



SOUTH AFRICAN EQUINE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 16539 PRETORIA NORTH 0116 TEL 012 5463442

CELL 082 575 6479 FAX 012 546 4057 E-MAIL vetlink@mweb.co.za

SAEVA VACCINATION POLICY DOCUMENT 2024:

African horse sickness vaccination priority policy during supply crisis

Background:

African horse sickness (AHS)

AHS is a controlled disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84) South Africa. Yearly vaccination in the AHS infected zone of the country and in the AHS protection zone of the AHS controlled area is a legal requirement for all horses. This means all horses in these areas must be vaccinated once every calendar year with a registered product. At present there is only one registered product for AHS vaccination which is a live attenuated vaccine supplied by Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP).

Horses in the AHS controlled area within the Western Cape (AHS protection, surveillance and free zones in the AHS controlled area) may only be vaccinated for AHS between 1 June and 31 October every year as stipulated by the Veterinary Procedural Notice: AHS Control issued by the Directorate: Animal Health under the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84). AHS vaccination within the AHS surveillance and free zones is not allowed unless written permission from veterinary services in the Western Cape Province has been granted.

In the AHS infected zone of the country (the rest of the country outside of the AHS controlled area), it is preferable to also vaccinate horses for AHS between 1 June and 31st October. Where it is not possible to vaccinate horses during this preferred period, it is advisable to implement additional vector protection during the vaccination process to reduce the risk of uptake and transmission of AHS vaccine virus.

At present we are experiencing a continued crisis in supply of the registered AHS live attenuated vaccine supplied by OBP. During this time, and any other time, where supply may be an issue, veterinarians must be relied on to ensure that distribution and administration of the AHS vaccine that

is available, is done in a responsible and prioritized manner, to ensure that optimal disease control is achieved under the crisis of supply.

Recommendation on Priority:

We believe that vaccination distribution should be limited to direct supply of veterinarians and veterinary-only wholesalers, with the understanding that these wholesalers supply veterinarians only, to ensure that priority populations are vaccinated responsibly and correctly.

Below is the order in which vaccination administration should be prioritized by veterinarians during a time of supply crisis:

1. Horses that are under the age of 3 years old, or with less than 3 sets of vaccinations previously should be vaccinated as priority as they would be at highest risk of infection and disease. This is especially important for horses that are resident in areas of high risk for AHS infection (AHS endemic areas of the country). Horses living in low-risk area should be prioritized if travelling to high-risk areas during high-risk times of year.
2. Horses that are resident in areas of high risk for AHS infection or horses living in low-risk areas if travelling to high-risk areas during high-risk times of year, that have been vaccinated more than 24 months ago.
3. Horses in RSA with less than 6 sets of vaccinations in their life and/or horses that are competing or moving regularly into high risk areas therefore increasing the risk of AHS spread.

Links:

- <http://www.myhorse.org.za/ahsvpn/>
- <https://www.dalrrd.gov.za/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Animal-Health/importexport/legislation/diseaseact>

South African Equine Veterinary Association

August 2024