



NEWSLETTER

October 2016

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REMINDER! AHS VACCINATION IS NOT PERMITTED IN THE AHS CONTROLLED AREA BETWEEN 1 NOVEMBER AND 31 MAY

Significant developments in African horse sickness research pave the way for direct exports of horses from SA

Three significant developments in AHS research could assist in development of protocols for direct exports of horses from South Africa:

- A recent study by [the Equine Research Centre \(ERC\)](#), where samples collected between 2004 and 2014 were analysed, has revealed that AHS outbreaks in the AHS Controlled Area of the Western Cape Province were caused by transmission of AHS vaccine derived viruses. These findings led to a restricted vaccination period in the AHS Controlled Area and the strong

recommendation that horse owners vaccinate their horses between 1 June and 31 October each year in the rest of the country.

- Advances in diagnostics using the RT-PCR test means that cases of AHS can be confirmed within four hours of samples being submitted (confirmation used to take at least two weeks). The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the European Union (EU) have incorporated this test into documentation which has been proposed for ratification, a process that is currently underway.
- Another [scientific study](#) has confirmed that the risk of a horse exported from South Africa under internationally accepted standards being infected with AHS is miniscule, giving confidence to trading partners to re-examine quarantine procedures, which should boost the export market.

The next goal is to raise around six million Euro towards the trials and commercial development of a new generation AHS vaccine.

AHS Outbreak Study

(The edited version of this paper is published in the Equine Research Centre Newsletter, distributed concurrently with this newsletter)

The Equine Research Centre, based at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Onderstepoort, University of Pretoria, under the Directorship of Professor Alan Guthrie, and which is partially funded by the [Equine Health Fund](#), Wits Health Consortium, has recently published a study which examined data collected between 2004 and 2014, which was designed to examine the anomalies observed in the 2014 AHS outbreak in Porterville.

This study, co-ordinated by Dr Camilla Weyer under the supervision of Prof Guthrie, has revealed that the outbreaks of AHS that occurred in the AHS Controlled Area in the Western Cape (which was established in 1997), between 2004 and 2014 were caused by transmission of vaccine derived viruses to resident, unvaccinated horses. This study was made possible thanks to the ERC's biggest asset – an extensive and meticulous biobank of samples collected and stored by Professor Guthrie and his team over the last 25 years.

It has long been believed that illegal movement of infected equines into the AHS Controlled Area was the most probable source for the repeated outbreaks of AHS in the area, but this study has proven that this is not the case. Data from this study shows that use of polyvalent (many types included) AHSV-LAV (AHS virus -live attenuated vaccine) can result in emergence and spread of virulent viruses to resident susceptible horses. These findings are consistent for other modified live virus vaccines and this has major implications for strategies to control AHS.

This does not mean that the vaccine is harmful. The vaccine provides excellent protection if used correctly and should be administered to horses older than six months from 1 June to 31 October each year. Without vaccination, the mortality rate due to African horse sickness infection can rise to 90%. Without the current AHS vaccine, South Africa would not have a horse industry and there would be no possibility at all of export.

Competition season is unaffected

According to Professor Alan Guthrie of the ERC, "The concept that horses cannot be worked at all through the vaccination period is pure fallacy. As per the package insert, the day of vaccination needs to be observed. Horses that are having their first three vaccinations (such as young stock or imported, naive horses) need to be monitored and not overly-stressed through this period. But the

standard practise of leaving horses, or even working them lightly, is not necessary in veterans of the vaccine.”

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

In a notice dated 28 September 2016, the vaccine manufacturer supported the 1 June - 31 October restricted AHS vaccination period and confirmed that sufficient stock of the AHS vaccine is available.

Equine Research Centre’s RT-PCR Diagnostic Solution

You will have read about the ERC’s RT-PCR tests in the November 2013 edition of the [ERC Newsletter](#). An exciting follow up is that, according to Professor Guthrie, “The OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) is in the process of adopting the ERC RT-PCR test to its protocol for RT-PCR testing, and it is scheduled to be adopted by the European Union on its list of approved tests.” This is an incredible achievement from a local research facility with minimal financial support.

