



SA EQUINE
HEALTH & PROTOCOLS
EXPORTS SOUTH AFRICA

African horse sickness control Movement report 2025

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**Western Cape
Government**
FOR YOU

Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Permit based movements – infected zone to AHS controlled area.....	4
2.1.	Domestic equids	4
2.2.	Stop-over quarantine (SOQ) movements.....	7
2.3.	Wild equids.....	8
2.4.	Concessions, declined and retracted permits	9
3.	Within controlled area movements.....	10
3.1.	Pre-notification only based movements	10
3.2.	Multiple movement permit movements.....	11
4.	Discussion.....	13
5.	Acknowledgements.....	14

Abbreviation	Meaning
<i>AHS</i>	African horse sickness
<i>AHSV</i>	African horse sickness virus
<i>ASD</i>	Area Status Declaration
<i>CA</i>	Controlled Area (AHS controlled area)
<i>FZ</i>	Free zone of the CA
<i>MMP</i>	Multiple Movement Permit
<i>NPC</i>	Non-Profit Company
<i>PZ</i>	Protection zone of the CA
<i>SOQ</i>	Stop-over Quarantine
<i>SV</i>	State Veterinarian
<i>SZ</i>	Surveillance zone of the CA

Executive Summary

This report presents a summary of equid movements associated with the African horse sickness (AHS) controlled area in South Africa during the 2025 calendar year, with a focus on movements into zones of higher control and associated risk mitigation measures.

A total of 7 427 equids moved into zones of higher control in 2025, representing a 15% decrease from 2024. Movements were predominantly associated with domestic horses, particularly Thoroughbreds, and were largely directed into the AHS surveillance zone. Movement patterns remained consistent with previous years, with peak activity occurring between August and November.

Permit-based movements from the infected zone accounted for 4 032 equids across 2 047 movement events, while 3 395 equids moved within the controlled area under pre-notification requirements. The Multiple Movement Permit (MMP) system continued to facilitate high-frequency, same-day movements, with over 9 000 movements recorded, highlighting its importance in supporting industry operations.

Stop-over quarantine (SOQ) movements enabled the controlled movement of 541 horses, providing an important pathway for high-value or time-sensitive movements that would otherwise be restricted.

A total of 196 zebra were moved during the year. No movements of zebra occurred from the AHS infected zone into the AHS controlled area during the year, nor between an AHS zone of more control to a zone of less control within the AHS controlled area.

Overall, the 2025 data demonstrate continued stability in movement patterns and effective implementation of risk mitigation measures.

1. Introduction

This is the eighth detailed report on equid movements in South Africa with respect to controls implemented to mitigate the risk of African horse sickness virus (AHSV) entering the AHS controlled area of the country. The initial report encompassed the 2017/2018 AHS season and is available online¹: it provides a more detailed explanation of the various movement types.

Since 2019² the reporting period was set to the calendar year. All reports are available [online](#)³. For the report below, the period evaluated is the **2025 calendar year**. We differentiate between movements from the infected part of South Africa and those that occur within the AHS controlled area, the latter only where movements occur to a zone of higher control. Wild equid movements are also evaluated, as well as more detail on those stepwise movements that required a stopover quarantine period prior to entry into the AHS controlled area. We also provide an overview of the Multiple Movement System movements. The Multiple Movement System is in place for selected registered properties in the AHS controlled area that facilitate same day movements between AHS control zone boundaries without the need for a Veterinary Health Certificate prior to movement⁴.

¹ <https://myhorse.jshiny.com/myhorse/landing/resources/reports/2017%202018%20Movements%20Report.pdf>

² <https://myhorse.jshiny.com/myhorse/landing/resources/reports/2019%20Movements%20report.pdf>

³ <https://myhorse.jshiny.com/myhorse/landing/?tab=reports>

⁴ https://myhorse.jshiny.com/myhorse/landing/resources/vpn_sop_mmp.pdf

2. Permit based movements – infected zone to AHS controlled area

This section deals with any equid moving from the AHS infected part of South Africa directly into the AHS controlled area in the Western Cape Province. Movements from the infected zone require an AHS risk status classification which is reported by the State veterinarian (SV) of origin in the form of an area status declaration (ASD). An ASD report has been published for 2025⁵.

