



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
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To: All individual horse owners
Breed Societies
Artificial Insemination and Breeding Centres
Press and Media
SAVA
SAVC
SAEVA
SANEF
SAHRA

RE: UPDATE ON CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Since the 2012/2013 breeding season, the equine industry in South Africa has been required to adhere to the testing regime required for Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) screening. The purpose of this screening programme was to substantiate the theory that the CEM outbreak identified in 2011 was not widespread and to provide some of the information that will be required to ultimately re-establish South Africa's CEM-free status.

Trace-forward and trace-back investigations identified a total of 39 cases, all of which have been treated successfully. Typing of the causative bacterium demonstrates that it is highly likely that there was a point introduction of the disease into the country and only horses in contact with the positive horses at the index property, an equine artificial breeding centre, were exposed to CEM. Thanks to the excellent co-operation by the equine industry, the evidence gathered from the nationwide screening programme shows that the CEM status in South Africa is currently stable, with no new cases being identified. As a result of the above, the Directorate: Animal Health (DAH) at DAFF is finalizing its records in order to close off all of the CEM cases on the international OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) reporting system, which will signal the end of the 2011 CEM outbreak..

Once the 2011 CEM outbreak has been closed, the DAH will tackle the next step, namely to try and officially declare South Africa free of CEM via the OIE system according to internationally accepted standards. In order to make such a

declaration, South Africa will have to demonstrate ongoing surveillance for CEM – even after the declared end of the 2011 outbreak. However, as the risk profile has decreased considerably, it has been decided that only a single set of swabs will be required for each stallion during the next testing season. (July 1 – June 30). This will replace the currently-stipulated requirement of two sets of tests per stallion and breeding season.

The reduced single CEM test requirement will continue to apply to all stallions used for breeding, either by natural mating or artificial insemination. A clearance certificate will be issued by the Equine Research Centre laboratory subject to negative results from this single test and only foals born to stallions in possession of a CEM-clearance certificate valid for that year will be allowed to be registered.

KIND REGARDS,



Dr Mpho Maja
DIRECTOR: ANIMAL HEALTH



The Registrar
ANIMAL IMPROVEMENT ACT

Date: 2014-08-11