



*Welcome to our August issue of the  
Equine Health Fund Newsletter*

**The Equine Health Fund extends heartfelt thanks to Ascot Stud and Wicklow Stud for their generous contributions of R10 000 each for AHS Vaccines for the indigent horse and donkey population in the Protection Zone. The challenge is out for other studs – whatever the breed of horse – to match or better this contribution.**

### GREYTON OUTREACH – JULY 2015

*Report by Dr Phillippa Burger*



On a chilly Western Cape winter day, 17 July 2015, a successful outreach to indigent horses and donkeys in the Greyton area was coordinated by Sharon Orpen (Greyton Equine Outreach) and hosted by the Greyton Riding Club. The team included Dr Kate Meiring (Cape Vet Equine Practice), Werner Gouws (Animal Health Technician, State Veterinary Services: Swellendam), Dr Phillippa Burger (MSc student, Equine Research Centre, University of Pretoria), Graham Haddow (Greyton

Riding Club) and a number of volunteers, Sharon, Jill and Nicky, from EARS (Everyone's Animal Rescue Society).

Despite the cold, there was a good turnout. 104 horses/donkeys were seen. Most had been microchipped on previous clinic days but 24 new microchips were inserted.

Each horse was checked by Dr Kate Meiring:

- with notes made in a personalized booklet and advice given to owners
- the database was updated with any owner detail changes recorded
- wound care was dealt with
- all horses were vaccinated for AHS, dipped and dewormed and microchipped if not already done

Ascot Stud and Wicklow Stud each very kindly donated R10 000 worth of AHS vaccines. This donation was facilitated by the EHF (Equine Health Fund). Western Cape Department of Agriculture also contributed AHS vaccine and dewormer.

The Equine Research Centre donated the microchips, while BringMeHome donated a microchip scanner that was used on the day and will be used on future occasions.

Dip was purchased with the funds from public donations.

Many thanks must go to the team and to the volunteers who came out to help. On previous occasions, farriers and dentists have also provided services and it is hoped that they will join in again next time.

*Breaking news ... we have just been informed of two more pledges of R10 000 each! They are from Mauritzfontein Stud (Guy Murdoch) and Lammerskraal Stud (Pieter Graaff)! Thank you so much! We put the challenge out to the Warmblood and other breed studs (see attached pledge form).*

## A CENTRAL DATABASE - THE AUSVET SOLUTION

Dr John Grewar is, in addition to being a Chief State Veterinarian in the Western Cape, technologically savvy and he was the ideal candidate to send to a workshop in Australia on Information Systems in July 2015.

Dr Grewar wrote :

*“The proposed AusVet information system for equine health in South Africa has advantages over traditional information systems. The data provider (be it the equine owner, holding manager, consulting veterinarian, State Veterinarian or testing laboratory) plays a key role in the development of the system and derives the most benefit as a result of meaningful feedback. Data entry is primarily focussed on:*

- *firstly solving issues that any given data provider may have. The data that is captured in solving these problems is then used to assist the project stakeholders with their goals, like showing trace back capabilities with movement data, or showing evidence for freedom of disease using negative reporting.*
- *secondly, the AusVet system is a developed platform where an administrative level user can, with some very basic technological training, create reports and add functionality to the entire system. This allows the system to evolve based on the needs of data providers and stakeholders without the input of hard coded programmer inputs, which can get expensive and take time to implement. In short – if change is necessary, change can easily be implemented.*

*Should stakeholders invest resources (time, money and personnel) in this system and if they follow the philosophy of treating the data provider as a primary focus, then there is an opportunity to create an equine health information system which will be sustainable, relevant and maintainable in the years to come.”*

The introduction of the AusVet Information System in South Africa will facilitate disease reporting, surveillance and movement control and will go a long way to being able to satisfy the OIE, EU and other prospective trading partner’s requirements for Disease Control and Monitoring. Even more importantly, it will facilitate understanding and disease management for owners, veterinarians, epidemiologists and researchers. Substantial funding – in the region of R4 million -is needed to go this route.