2.1. Domestic equids

A total of 2047 (up ~2% from 2005 in 2024, and compared to 1623 in 2023, 1559 in 2022 and 1640 in 2021) movement events consisting of 4032 (4223 in 2024) domestic equids (all horses barring 11 donkeys), occurred in 2025, with an average of ~2 equids moving per movement application which has remained consistent over the years. The most horses moved were Thoroughbreds, with 55% of the total representing this breed (Table 1). The remaining movements were evenly spread across breeds, with the only other breeds moving relatively frequently being SA Warmbloods (7.5%), Arabians (3.2%, a decrease from 5.5% in 2024), American Saddlebreds (6%), and Vlaamperde (2.3%). This breed breakdown remains similar to previous years.

Table 1: Domestic equids moved, by breed, in 2025 into South Africa's AHS controlled area from the AHS infected zone

<i>Breed</i>	<i>Total moved</i>	<i>% of total</i>
<i>Thoroughbred*</i>	2220	55%
<i>SA Warmblood</i>	356	8.8%
<i>American Saddlebred</i>	243	6%
<i>Arabian</i>	129	3.2%
<i>Vlaamperde</i>	95	2.3%
<i>Other/Cross breed</i>	989	24.4%
Total	4032	

* It should be noted that Thoroughbreds are not necessarily racehorses as Thoroughbreds are widely used across all disciplines such as show jumping and dressage as well as for pleasure riding movements, and this data does not distinguish between racehorses or horses used in other sectors.

Figure 1 shows the time series analysis of domestic equids moved. As in the previous year, most equids moved between August-November 2025, with the least moved during June 2025. The AHS surveillance zone remained the most common destination (69.1%, like 2024) for equids moved (Table 2). The free zone as a destination accounted for 6.3% of equids moved – like 2024 and a decrease from a proportion of 9% in 2023 and 10.8% in 2022.

⁵ <https://myhorse.jshiny.com/myhorse/landing/resources/reports/2025%20AHS%20Area%20Status%20Declarations%20Report.pdf>

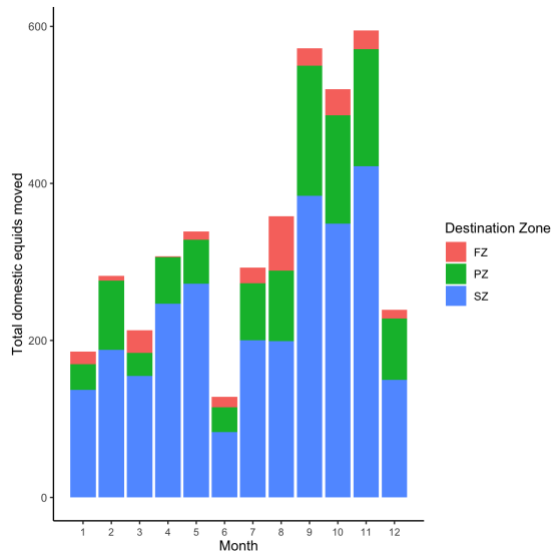


Figure 1: Time series plot of total domestic equids moved from the AHS infected area, and their destination within the AHS controlled area during 2025

Destination	Total moved	% of total
Surveillance zone	2786	69.1%
Protection zone	991	24.6%
Free zone	255	6.3%
Total	4032	

Table 2: The destination zone of domestic equids moving from the infected area into the AHS controlled area of South Africa in 2025

Figure 2 gives an indication of the primary origin of equids moving into the AHS controlled area. In this case we have categorised the movement by the State Veterinary area of origin. These areas are specifically labelled if 100 or more equids moved from that region during the year. The main province of origin was the Western Cape Province, with the *George* (n=1709 equids moved), *Swellendam* (n=85), *Beaufort West* (n=89) State Veterinary areas most represented as in prior years. This province accounted for 49.8% (n=2010) of all equids moved into the AHS CA in 2025. Kwa-Zulu Natal (*Umgungundlovu* and *Ethekwini*), Gauteng (*Germiston*), Northern Cape (*De Aar* and *Kimberley*), and Eastern Cape (*Port Elizabeth* and *Graaff-Reinet*) were most strongly represented outside of the Western Cape, as was the case in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The 8 labelled areas in Figure 2 accounted for a total of 82% of all domestic equids moved during the year.

