

Equine disease control

Surveillance report

Dourine 2025

**JD Grewar & CT Weyer
2025**

Surveillance Report

Disease	Dourine in horses
Coverage Area	Western Cape – AHS Surveillance Zone
Period	2025
Authors	John Grewar, Camilla Weyer & Lesley van Helden

Introduction

Since 2018, active dourine surveillance has been conducted in the Western Cape Province through the testing of horses enrolled either as sentinels - primarily sourced from the African horse sickness (AHS) sentinel programme - or through structured surveys of randomly selected horses within the AHS free zone, as implemented in 2020. The surveillance strategy has aimed to test sentinel animals at six-monthly intervals.

During 2018 and 2019, surveillance activities were limited to the first half of each year. In 2020, a targeted survey of horses within the AHS free zone was undertaken during the first half of the year. From 2021 onwards, the programme achieved the intended biannual testing target, with sentinel horses sampled during mid-year and end-of-year cohorts.

An overview of dourine, including its epidemiology and the rationale for ongoing surveillance, has been comprehensively described in previous reports, which are available via the referenced links or through <https://www.myhorse.org.za>. Accordingly, this report does not repeat those background details.

The purpose of the present report is to provide evidence supporting freedom from dourine within the geographic area where active surveillance is conducted for AHS, namely the AHS surveillance and free zone of the Western Cape Province, based on surveillance activities undertaken during the 2025 reporting period.

Surveillance parameters

Table 1: Surveillance parameters used in design and evaluation of the Dourine surveillance program in 2025.

Parameter	Value	Comments
Population at risk	16000	All horses in the surveillance and free zones. 16000 is an estimate we have used in the last few analyses; there are currently 20885 and 780 horses registered in the AHS surveillance and free zones respectively although data is captured only for horses entering the area.
Design Prevalence	~5%	Minimum expected prevalence in the population should dourine occur; parameter taken from the serological survey requirements of the EU for AHS sentinel surveillance given that the same population was used for the dourine sampling.
Test Sensitivity	90%	Estimate based on best scientific guess. The sensitivity of the complement fixation test (CFT) has not been established, although given the false positive rates (see specificity) the sensitivity is likely to be relatively high. The CFT is seen as a gold standard for individual horse testing prior to export and this also supports a test with relatively good sensitivity.
Test Specificity	Unknown but system specificity of 100% assumed	The CFT test is prone to false positives and probably does not have a particularly good specificity. However, for the purposes of surveillance evaluation and given that any positive CFT result will be investigated to establish a final diagnosis a specificity of 100% was used in establishing the outcome of the sensitivity of the surveillance
Type 1 error	5%	Used to provide a final probability of 95% that Dourine was not present if it was not detected using the surveillance parameters.

South Africa's African horse sickness (AHS) sentinel surveillance programme, operating within the AHS free and surveillance zones, targets the sampling of approximately 150 horses per month using PCR testing. In addition to PCR testing, serum samples are collected from all sentinel horses. A randomly selected subset of these sera is used to support the dourine surveillance system, traditionally drawing on approximately 100 samples from those collected during the June and December sentinel sampling rounds each year.

During 2025 the sample quality on arrival at the laboratory was not adequate to test for the mid-year sampling period which necessitated an adjustment to this schedule to test September 2025 samples. The December 2025 cohort was selected for testing as planned. The AHS sentinel surveillance programme is designed to sample horses in proportion to the underlying population at risk, employing a spatially stratified, gridded sampling framework to ensure geographic representativeness across the surveillance area (see Figure 1).

Consent and ethics

Ethics approval was not obtained nor required for this survey since the samples were used from the existing AHS sentinel surveillance program. Sentinel owners and managers have previously provided consent for this surveillance program.

Results

A total of 100 horses were selected from 28 locations across the AHS surveillance zone in September 2025. In December 100 horses were selected from 31 locations. Proportional numbers of horses sampled across the surveillance zone are shown in Figure 1 below. Most samples were taken from an area of approximately 50-75 km around the Kenilworth Quarantine Station, from which horses are exported.

