



SOUTH AFRICAN EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION

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Notice 20 July 2018

AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS AND EQUINE INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS

There appears to be much confusion about the rules pertaining to vaccinations for competition horses.

For all horses wishing to participate in any SAEF discipline show, the following vaccinations are compulsory:

1. AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS VACCINATION (AHS)

Horses for competition purposes must be vaccinated annually against AHS, with an effective remedy. Only a vaccine registered under the Fertilizers, Farm Feed, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act, 1947 (Act No.36 of 1947), including any medicine or veterinary medicine as defined in section 1 of the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act, 1965 (Act No. 101 of 1965) will be accepted as an effective remedy. The only registered vaccine for AHS in South Africa is the African horse sickness vaccine produced by Onderstepoort Biological Products.

Both AHS bottle 1 and AHS bottle 2 must be given a minimum of 21 days apart. The interval between vaccines may be longer than 21 days, but if horses are vaccinated with the 2nd bottle of the vaccine less than 21 days after the first bottle, both vaccinations will be invalid. (Scientific research has shown that if the period between the two bottles of the vaccine is increased to 4 – 6 weeks, it is safer for the horse, as with a longer interval, the horse is less likely to still have virus circulating from the first vaccine at the time of administration of the second vaccine.)

Horses for competition purposes require AHS 1 and AHS 2 every calendar year. For example, a horse may receive the first vaccine in June 2018 and the second vaccine in August 2018. This horse has until the end of 2019 to complete both AHS 1 and AHS 2, i.e. AHS 1 and AHS 2 must be administered at least once in each calendar year.

Many veterinarians recommend the administration of AHS 2 before AHS 1, especially in naive animals (imported horses, foals and horses vaccinated for AHS for the first time). This practice is not illegal if done under the supervision of your veterinarian.

Please note, that for those competitors residing in the Western Cape AHS free and surveillance zones, permission to vaccinate for AHS has to be requested in writing on the required form sent to vaccinate@myhorse.org.za. In the Western Cape AHS free, surveillance and protection zones, horses may only be vaccinated for AHS between 1st June and 31st October each year. Whilst it is not a requirement that horses in the AHS infected zone be vaccinated between 1st June and 31st October, it has been strongly recommended that horses are vaccinated for AHS during this period in the infected zone.

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Acting Treasurer: Jan Joubert
Secretary General: Wessel Strauss

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Gauteng Equestrian Federation (GEF)
Western Cape Equestrian Federation (WCEF)
Free State Equestrian Federation (FSEF)
North West Equestrian Federation (NWEF)
Eastern Cape Equestrian Federation (ECEF)
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The SAEF has approved a dispensation for competition horses that reside in the AHS free and surveillance zones of the Western Cape in that they are not required to have annual AHS vaccinations to compete in events in the free and surveillance zones. However, should they wish to leave the free or surveillance zone to compete in the infected or protection zones, they will be required to comply with the SAEF annual AHS vaccination requirements.

2. EQUINE INFLUENZA VACCINE

The SAEF veterinary committee recommends that the first three equine influenza (EI) vaccinations are given in accordance with the vaccine manufacturer's recommendations. (Generally the recommendations are that the first two vaccines are administered with a 4 week interval and the first booster is administered 5 months later.)

According to the FEI regulations: an initial primary course of two vaccinations must be given, the second vaccination must be administered within 21-92 days after the first vaccination and the first booster must be administered within 7 calendar months following the date of administration of the second vaccination of the primary course.

It is important that the primary course should consist of the same proprietary vaccine.

After the first three vaccinations, booster vaccinations must be administered at a maximum of 12 month intervals, however horses competing in events must have received a booster within 6 months +21 days before arrival at the event.

The most frequently asked question has been 'Why do we have to vaccinate for equine influenza every 6 months for competition purposes?' According to the equine influenza (EI) vaccine package insert, provided the primary course of two vaccinations and the first booster has been given, horses will have an immunity for a period of 1 year. This immunity may be "protection from clinical signs" which is not the same as "protection from infection". After 6 months, horses can be infected with EI but show no clinical signs. These horses can act as "Trojan horses", unwittingly shedding virus at events which can result in explosive outbreaks when horses return home from an event, especially as horses that remain at home are not always well vaccinated.

For this reason, responsible equestrian sporting bodies require that horses that compete at an event are vaccinated for EI within a period not exceeding 6 months. This policy ensures that the vast majority of the horses at the event are "protected from infection", which reduces the chances of subclinical EI being transmitted at an event.

An outbreak of EI could result in huge economic losses and the cancellation of all events, which is less likely to occur if the equine population is well vaccinated.

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(Horses that have received the primary course prior to 1 January 2005 are not required to fulfil the requirement for the first booster, providing there has not been an interval of more than 12 months between each of their subsequent annual booster vaccinations. Horses whose booster vaccinations have exceeded a 12 month interval must receive the primary course of vaccinations.)

3. VACCINATION AND COMPETITION

No vaccination (AHS, Equine Influenza, Rabies, EHV or any other vaccination) may be given within 7 days prior to a competition. The start of competition is 1 (one) hour before the horse inspection (trot up), or the first class.

WE URGE ALL COMPETITORS TO ACT RESPONSIBLY AND COMPLY WITH THE SAEF/FEI VACCINATION REGULATIONS. THEY ARE IN PLACE TO PROTECT ALL HORSES THAT COMPETE AT EVENTS.

SAEF Veterinary Committee

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