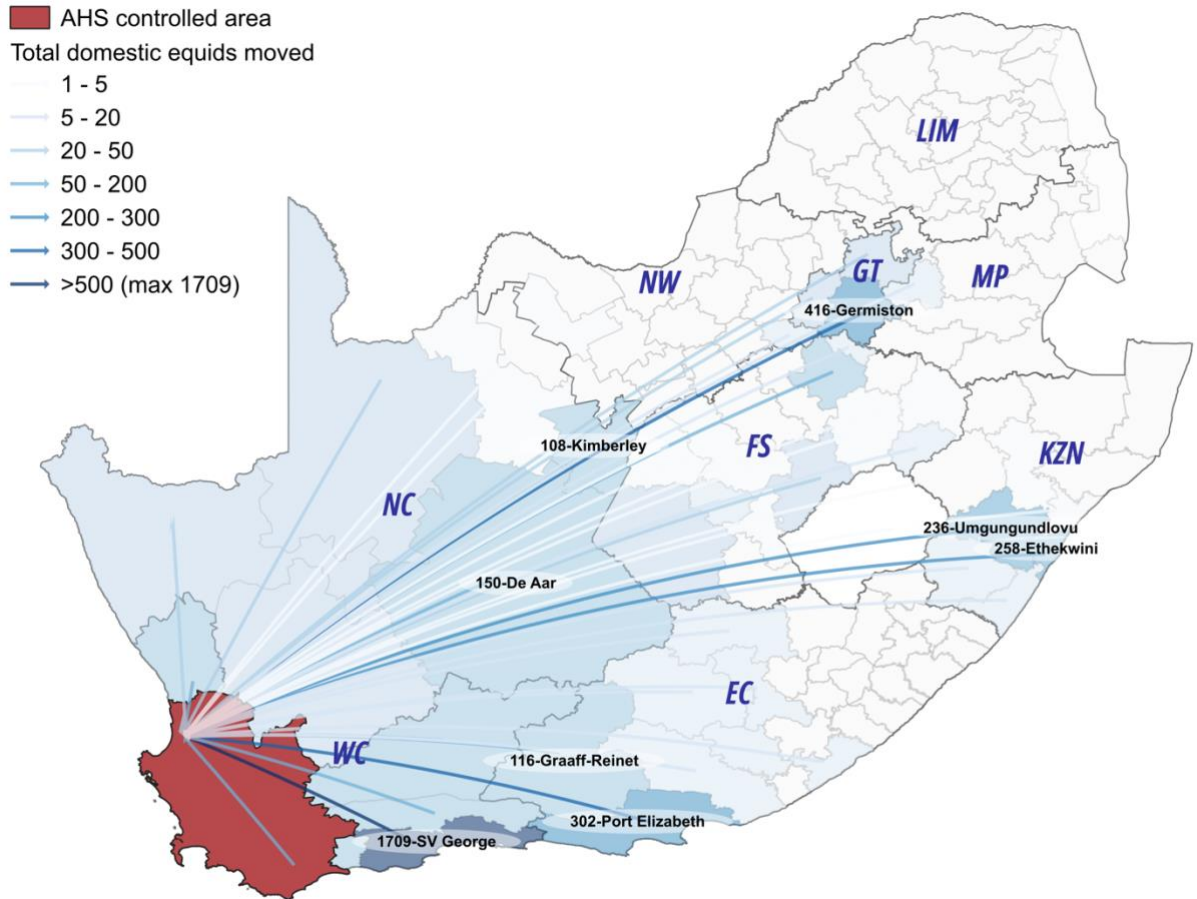


Figure 2: The total number of equids per State Veterinary (SV) area of origin that moved into the AHS controlled area in 2025. Areas are labelled if 100 or more equids moved from the region during the year.

2.2. Stop-over quarantine (SOQ) movements

The introduction and description of stop-over movements has been detailed in previous reports. A total of eight SOQ facilities (Figure 3) were used during 2025 (n=6 in 2024, n=8 in 2023), all in the AHS infected zone. All three Gauteng facilities are vector protected facilities. 541 horses moved under this protocol (up from 416 in 2024 and closer to the 498 in 2023). All stop-over facilities used in 2025 were within the Western Cape boundaries except for the three Gauteng vector proof facilities.