Previously tests for AHS and serotype identification took a minimum of two weeks, often resulting in people avoiding the expense of the test, and simply proceeding with symptomatic treatment!

The validation of the ERC’s RT-PCR test, which has a potential turn-around of only four hours from sample receipt, could mean a reduction in time spent in pre-export quarantine for possible export, as horses do not need to be isolated extensively whilst waiting for test results.

AusVet Risk Assessment (done in collaboration with ERC and EHF)

The details of this Risk Assessment, which has now been published in the prestigious PLOS ONE scientific journal, were included in the June edition of the [EHF Newsletter](#). This study by AusVet, which used data provided by the ERC, confirmed the likelihood of undetected AHS infection in horses exported from South Africa can be reduced to miniscule by appropriate risk management measures and the risk assessment provides support for countries to negotiate export protocols with South Africa.

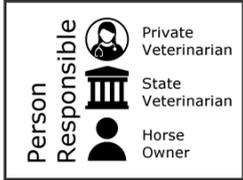
With the latest scientific information and the validation of diagnostic testing in-hand, South African horses can be safely exported all around the world while fundraising takes place for the longer term goal : A new AHS vaccine.

SUMMARY OF MOVEMENT CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Below is a brief schematic detailing the requirements and responsibilities regarding moving horses in South Africa into AHS control zones of higher control. There are responsibilities from both the horse owner/manager and the private veterinarian to ensure that horses are moved legally and travel with the correct paper work. The primary starting point of movement control is through the completion and submission of the movement application form by the owner/manager of the horses. This allows the smooth processing of requirements in good time so that movements are legal and stress free for all involved.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL HORSE MOVEMENTS INTO AN AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS ZONE OF HIGHER CONTROL



- Passport**
- approved by State Vet Boland for movement purposes
 - ID page completed by veterinarian
- AHS vaccinations**
- CANNOT be <40 days
 - AND CANNOT be >24 months ago
 - MUST be performed by veterinarian
- State Vet PERMIT**
- confirmation of no AHS cases at origin
- HEALTH CHECK by private vet**
- WITHIN 48 hrs PRIOR to movement
 - completed in APPROVED passport
- PRENOTIFICATION of movement to SV Boland**
- prenote@myhorse.org.za
 - WITHIN 48 hrs prior to movement

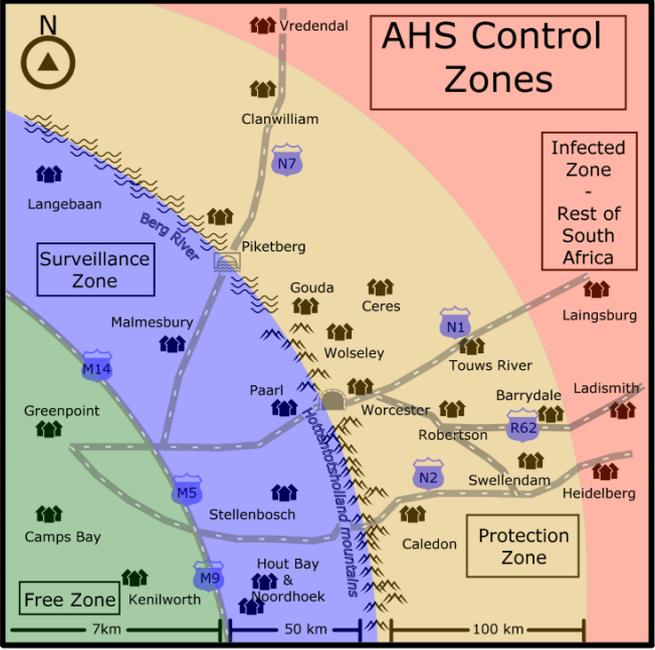
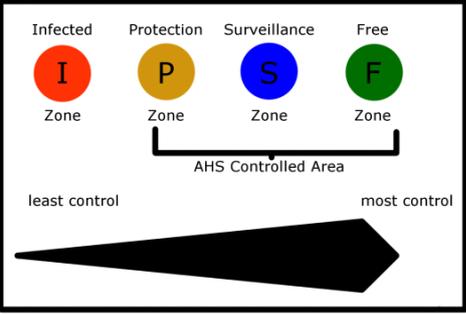
ORDER OF EVENTS

