

24th June 2025

UPDATED AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS (AHS) VACCINATIONS

Please read the update carefully which applies to all competition horses that take part in any event under the auspices of the SAEF.

Currently, we are assured by Onderstepoort Biologicals that there is no shortage of the African Horse Sickness Vaccine.

The following point (i) issued in August erroneously allowed 3.5 years without demonstrating the administration of a vaccine. The SAEF have always attempted to maintain the 24 month period allowed for movement back into the Western Cape Controlled area. However, point (i) will be accepted for competition purposes, until 1st December 2025. Owners are, however, encouraged to vaccinate their horses on an annual basis outside the Free & Surveillance Zones to mitigate the risk of their horses contracting AHS, particularly as there is currently no shortage of the AHS vaccine.

- i) As per the directive issued on the 8th August 2024, **for competition purposes in the AHS infected zone, horses must have received at least one AHS bottle 1 and one AHS bottle 2 vaccine between 1 June 2022 and 1st December 2025.**
- ii) **From 1 December 2025 for competition purposes in the AHS infected zone, horses must have received at least one AHS 1 and one AHS 2 vaccine in each calendar year. (i.e. between 1 January and 31st December of each year),**
- ii) **Horses residing in the AHS controlled area within the AHS free and surveillance zones of the Cape do not require AHS vaccination in order to compete. However, should these horses leave the AHS controlled area, they will require vaccination against AHS as described in i) and ii) above. For movement into the AHS controlled area of the Western Cape, a horse must have received its AHS Vaccines within 24 months of entry. Any change to this requirement will be communicated by DALRRD and is outside the administrative control of SAEF.**
- iii) Horses residing within the AHS protection zone require AHS vaccination in order to compete both within the AHS controlled area and, within the AHS infected zone as described in i) and ii).
- iv) The only vaccine accepted for competition purposes is the Onderstepoort Biological Products vaccine, as it is currently the only registered vaccine against AHS in terms of the 'Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 1947 (Act 36 of 47).
- v) **AHS vaccines must be supplied and administered by a registered veterinarian, who is required to sign and stamp the passport as part of the vaccination certification.**
- vi) The current AHS vaccine is an attenuated live vaccine supplied in two bottles AHS1 and AHS 2. The two vaccine bottles must be administered at least 3 weeks apart. If vaccines are given less

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than 3 weeks apart, both vaccines are invalidated, making the horse ineligible to compete and compromising its welfare. **Research has shown that leaving a longer interval between vaccines is better for producing greater immunity.**

- vii) In the AHS infected zone, it is strongly recommended that horses are not vaccinated during periods of high midge prevalence due to the risk of vaccine virus transmission by the midge vector.
- viii) **AHS vaccination is only allowed in the AHS controlled area between 1st June and 31st October each year due to the transmission risk. Owners wishing to have their horses vaccinated against African Horse Sickness in the Free and Surveillance zones of the Western Cape for competition purposes outside the 2 zones, must contact the state vet in the Western Cape for permission to vaccinate.**

UPDATED EQUINE INFLUENZA VACCINES

All horses competing in any SAEF sanctioned event require Equine Influenza vaccination. The vaccination must be supplied, administered and signed by the veterinarian. The following is the protocol for administering the vaccine. All horses must be able to demonstrate a Primary Vaccination unless they have been given Equine Influenza annually without exceeding the year since 2005.

- i) V1 - Day 0 Horse not eligible to compete
- ii) V2 - 21 – 60 days after V1. (Prior to January 2024 21 – 92 days) Horse eligible to compete after 7 days
- iii) V3 – within 6 months and 21 days of V2 (Prior to Jan 24 – within 7 months of V2)
- Those horses vaccinated prior to 1 January 2024, **according to the protocol in place at the time, are not required to redo their primary vaccinations.**

NO HORSE MAY COMPETE FOR 7 DAYS FOLLOWING ANY VACCINATION

Kind regards



Sharlene Venter
Secretary General – SAEF



Dr Sheelagh Higgerty
SAEF Head Veterinarian

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