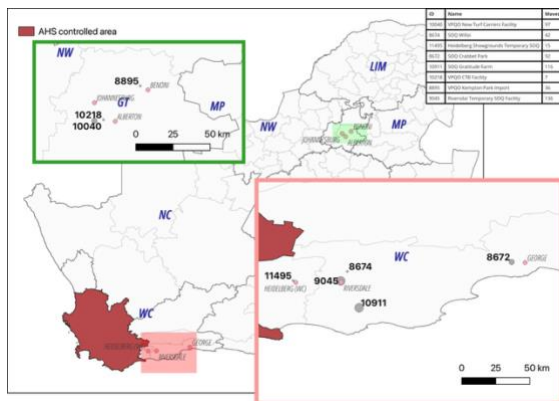


Figure 3: Facilities (n=8) used for stop-over quarantine movements during 2025 with proportional circles representing the total number of equids that used these facilities. The inset table provides further detailed information on holding name and actual horses moved in 2025.

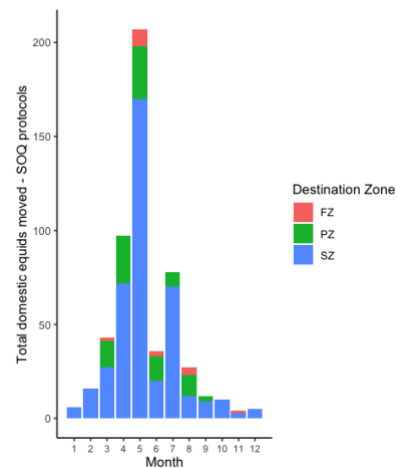


Figure 4: Equids moving under the stop-over quarantine protocol during 2025 with their month of movement and destination shown.

Figure 4 shows the temporal trend of the horses that moved in this fashion. Over the year the trend is similar to what has occurred since 2022. The destination of these movements remains the surveillance zone as the primary destination, which mirrors the general movement trend (see Figure 1).

In 2025 the use of a vector protected veterinary hospitals as destinations for equines from the AHS infected zone was implemented for emergency medical use. During the year 5 horses moved to one facility in the AHS surveillance zone in March, May, August and December (n=2) 2025.

2.3. Wild equids

A total of 196 (compared to 56 in 2024 (see note below), 74 in 2023, 73 in 2022, 80 in 2021, 34 in 2020 and 26 in 2019) wild equids (all zebra) were moved during 18 movements into (n=0), within (n=112) or from (n=84) the AHS controlled area during 2025 (Figure 5). 101 (51%) were Plains zebra - *Equus quagga* (and generally for the Western Cape specifically - *Equus quagga burchelli* – i.e. Burchell’s zebra) while the remainder were Cape Mountain Zebra (*Equus zebra zebra*).

NOTE: Regarding zebra movement totals - previous analyses adjusted the reported number of animals moved to reflect only those that were confirmed as tested. This approach accounted for the fact that zebra movement permits may remain valid for up to three months after issuance (subject to any additional permit conditions). However, due to challenges in data availability and communication—particularly in verifying actual movements both within and out of controlled areas—this approach has not been applied in the current reporting period. Instead, totals have been aligned with the domestic permit reporting methodology, where the number of animals “moved” reflects the number specified on the permit at issuance, without validation of whether the movement was ultimately completed. As a result, these figures may overestimate the actual number of zebra moved, as wildlife translocation operations can be constrained and may not always result in the capture or movement of all targeted animals.

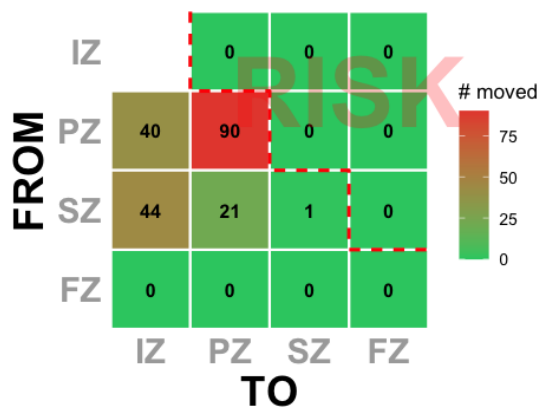


Figure 5: Number of zebras moved during 2025 and associated with the AHS controlled area. The zone of origin is shown vertically; the zone of destination is shown horizontally. The blocks above the dashed red line indicate movements from a zone of lower control to a zone of higher control.

