members and Athlete's Commission & Provincial Federations

President: Professor Ian Sanne
Vice President: Sandra Copeland
Secretary General: Sharlene Venter
Treasurer: Helen Thrush
Athletes' Rep: Vacant
Associates Rep: Glynis Fuller

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VERY IMPORTANT

All horses must have their Equine Influenza Primary Course Vaccinations recorded in their latest FEI Group IX Passport by **30 April 2024**. If a horse passport is found upon inspection, to not have the Equine Influenza Primary Course Vaccination recorded, the horse will not be eligible to compete in a competition. Please note below the wording to be used by the veterinarian, for the vaccination history to be transferred to the latest FEI Group IX Passport.

Article 1002 Vaccinations and Infectious Diseases

Wording for transcriptions or confirmation of previous vaccination/s from Art 1002

Article 1002

10. When a new or duplicate equine Passport or FEI Recognition Card is issued, the Horse's veterinarian can use the following statement to summarise a long equine influenza history: ***"The vaccination history and primary course of this Horse is correct to date in accordance with the FEI Veterinary Regulations. Last vaccination on 00/00/00 date".*** **Must be signed, stamped and dated by the veterinarian.**

The last Vaccination in the previous passport must be transcribed into the new passport by the veterinarian.

2. AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS VACCINE (AHS)

African Horse Sickness is a controlled disease in South Africa, and as such the State Veterinary Department must be notified of any positive cases. According to the Government 'Animal Diseases Act 35 of 1984', all Equidae must be vaccinated against AHS annually, (except in the Controlled AHS Zones of the Western Cape).

The only vaccine currently registered in terms of Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 1947 (Act no 36 of 47) for AHS and therefore the only "efficient/effective remedy" as described above is the live virus vaccine produced by Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP).

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For Competition purposes the following apply:

- i) Horses must be vaccinated against AHS 1 and AHS 2 once in each calendar year. (Exception is the Free and Surveillance Zones of the AHS Controlled area, who require written permission for vaccination, from State Vet Boland.
- ii) The only accepted registered vaccine for competition purposes is the OBP vaccine, in terms of the 'Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 1947 (Act 36 of 47).
- iii) AHS vaccines must be administered by a veterinarian, who is required to sign and stamp the passport.
- iv) Vaccines must be administered with a minimum of 3 weeks (21 days) apart. Vaccines given less than 3 weeks will invalidate both vaccines. (It has come to the notice of SAEF the growing number of horses that are receiving the second AHS vaccine within 15 to 20 days of the first. Not only is the horse ineligible to compete, but the welfare of the horse becomes compromised.)
- v) For competition purposes horses residing in the Free and Surveillance Zones of the Western Cape do not require AHS vaccine. However, should they leave the Free and Surveillance Zones they will be required to have AHS vaccine, both for competition purposes and for movement back into the Controlled area.
- vi) Vaccination is only allowed in the Controlled Zones, between 1st June and 31st October each year. Whilst it is strongly recommended that horses are not vaccinated during high midge prevalence, vaccination times are not legislated in the Infected Zone.
- vii) Due to the shortage of AHS vaccine during 2023, the SAEF issued a dispensation for all competition horses. **"For competition purposes horses must at least have received one AHS 1 and one AHS 2 vaccine between 1 June 2022 and 30 June 2024."**

The SAEF is aware of the current problems with availability of AHS vaccine. The SAEF is closely monitoring the situation and will consider issuing a new or updated dispensation when and if the need arises.

NB: NO VACCINE MAY BE ADMINISTERED WITHIN 7 DAYS OF COMPETITION

Sheelagh Higgerty

Chairperson, SAEF Veterinary Committee

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