MOVEMENT APPLICATION

- ALL movements to a zone of higher control require a movement application to be sent to State Vet (SV) Boland
- Complete application form www.myhorse.org.za/forms/moveapply.pdf
- Email to Movement Committee move@myhorse.org.za

DOCUMENTS TO MOVE WITH

- Approved horse passport with AHS vaccination and health check info included
- State Vet Permit
- Any concession documents



STOP OVER QUARANTINE FACILITIES

In order to manage the risk of introducing AHS into the AHS Controlled Area via an infected horse, direct movement of horses from areas of high risk of AHS circulation is prohibited.

A period of increased movement control for horses moving from the AHS Infected Zone (IZ) into the AHS Controlled Area in the Western Cape is implemented each year during the time period when the vector is most active and therefore transmission most likely (February to June).

In order to facilitate movement of horses into the AHS controlled area during this period, a step-wise “Stop Over Quarantine” (SOQ) protocol has been developed. State Veterinary approved SOQ holdings are situated in low risk areas where there is adequate state veterinary supervision. Horses are held at the approved holding for a minimum of 14 days and tested to prove they are free of circulating AHSV before they are allowed to move to the AHS Controlled Area.

These facilities, although approved and monitored by State Veterinary authorities, are not State enterprises. They are managed commercially by private individuals. The manager at each yard is in charge of ensuring that the protocol is followed and should this not occur the approval will be withdrawn. The State does not have any influence on the fees charged by such facilities, as this is a business arrangement between the client and the facility owner and manager.

Booking a place at one of these facilities is the responsibility of the horse owner/ agent. Application for movement to any of these facilities must be made to move@myhorse.org.za, PRIOR to arrival at the facility. A health certificate for movement is required issued within 48 hrs prior to the movement to the facility. All costs involved in the Stop Over Quarantine are for the owner/ agent’s expense.

Approved Stop Over Quarantine Facilities					
Area	State Veterinarian	Authorised Manager	E-mail	Contact No.	Cell & Whatsapp
Beaufort West: Klawervlei	Dr Jaco Pienaar	Charles Koster	ckoster@isat.co.za (Catherine Koster)	023 418 1671	082 821 7719
Beaufort West: Showgrounds	Dr Jaco Pienaar	Lien van Rooyen	hs@workmail.co.za		083 292 0891
Touwsrivier: Lettaskraal	Dr Christie Kloppers	Izak Nieuwoudt	lettaskraaleqs@roodtinc.com	023 358 1035	082 776 3073
George : Crabbet Park	Dr Edwin Dyason	Carolyn Berman	Carolyn@katavibotanicals.com		082 466 1802
Springbok : Biesjesfontein	Dr Lina Gerber	Anne Barnes	david@namaquahorsetrails.co.za		082 877 5764
Dedorns* (Protection Zone) : Infinity Stables	Dr Christie Kloppers	Sunia de Kock	sunia@grapealliance.co.za		083 714 9181

*This Stop Over Quarantine Facility is situated in the AHS Protection Zone and a stricter vector protected protocol is followed. Horses MUST be tested prior to movement to the facility, and only certain categories of horses may be kept at this facility. For more information, contact Dr Camilla Weyer.

EHF, SAPS AND W CAPE STATE VETERINARIANS COLLABORATE IN AHS CONTROL TRAINING

Collaboration between the Western Cape State Veterinary Officials and South African Police Services (“SAPS”) is required to ensure proper control of horse movements in the Western Cape controlled zones for African horse sickness (“AHS”). Regular roadblocks and the capacity to prosecute transgressors successfully is essential for this purpose.