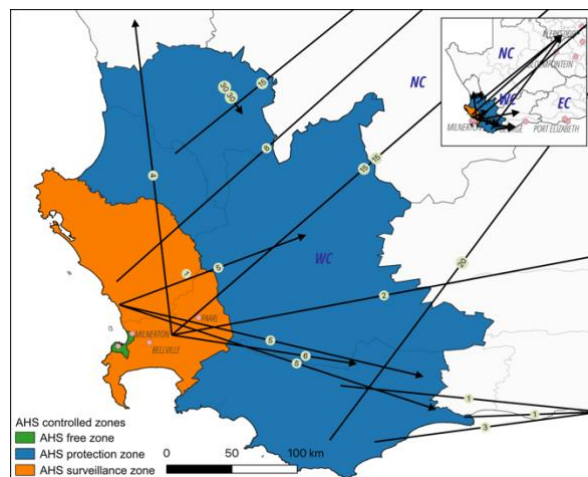


Figure 6: All zebra movements during 2025 that were associated with the AHS controlled area. Numbers on each line represent the total moved for each of the movements (n=18) that occurred. The arrow represents the origin and destination of each movement in relation to the AHS control zones underlying the movement.

Zebra generally moved in September and October (Figure 7). The only official constraint for zebra movement temporally is when they originate in the AHS infected zone – here they can only move in July, August and September – this did not occur in 2025 (as in 2024 and 2023).

