



Directorate Animal Health, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development  
Private Bag X138, Pretoria 0001

**Enquiries:** Dr Kerry Loxley • Tel: +27 12 319 7684 • E-mail: KerryL@dalrrd.gov.za  
**Ref:** 12/1/8/33/1

To all Equine owners, managers, veterinarians, and other role players

## **DELAYED START OF AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS VACCINATION PERIOD IN THE CONTROLLED AREA**

Due to the still active outbreak of African horse sickness (AHS) within the AHS controlled area protection zone, as well as recent confirmed cases of Equine encephalosis virus, another orbivirus similarly transmitted by the *Culicoides* midge vector, the start of the AHS vaccination period within the AHS controlled area has been delayed.

Vaccination against AHS may therefore **not** commence within the AHS controlled area on 1 June 2021. This includes the AHS protection zone, surveillance zone and free zone. The situation will be reviewed, and the risk re-assessed on a 2-weekly basis with the new vaccination season start date to be announced as soon as possible.

This decision has not been taken lightly, as we are acutely aware of the logistical difficulties relating to vaccination timing for competition and movement. However, the safety of the AHS controlled area and reducing the risk of introducing the modified live AHS vaccine into an already unstable environment must take precedence.

Please continue to send in applications for permission to vaccinate so that they can be processed timeously once vaccination is permitted.

The following information has been included for ease of reference.

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING VACCINATION AGAINST AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS (AHS) IN SOUTH AFRICA

AHS is a controlled animal disease in terms of the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84) and certain measures have been prescribed for AHS control. Please take note of the following:

### Zoning

Certain parts of the Western Cape Province have been legislated as the “AHS controlled area” in terms of the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84). The AHS controlled area is made up of three zones: the AHS protection zone, the AHS surveillance zone and the AHS free zone. The rest of South Africa, outside the AHS controlled area, is considered endemic for AHS and is known as the AHS infected zone.

The only vaccine currently registered in terms of Fertilizers, Farm Feeds, Agricultural Remedies and Stock Remedies Act 1947 (Act no 36 of 47) for AHS and therefore the only “efficient/effective remedy” as described above is the live virus vaccine produced by Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP).

Please see the below excerpt from Table 2 of the Regulations to the Animal Diseases Act 1984 (Act no 35 of 84) regarding vaccination against AHS.

Excerpt from Table 2 of the Regulations to the Act regarding vaccination for AHS

<b>Animal Disease</b>	<b>Controlled Veterinary act to be performed in respect of-</b>	
	<b>Susceptible animals</b>	<b>Contact animals</b>
<i>African Horse sickness</i>	<p>1. All equines in the Republic except equines in the African Horse sickness free zone and the African Horse sickness surveillance zone as described in Table 1, shall between the ages of 6 and 12 months, then between the ages of 12 and 18 months and then again once every</p>	<p>1. Contact animals in a controlled area shall be isolated and immunised as determined by the director.</p> <p>2. Contact animals outside the controlled area shall not be moved into a controlled area without the</p>

	<p><i>year thereafter be immunized with an effective remedy by the responsible person; Provided that the director in a particular case may determine that such immunization must be carried out by an officer or veterinarian.</i></p> <p>2. <i>Equines in the African Horse sickness free zone and surveillance zone as described in Table 1 shall only be immunized with the written permission of the director.</i></p>	<i>permission of the director.</i>
--	--	------------------------------------

On 26 March 2015, the period of vaccination was reduced to the low midge activity period of the year to decrease the risk of midge transmission of vaccine virus. This period can be amended by the Director from time to time should the risk for vector transmission change. All persons must please ensure that all administrations of vaccine are given within the correct period as described in the table below:

<b>AHS Zone</b>	<b>Vaccination Period</b>
<b>AHS free zone</b>	Permission for vaccination will only be given from 1 June 31 October each year
<b>AHS surveillance zone</b>	Permission for vaccination will only be given from 1 June to 31 October each year
<b>AHS protection zone</b>	All equines in this area must be vaccinated within the period of 1 June to 31 October each year
<b>AHS infected zone</b>	Strong recommendation is made to vaccinate during the period from 1 June to 31 October each year

Kind regards

**Dr Mpho Maja**  
**DIRECTOR ANIMAL HEALTH**