A training workshop organised by Dr Trudie Prinsloo and sponsored by the Equine Health Fund (“EHF”) (Wits Health Consortium) for all the individuals involved in roadblocks was held on 30 June at Nuy Valley, just outside Worcester. Officials came from as far as Beaufort West and a total of 35 people attended the training, of which 15 were State Veterinary Officials, 13 SAPS members and the remainder represented the Equine Health Fund in various capacities.



Training covered the importance of AHS and the reasons for control, procedures for control of AHS in the Western Cape and documentation required for legal horse movements into the AHS controlled area.

The second session of the day dealt with the legal side of the training with a presentation of the application of the Animal Diseases Act in AHS control by Dr Trudie Prinsloo and a discussion of the Criminal Procedures Act and its relevance presented by Captain Van Lill from the SAPS.

The afternoon session was a practical demonstration on horse identification and the passport system. Two horses were kindly provided for this purpose by Dr Marianne Thomson, a private veterinarian in the area.

There was great interest and enthusiasm. This kind of initiative fosters a good working relationship between Veterinary Services and the SAPS.

AHS CONTROL – ROADBLOCK REPORT

On 5 August 2016, 6 officials from the South African Police Services, 7 officials from the Western Cape Veterinary Services as well as 6 individuals representing the Equine Health Fund met at the weighbridge near Rawsonville next to the N1 to conduct a roadblock organized specifically as part of the ongoing control of horse movements into the AHS controlled areas in the Western Cape.



Warrant Officer Nico du Toit from the Worcester Stock Theft Unit was in charge of the operation on behalf of the SAPS and Dr Gary Bührmann headed up the Veterinary Services team. The Provincial Traffic Department has officials present at this site daily and the operation was approved by Mr Giba, the Head of the Provincial Traffic Department for the

Worcester area. Mr Giba personally attended the roadblock to meet some of the officials involved and he is very supportive of collaboration between the various state departments.

The traffic officials on the N1 pulled over all vehicles transporting horses. Identification spot checks were done and all documentation was checked. There was one transgression where the SV movement permit had been issued, but was not present in the vehicle. The owner was contacted and reprimanded. The people transporting the horses were very co-operative and supportive.

Since this site falls within the jurisdiction of the Worcester State Veterinary Office, Dr Christi Kloppers and his team made use of the opportunity to check for other transgressions in terms of the Animal Diseases Act and the Meat Safety Act. Vehicles with livestock, hides and skins and meat were inspected.

The SAPS made use of the opportunity to inspect livestock for the presence of branding and tattooing marks as required by the Animal Identification Act. Two members of the Breederiver K9 Unit were also present with sniffer dogs that check vehicles for the presence of illegal drugs.

This was an extremely successful operation and the aim is that it will become a regular activity.

OFFICIALS INVOLVED		
Western Cape Veterinary Services	Equine Health Fund	SAPS
Dr Gary Bührmann	Dr John Grewar	WO WN Du Toit (Stock Theft Unit Worcester)
Dr Christi Kloppers	Dr Camilla Weyer	Sgt M Du Toit (Stock Theft Unit Worcester)
Mr Dawid Visser	Dr Phillippa Burger	WO A Van Greunen (Stock Theft Unit Kuilsrivier)
Mr Malcolm Cupido	Dr Trudie Prinsloo	WO S Van Zyl (Stock Theft Unit Kuilsrivier)
Mr Rudolf Nieuwenhuis	Ms Danielle Pienaar	WO G Dippenaar (K9 Unit Breederivier)
Ms Thuli Tsele	Ms Esthea Russouw	Sgt Baadjies (K9 Unit Breederivier)
Mr Marius Vrey		



A further R89 820 received from SAEF Members – Thank you!

These funds have been paid directly to the Equine Research Centre for their ongoing research into outbreaks in the infected area.

EHF BABY BOOM ...

Dr Camilla Weyer and Esthea Russouw of EHF recently had little ones, now it's Dr Phillippa Burger's turn! Congratulations Phil – we hope your pregnancy goes well, and we look forward to meeting Baby Burger.

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