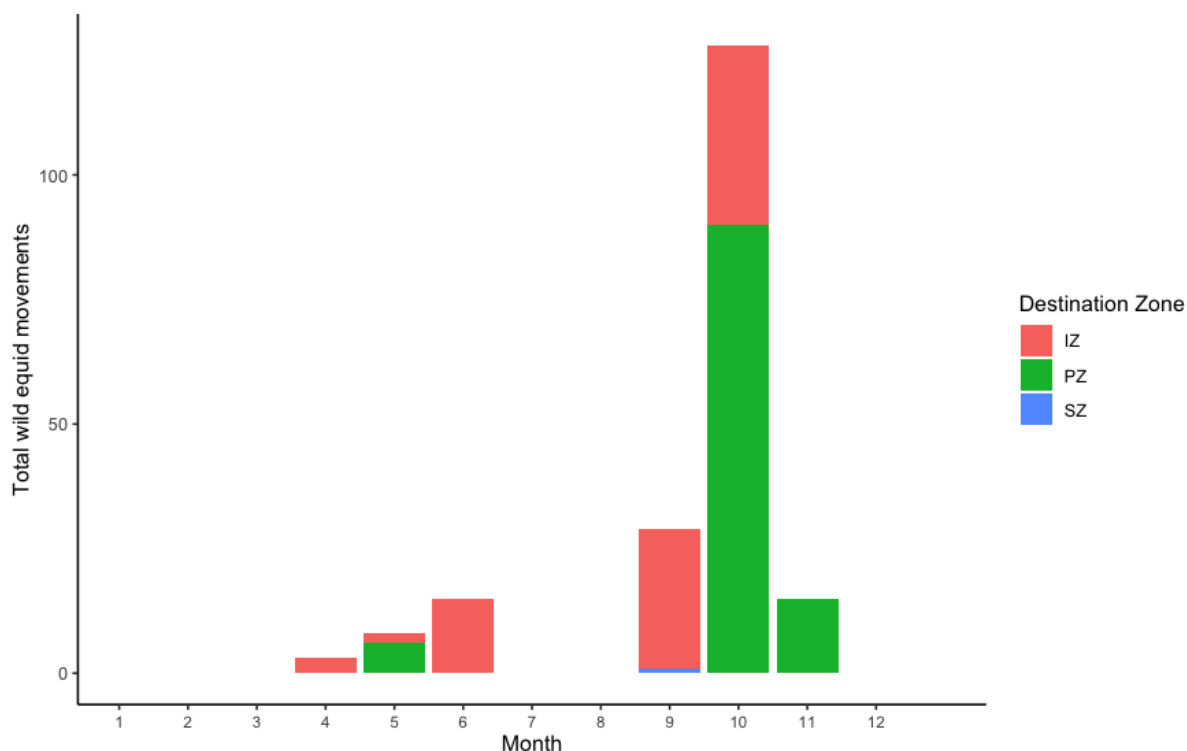


Figure 7: Zebra movement events (n=18) during 2025 with their month of movement and destination shown.

2.4. Concessions, declined and retracted permits

The purpose of permits issued for movements from the AHS infected zone into the AHS controlled area is to ensure AHS risk is mitigated through vaccination, health checks and AHS status at origin declarations. During 2025:

- 14 horses were declined movement due to passport non-compliance or lack of information on application.
- 190 (up for 47 in 2024) horses were declined due to vaccination non-compliance.
- 21 horses were declined due to a high-risk AHS status at origin.

3. Within controlled area movements

3.1. Pre-notification only based movements

Movement within the AHS control area to a zone of higher control requires that notification of movement occurs within 72 hours of movement in place of a permit being issued. The passport, vaccination and health certification requirements are otherwise the same as for a movement into the AHS controlled area. A total of 3395 (down from 4540 in 2024) equids moved in this fashion during the year: 3392 horses, 1 donkey and 2 mules. Most equids that moved within the controlled area were Thoroughbreds (58.9%). Most (69%, down from 75.4% in 2024 and still higher than the 58% in 2023, and the 62%, 70%, 74% and 77% in 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019 respectively) moved from the AHS protection zone to the AHS surveillance zone (Figure 8).

An important consideration for these movements is that there are a considerable number of horses that move within the AHS controlled area on the multiple movement permit system, which is a same day return movement licensing system allowing horses to move in this fashion without pre-notification of movement. The information reported here refers to movements where horses would generally not be returning to their origins on the same day.

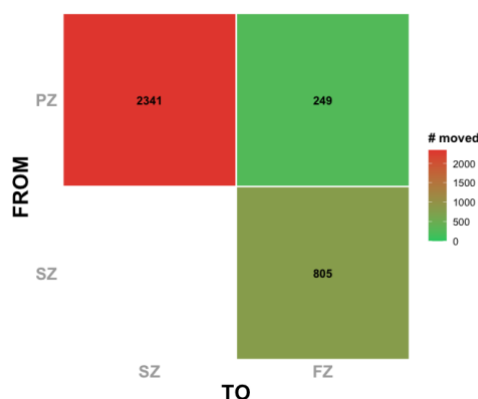


Figure 8: Movements of domestic equids within the AHS controlled area, where horses moved to a zone of higher control, during 2025.

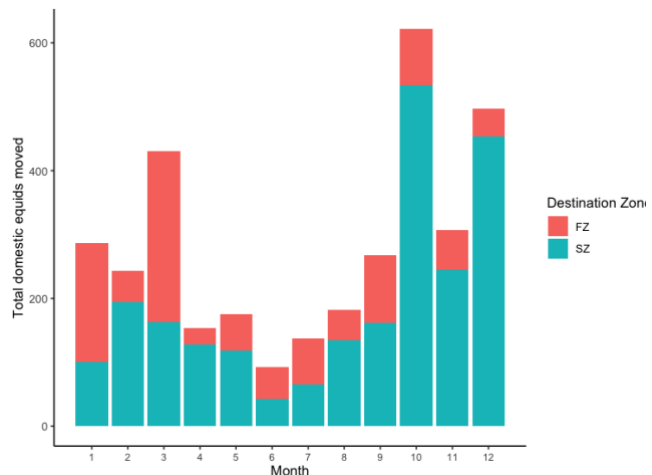


Figure 9: Time series plot of total domestic equids moved and their destination for movements within the AHS controlled area during 2025

The movement pattern over time (Figure 9) is quite like that of infected area origin movements (see Figure 1). Movements between the surveillance and free zone throughout the year will either be equids moving to one of the two veterinary practices that have their premises within the free zone, or thoroughbreds in training that move from feeder farms in the controlled area to the training yards in Milnerton. Note that the movement from PZ to SZ has stabilised to levels closer to that of 2023, with 1082 less horses moving in this fashion compared to 2024 after vaccination permission issuance returned to normal in 2025 after the disruption in 2024 – see previous report for details.