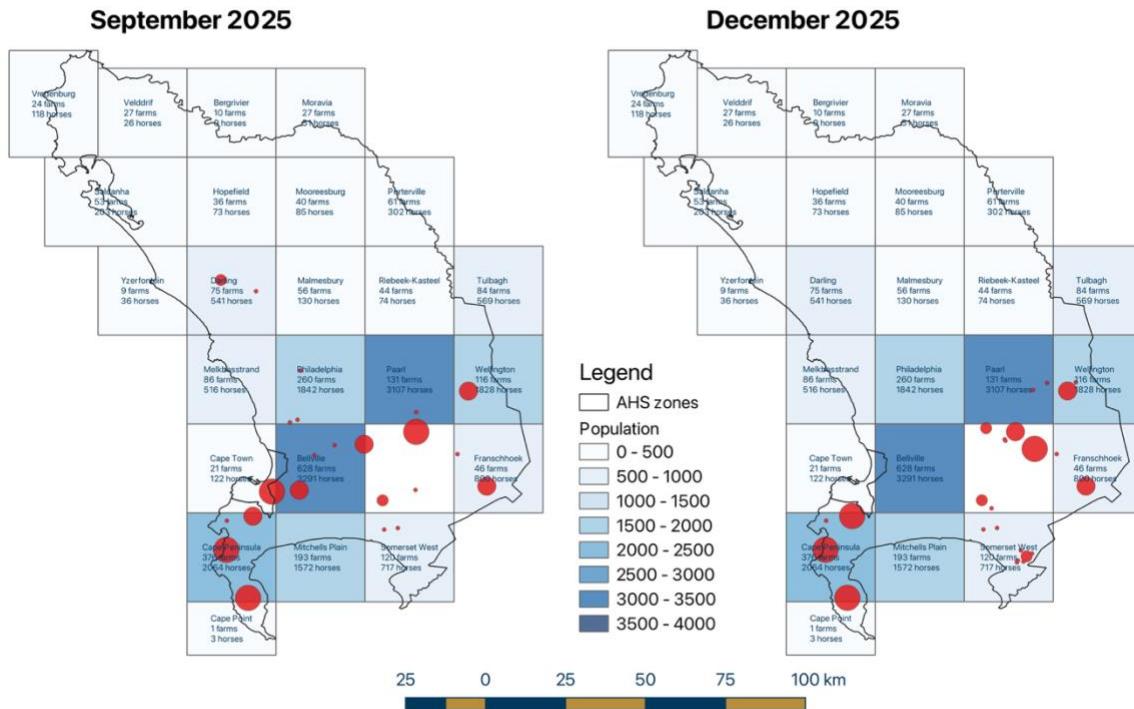


Figure 1: Dourine survey locations showing proportional circles for number of equines tested per location in September and December 2025 respectively. The underlying population at risk is shown as a light to dark blue gradient, this to show that locations were chosen to reflect the relative underlying population at risk per surveillance grid.

September 2025: all 100 samples tested negative for dourine antibody using the CFT – S2025/10_0501 (Western Cape Veterinary Laboratory Services).

December 2025: all 100 samples tested negative for dourine antibody using the CFT – S2026/01_0010 (Western Cape Veterinary Laboratory Services).

Sensitivity of the surveillance program

The sensitivity (and resulting probability of freedom) of the surveillance program is shown in Table 2 below. This evaluation is independent of any prior surveillance. While the sentinel surveillance program is based on a single stage sampling strategy (evaluated in Column 2 of Table 2) we have estimates of the underlying number of herds in the surveillance zone as well as estimates of the herd sizes of the sampled herds. This allows an estimate of surveillance sensitivity in a more realistic setting (Column 3 of Table 2). Note that in this latter analysis we reverted to an effective population design prevalence of 2% (within herd design prevalence of 20% and herd level prevalence of 10% throughout the population) – this in an effort to depict a reasonable minimum expected prevalence with so few cases of dourine reported in the prior two decades in the AHS surveillance zone (see Figure 3).

