

AHS – PRESS RELEASE

MOVEMENT CONTROL FOR HORSES DUE TO AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE : 30 MARCH 2009

PRESS RELEASE : MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE IN THE WESTERN CAPE,
COBUS DOWRY

RESTRICTIONS ON HORSE MOVEMENTS INTO THE WESTERN CAPE DUE TO OUTBREAKS OF AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS THROUGHOUT THE REST OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Chief Directorate of Veterinary Services in the Western Cape has announced that a restriction will be placed on all horse movements to the Western Cape African Horse Sickness control area from all other provinces, with immediate effect.

These restrictions have been instituted due to the increasing number of reported and suspicious cases of AHS in the rest of South Africa. Horse owners are thus strongly discouraged from attempting to move horses from anywhere in the infected zone into the Western Cape control area as the risk of transmitting the disease is increasing daily. An outbreak in the AHS control area can potentially result in the death of many horses as well as place our export status in jeopardy, possibly leading to a 2 year ban by the EU and causing major financial and physical losses to the equine industry as a whole.

Consequently horses may no longer move directly into the Western Cape AHS control zones from anywhere in the Infected zone, but will have to stop-over for 3 weeks in Beaufort West under the supervision of the State Veterinarian there. All such movements and stop-overs must be co-ordinated with him. The local State veterinarian at origin of the horse must also give approval before the horse can move. Horses must still comply with the AHS protocol for movements prior to leaving any such restricted areas.

Western Cape Veterinary Officials warns that this is the highest risk period in the year for AHS and horse owners in close proximity to outbreaks throughout the country are strongly advised to:-

- * stable their horses overnight or move to high lying areas if possible, from 2 hours before sunset until 2 hours after sunrise while the midges are active.
- * to ensure all horses are correctly vaccinated, especially if they are in high risk areas and not stabled.
- * ensure horses are also treated with insect repellants daily.
- * obtain permission for all movements from their local State and Private veterinarians, and to ensure that the movement is approved by the State veterinarian Boland if it is into the Western Cape.

- * Not move horses into the Western Cape AHS control area unless it is absolutely essential and has been arranged in advance with the State Veterinarian, Boland.
- * Contact Dr Pienaar (Tel: 023 414 2154) to organize a compulsory 3 week stopover in Beaufort West if the movement is unavoidable.

Your co-operation in assisting us to implement these movements controls and thus potentially to prevent an outbreak of AHS in the Western Cape Control area is greatly appreciated.

Enquiries can be directed to the State Veterinarian Boland Tel: 021 808 5026/5253.
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