3.2. Multiple movement permit movements

The Multiple Movement Permit (MMP) system is a core component of the AHS controls that regulates and facilitates horse movements within the AHS CA. It provides a structured mechanism for horses that move repeatedly between defined premises on the same day—such as training yards, breeding, competition, and livery facilities—without requiring a new individual veterinary health check prior for each horse movement when the movement that occurs is off the registered property, across into a zone of less AHS control, and then back on the same day to the registered property. The system requires that movements are recorded by each owner/manager of the registered property – this for all movements onto or off the property, irrespective of the length of visitation or time away. For same day movements there is differentiation made between the resident horse from the registered holding that leaves and comes back (*sameday resident*) versus a horse arriving and leaving the same day that is also part of the MMP system but from a different home holding (*sameday visitor*). All participating holdings are registered and subject to compliance with surveillance, vaccination, and reporting requirements.

Table 3: Summary of registered holdings and horses linked to the Multiple Movement Permit (MMP) system in the Western Cape AHS controlled area during 2025. Each permit is valid for 6 months, and a single holding may therefore receive multiple permits within a calendar year. ‘Nominated holdings’ are those destinations identified by MMP-registered holdings as likely recipients of horses under this system.

Holding zone	Permits issued	Registered holdings	Nominated PZ holdings	Nominated SZ holdings	Nominated FZ holdings	Registered horses (unique)
Protection zone	26	21	3	38	0	1075 (936 in 2024)
Surveillance zone	27	18	14	1	5	1410 (1476 in 2024)
Free zone	39	20	0	3	1	898 (916 in 2024)
All zones/Total	92 (94 in 2024)	59 (57 in 2024)	17 (13 in 2024)	42 (34 in 2024)	6 (6 in 2024)	3383 (3328 in 2024)

In 2025, a total of 92 permits were issued to 59 different holdings, distributed evenly across the AHS Free, Surveillance, and Protection zones - Table 3. These permits were associated with 3383 unique horses. Over the same period, MMP-registered holdings logged the following movements: 2644 same-day movements of resident horses, 1981 same-day movements of visiting horses, 2852 permanent departures, and 1809 permanent arrivals. The temporal distribution of all logged movements is presented in Figure 10. Of particular note are the same-day resident movements, which are uniquely captured by the MMP system and not recorded elsewhere in this report.

Monthly movements by direction (2024)