Table 2: Design prevalence with resulting surveillance sensitivity and probability of freedom outcomes for two different scenarios independently analysed: the sentinel program design prevalence and the generic values used given the history of cases in the AHS controlled area. NOTE: This evaluation is for a single point in time and does not consider previous surveillance outcomes.

Parameter	Descriptions and values based on varying data sources		
	Single stage population sensitivity	Generic prevalence to result in effective design prevalence of 2% with 2-stage analysis	
Animal level prevalence (P^*u)	0.05		0.2
Herd level prevalence (P^*c)	n/a		0.1
Effective population prevalence ($P^*u \times P^*c$)	0.05		0.02
	2025 H1	2025 H2	2025 H1
MeanSSH - Mean herd level surveillance sensitivity	n/a		0.507
SeP - Population surveillance sensitivity	0.989	0.989	0.761
PFreeU - Confidence of population freedom - uninformed prior	0.986	0.986	0.774
			0.796

With surveillance evaluation it is also appropriate to evaluate probability of freedom outcomes given prior surveillance events. In Figure 2 below, we show all 13 surveillance events undertaken to date in the AHS surveillance and free zones (see previous reports). Where surveillance was missed (second half of 2018 (H2), 2019 (H4) and 2020 (H6)) a zero sensitivity is assumed. Note also that the surveillance in 2020 (H5) was targeting the AHS free zone only, but the evaluation below assumes a population at risk across the AHS free and surveillance zone for standardisation purposes.

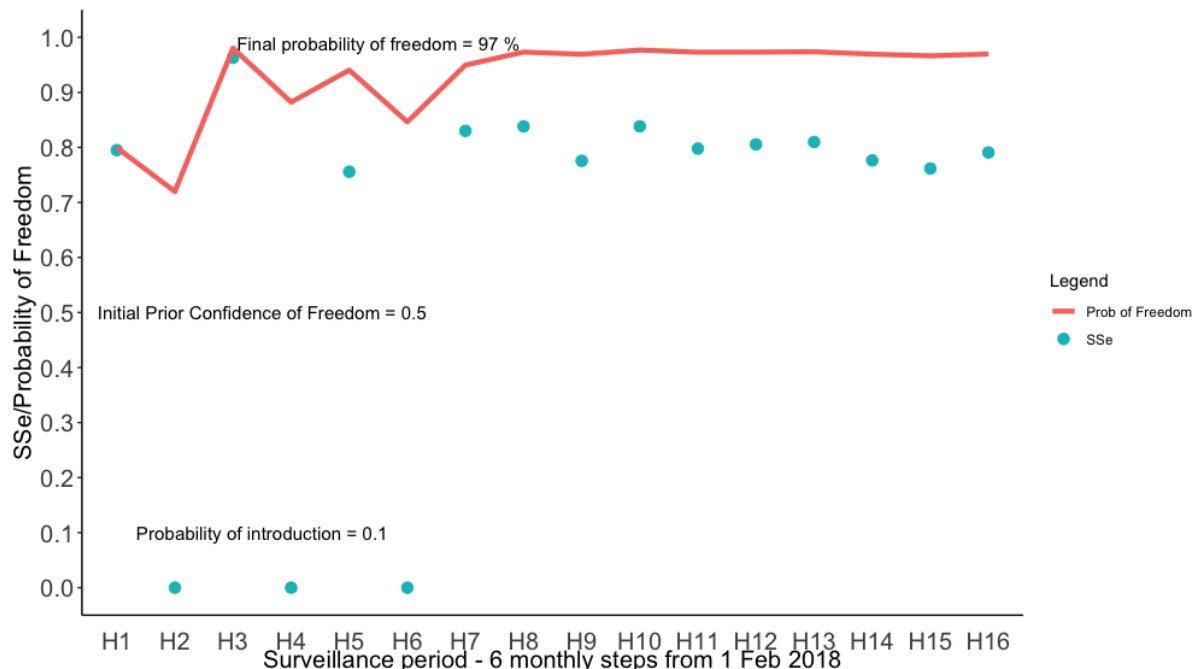


Figure 2: Surveillance system sensitivity and probability of freedom assuming an introduction probability of 10%, an underlying herd and animal prevalence of 20 % and 10% respectively and an uninformed prior probability of 50% in period 1.