## QUESTION ASKED ... HOW LONG IS THE OBP AHS VACCINE EFFECTIVE FOR?

According to the OBP AHS vaccine pamphlet, “Foals born of unvaccinated dams can be inoculated at any age but foals of immune dams should not be vaccinated until they are at least six to seven months old.”

Dr Jacob Modumo, Business Development Officer of Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP), who manufacture the registered AHS vaccine, assisted with the following clarification: With foals, or

horses vaccinated for the first time, there may be serotype “competition” or immune-dominance of some of the serotypes. These more dominant serotypes can suppress the least dominant ones to replicate enough to stimulate an immune response. That is why the vaccination pamphlet advises that “It takes up to 2-3 vaccinations for horses to become immune to all serotypes in the vaccine.”

According to the Animal Diseases Act 35 of 1984, it is compulsory to vaccinate all horses in South Africa except horses in the African horse sickness free zone and the African horse sickness surveillance zone between the ages of 6 and 12 months, then between the ages of 12 and 18 months and then again once every year thereafter with an effective remedy.

After 3 vaccinations, tests have shown that annual vaccination results mostly in sero-conversion that picks up in 6-8 weeks post vaccination and lasts at protective level for a minimum of 10 months. Levels drop below protective level mostly from 11-12 months post vaccination. This is the justification for the recommended annual vaccination.

## SHOULD SHOW VENUES DECLARE AHS TO PROSPECTIVE COMPETITORS?

**This is a report back from a query to DAFF regarding the responsibility of reporting AHS cases**

Following enquiries regarding whether or not a show holding body may withhold the fact that a horse tested positive for AHS on the property:

1. According to the Animal Diseases Act (35 of 1984 ) Section 11:

*(1) Any owner or manager of land on which there are animals, and any owner in respect of animals, shall, whether or not such owner or manager has obtained advice regarding the health, or any certificate of fitness or health of the animals in terms of section 13 (1) (c), from the director -*

*(a) take, with due observance of the provisions of this Act, all reasonable steps to prevent the infection of the animals with any animal disease, or parasite and the spreading thereof from the relevant land or animals, or which are necessary for the eradication of animal diseases and parasites on the land or in respect of the animals; and*

*(b) whenever such animals -*

*(i) have become or can reasonably be suspected of having become infected with any animal disease or parasite, apply in respect of such animals the prescribed treatment or any other treatment which may be deemed suitable and customary in the particular circumstances; and*

*(ii) have become or can reasonably be suspected of having become infected with any controlled animal disease, immediately report such incidence in the prescribed manner to the director.*

And According to Regulation 12 of the same Act:

- (1) The reporting of the incidence or suspected incidence of a controlled animal disease by a responsible person in terms of section 11(1)(b)(ii) of the Act shall forthwith be done verbally to the responsible State Veterinarian or responsible technical officer, and shall be confirmed in writing as soon as possible thereafter.*

*[Subreg. (1) amended by R.2358 of 10 December 1993]*

- (2) A report referred to in subregulation (1) shall-*

- (a) contain the name, postal address, residential address and telephone number of the responsible person making such report;
  - (b) furnish a description of the infected or suspected of being infected controlled animal or thing, including any identification, brand or ear mark that occurs thereon;
  - (c) specify the symptoms shown by the controlled animal or thing concerned; and
  - (d) contain a description of the place where the controlled animal or thing concerned and, if applicable, any contact animal and any progeny or product of such animal are isolated as contemplated in regulation 13.
- (3) A responsible person shall also forthwith bring the incidence or suspected incidence of a controlled animal disease referred to in subregulation (1) to the notice of-
- (a) each owner or manager of adjoining land and each owner of susceptible animals on the same or adjoining land; and
  - (b) each prospective buyer of his susceptible animals as well as a person who has bought susceptible animals from him during the immediately preceding 30 days.