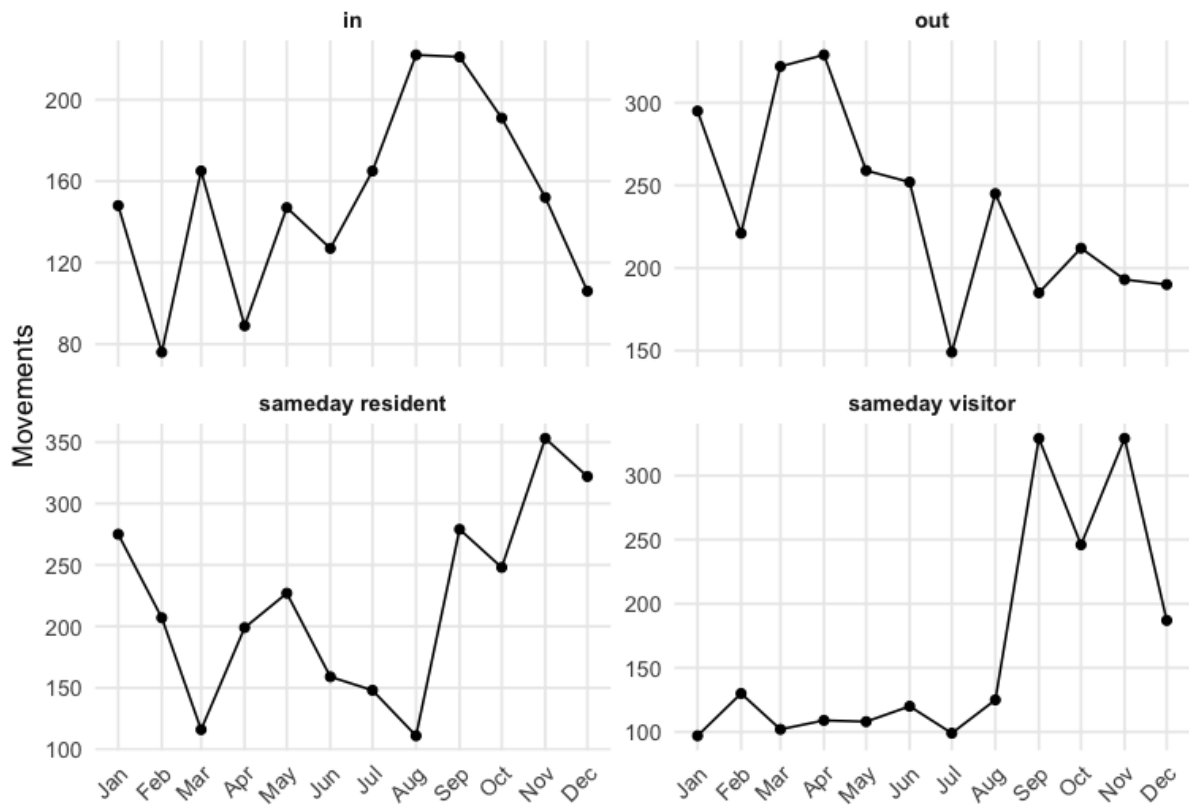


Figure 10: Movements logged under the Multiple Movement Permit system during 2025. ‘Same-day resident’ and ‘same-day visitor’ movements reflect horses that return to their registered holding within the same day and visiting horses that arrive and depart on the same day, respectively.

4. Discussion

A total of 7427 equids moved into a zone of higher control during the year, representing a 15% decrease from 2024. It is once again clear that most movements into a zone of higher control consisted of domestic equines. The AHS surveillance zone remains the most common zone of destination, both for infected area origin and controlled area origin movements. Most movements are associated with Thoroughbred horses.

Movement regulation requires close communication and interaction between various regulatory and State authorities. Movements originated from 42 of the 126 State vet areas in the country (similar to 44 in 2024 and 42 in both 2022 and 2023).

Stop-over quarantine movements have assisted in facilitating the movement of 541 horses that would otherwise not have moved or would have required a 40-day residency in an AHS low risk area prior to direct movement. While this system is resource-intensive it promotes the movement of high value horses or critical movements (such as for high-level competitions) and allows control and an acceptable system for the public needing to move horses.

5. Acknowledgements

The South African Equine Health and Protocols NPC have been the authorized permit issuing body during 2025 and provides this service on behalf of State Veterinary services in the Western Cape. Dr Camilla Weyer and Dr Debra Carter are responsible for the day-to-day running of the various movement systems with administrative support from Hannelie Jacobs, Johanne Jacobs, Christelle Scholtz, Marie van der Westhuizen, Ronel Dann, and Madelein Smit.

We are grateful to our State Veterinary colleagues across the country for assisting in the controlled movement of equids, and particularly the State Veterinary Services in the Western Cape, namely Drs Vivien Malan, Christi Kloppers, Kayla Smith, Cathy Fox, Leana Janse van Rensburg, Chanel Lombard, Ansulize Pepler and Solomon Bhandi. Dr Duma Mpofu from Gauteng Veterinary Services provides invaluable support with regards to vector-protected stop over quarantine movements.

Mr Nico du Toit from the South African Police Services Stock Theft Unit and Drs Trudie Prinsloo and Aileen Pypers are members of the Western Cape AHS regulatory committee that deals with movement non-compliance.

During 2025 the central auditing of movements was continued by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development and Dr Kerry Loxley has been auditing individual movements in this regard. The Western Cape Department of Agriculture also began their own internal audits and we are grateful to Malcolm Cupido and Roelof Mare, Control AHT's from SV Boland and Swellendam respectively, who assisted.

We are grateful to all private veterinarians and members of the public who comply with movement control.