



16th February 2018

Dear Members

It has come to our attention that the FEI has had a positive doping result for a South African Show Jumping horse and the source was Scopolamine. This substance is a constituent part of Buscopan and as such was originally listed as a prohibited substance, it has since been downgraded to a specified substance. Specified substances according to the FEI website are those 'which are more likely to have been ingested by horses for a purpose other than the enhancement of sport performance, for example through a contaminated food substance'. The most likely source of Scopolamine is the plant *Datura* otherwise known as Oliboom. *Datura* is an invasive plant species in South Africa and as explained in Annexure A (a snippet from Lesley Henderson's book, *Alien Weeds and Invasive Plants*), this plant is present in cultivated lands in South Africa as well as roadsides and riverbanks. Henderson further explains that the whole plant is poisonous and not just the seeds. Although horses wouldn't choose to eat this plant, when it is present in the hay, it is unavoidable, thus causing so many positive cases of Scopolamine findings in South African horses. The prevalence of the plant is increasing and as such we expect to get more positives. Other disciplines have had numerous positive findings in FEI testing, at least one of which is presently under review.

The Jockey Club of South Africa has doubled its threshold for scopolamine as a result of the many positives and after consultation with veterinarians and other professionals, it is their view that it is highly unlikely that the chemical could be ingested from medication. If Buscopan were the source, 2 other banned substances would come up positive at the same time, this has not been the case. The only slightly positive aspect of the chemical is its short withdrawal time which has led to much fewer positives than there could have been. Please be aware of the presence of *Datura* in and around your properties and where possible make your hay and feed suppliers aware of the danger of contamination. It is the intention of SASJ in consultation with other disciplines to petition the FEI Lists Committee via our Federation, SAEF, to increase the thresholds for scopolamine particularly in Southern Africa. We will post an article with pictures on the website for your easy reference.

Kind Regards
SASJ Executive

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