So taking the above into account, and having discussed the matter with the relevant people at DAFF, it would in fact not be legal to withhold information about the occurrence of AHS on a property from owners whose horses could be directly affected by an AHS positive case on that property.

In order to take legal action, there would be two options:

1. The affected owner of a horse could report the case to the Director of Animal Health, who could then lay a criminal charge against the alleged offender for contravention of the Animal Diseases Act.
2. The affected owner could lay a civil claim against the responsible show holding body. The owner would need to prove damages and show that the damages were as a result of the horse attending a show on the property where the responsible show holding body failed to notify owners about a case of AHS on the property. Damages could include a claim resulting from movement restrictions.

The short answer is “yes”, it appears that show holding bodies could be held liable if they failed to report the occurrence of SUSPECT AND CONFIRMED cases of a disease on the property to competitors.

Riders should be encouraged to put pressure on their competitive bodies to make it a requirement that to be registered as a show holding body, mandatory disease reporting responsibilities must be undertaken.

**FOR OUR READERS WHO ARE SAEF MEMBERS AND HAVEN'T YET SEEN IT,  
PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR THE SAEF DIRECTIVE FOR AHS VACCINATIONS**

## SAEF DIRECTIVE RE AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS VACCINATIONS



**SOUTH AFRICAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION**  
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17 July 2015

To All Equestrian Members

### Directive regarding the Vaccination of AHS

The Department Of Agriculture, Directorate Veterinary Services, Animal Health, recently amended the Regulations regarding the vaccination for AHS. As from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015, Horses resident in the AHS Controlled Area of the Western Cape may ONLY be vaccinated for AHS between 1 June and 31 October every year.

This created confusion amongst competitors regarding the SAEF "legal" status of their vaccinations recorded in their Horse Passports.

The veterinary Commission of the SAEF was requested to make recommendations regarding the validity of AHS vaccinations for SAEF competition purposes to assist owners who may have vaccinated their horses late in 2014 or more recently in 2015 predominantly as a result of the unavailability of AHS vaccine for several months in 2014. This recommendation was made to prevent owners who may have vaccinated recently, having to revaccinate already well vaccinated horses a few months later. The following directive was approved by the Veterinary Commission.

### AHS VACCINATION

*The Veterinary Commission will allow and support the dispensation to ALL competitors that their horses have up until the 31st October 2016 to be vaccinated against African Horse Sickness, for the purposes of competition in any SAEF associated or member discipline. This dispensation is provided that horses have had at least 3 previous AHS vaccinations administered by a registered veterinarian and recorded in the passport and were vaccinated for AHS between 1 June 2014 and 31 May 2015, i.e. AHS vaccinations were up to date at 31 May 2015.*

*This directive would not replace or supersede any DAFF ruling that may be in force. It also does not imply that horses may compete having never had an AHS vaccination before. Whilst this dispensation is issued to fall in line with the DAFF regulations for the Western Cape, it is strongly advised that in the endemic areas horses receive annual vaccination.*

**EXECUTIVE:**  
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Western Cape Equestrian Federation (WCEF)  
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North West Equestrian Federation (NWEF)  
Eastern Cape Equestrian Federation (ECEF)  
Mpumalanga Equestrian Federation (MEF)  
Limpopo Equestrian Federation (LEF)  
KwaZulu Natal Equestrian Federation (KZNEF)  
Northern Cape Equestrian Federation (NCEF)





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For your convenience please find attached to this letter the recent documentation send out by the Department regarding the vaccination of AHS. It was in view of the attached circular that the above mentioned directive was issued by the SAEF Veterinary Commission.

I trust that this directive will clear any uncertainties regarding your AHS vaccinations.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wessel Strauss".

Wessel Strauss  
Secretary General

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Nora-Jean (NJ) Freeman on behalf of Equine Health Fund – [nfreeman@witshealth.co.za](mailto:nfreeman@witshealth.co.za)