The dourine probability of freedom in the AHS free and surveillance zone in H1 and H2 2025, given the 2025 surveillance efforts alone, ranges between 77.4% and 98.6% depending on the analysis used. The overall probability of freedom taking prior surveillance into account is 97%.

Discussion

Stand-alone surveillance efforts like the one described here supplement the current clinical passive surveillance and Thoroughbred pre-breeding dourine surveillance efforts in South Africa.

Figure 3 shows all dourine cases reported in South Africa from 1993 through Dec 2025 (data accessed [Jan 2026](#) from the National Department of Agriculture (DOA) and collated to South African local municipalities). The last case in the Western Cape in 2012 occurred in a working mule in the Bredasdorp region – details of that case can be found at http://www.elsenburg.com/vetepi/epireport_pdf/February2012.pdf.

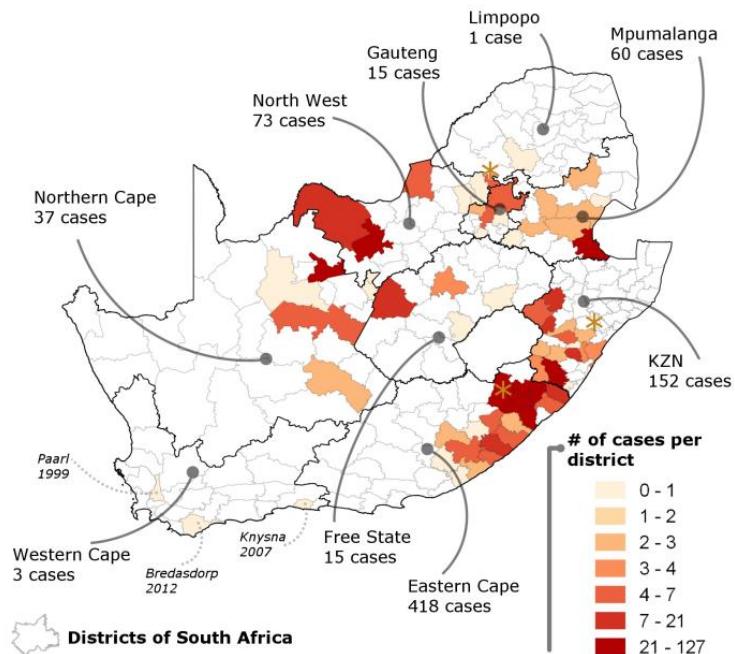


Figure 3: Historical dourine cases reported to DOA from 1993 through Dec 2025 (the last case as reported was in 2018 in the Eastern Cape) to date. Cases have been aggregated by municipality while case totals per province are labelled. The three cases reported in the Western Cape are also labelled specifically with the [last case reported in 2012](#).

Acknowledgments

We are very grateful to our colleagues in the National Department of Agriculture (DOA), the Western Cape Department of Agriculture and particularly its Veterinary Laboratory who assisted in and facilitated this work. Funding for this project was obtained from the South African Equine Health and Protocols (SAEHP - sampling, logistic and testing costs). We are, as always, very grateful to the owners and managers of the sentinel horses in the AHS controlled area in the Western Cape.

September 2025 results (S2025/10_0501)

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 <p>VETERINARY LABORATORY SERVICES Private Bag X5020, Stellenbosch, 7599 Heilshoogte Road, Stellenbosch, 7600 tel: +27 21 808 7510 www.elsenburg.com www.westerncape.gov.za</p>  <p>sanas Veterinary Laboratory V0029</p>			RESULTS AND REPORT Specimen Type: Serum (continued)																																																																																																																													
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LABORATORY REPORT (CONTINUED)
Submission No: S2025/10_0501

RESULTS AND REPORT

Specimen Type: Serum (continued)

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LSS250303	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250210	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250211	Negative	04-11-2025
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TSS250241	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250242	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250243	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250244	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250245	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250246	Negative	04-11-2025
TSS250247	Negative	04-11-2025

SEROLOGY

Page 3 of 4

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LABORATORY REPORT (CONTINUED)
Submission No: S2025/10_0501

RESULTS AND REPORT

NOTE: Opinions and interpretations expressed herein are outside the scope of SANAS accreditation.

Thank you for submitting these samples to the Western Cape Provincial Veterinary Laboratory. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Authorised signatory

D.S CONRADIE

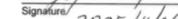
Name 

Signature  05 NOV 2025

Report date

State Veterinarian DR K T HARRIS

Name 

Signature  2025/11/06

Date

Page 4 of 4

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December 2025 results (S2026/01_0010)

<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding-bottom: 10px;">  <p>LABORATORY REPORT No: S2026/01_0010</p> <p>Sender: Dr John Grewer 0836420610 Owner: Sender is owner Clinic or Company: SA Equine Health and Protocol NPC Company: - PO Box or Street: Postnet Suit 474, Baker Square Farm Name (GPS): - (--) Block, Paardeval Street address: - Town, postal code: Somerset West, 7600 PO Box address: - Contact number(s): 0761522782, 073799818 Town, postal code: - (--) Email: zebra@myhorse.org.za; results@myhorse.org.za Contact number(s): - (--) Email: - Sender reference: SAEHP_Dourine-H22025 State Vet Area: Contact Sender for SV details Purpose of sampling: Diagnostic</p> </div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding-bottom: 10px;"> <p>SPECIMEN INFORMATION</p> <p>Species: Equine - Horse. Specimen condition: Suitable Client sampling date, if indicated: 17-12-2025 Date & Time Received: 05-01-2026 11:25:51 Specimen Type Quantity Test(s) Required Serum 100 Complement Fixation Test (CFT) for Dourine (P-SER-M-018)</p> </div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding-bottom: 10px;"> <p>RESULTS AND REPORT</p> <p>Specimen Type: Serum</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">DOURINE CFT Result</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Specimen ID / Horse Name</th> <th>Result</th> <th>Date Tested</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>JSS250102</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250103</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250104</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250105</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250106</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250107</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250108</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250109</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250110</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250111</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250112</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250113</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>JSS250114</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250435</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250436</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250437</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250438</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250439</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> <tr><td>LSS250440</td><td>Negative</td><td>08-01-2026</td></tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; padding-bottom: 10px;"> <p>SEROLOGY Page 1 of 4 The(se) result(s) apply only to the sample(s) that were tested, as received from the client. 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LABORATORY REPORT (CONTINUED)
Submission No: S2026/01_0010

RESULTS AND REPORT

Specimen Type: Serum (continued)

DOURINE CFT Result

Specimen ID / Horse Name	Result	Date Tested
LSS250483	Negative	08-01-2026
LSS250484	Negative	08-01-2026
LSS250485	Negative	08-01-2026
LSS250486	Negative	08-01-2026
LSS250487	Negative	08-01-2026
LSS250488	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250342	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250343	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250344	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250345	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250346	Negative	08-01-2026
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TSS250348	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250349	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250350	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250351	Negative	08-01-2026
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TSS250359	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250360	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250361	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250362	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250363	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250364	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250365	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250366	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250367	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250368	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250369	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250370	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250371	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250372	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250373	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250374	Negative	08-01-2026
TSS250375	Negative	08-01-2026

LABORATORY REPORT (CONTINUED)
Submission No: S2026/01_0010

RESULTS AND REPORT

REMARKS:

All samples negative for Dourine.

NOTE: Opinions and interpretations expressed herein are outside the scope of SANAS accreditation.

Thank you for submitting these samples to the Western Cape Provincial Veterinary Laboratory. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any queries.

Authorised signatory

M. DREYER

Name
M. Dreyer
Signature
2026/01/08
Report date

State Veterinarian

DR T. ANTHONY

Name
T. Anthony
Signature
08 JAN 2026
Report date
D.P.T. VAN LANDVOORT, D.V.M.
PROVINCIAL VETERINARY LABORATORY
PRIVATE BAG X5026, STELLENBOSCH, 7539
PROVINCIAL VETERINARY LABORATORY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE, VET. FED. 17/19

SEROLOGY

Page 3 of 4

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