



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
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To: All individual horse owners
Breed Societies
Artificial Insemination Centers
Press and Media
SAVA
SAVC
SANEF
SAHRA

**RE: SCREENING OF STALLIONS FOR CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS (CEM) –
ORDER IN TERMS OF SECTION 11 OF THE ANIMAL DISEASES ACT AND
ANIMAL IMPROVEMENT ACT**

CEM is an acute, highly contagious venereal disease of equines and zebras caused by a gram negative bacterium, *Tylorella equigenitalis*. It is characterised by a mucopurulent vaginal discharge and early return to oestrus in most affected mares. Infected stallions and chronically infected mares may not show clinical signs.

CEM is considered to be of high significance due to the massive economic losses that can be associated with the disease as a result of its devastating effects on reproductive efficiency of affected equines. These losses are related to the mare's inability to conceive, embryonic loss, and costs related to repeat breeding and treatment. CEM is an OIE (World Organization for Animal Health) listed disease and has an impact on a country's ability to trade.

CEM was first confirmed in South Africa in April 2011 and reported to the OIE in May 2011. Prior to this, South Africa was considered free of CEM. At this stage there is no reason to believe that CEM is widespread in the country. If the disease can be detected before any further spread, it can be contained and eradicated and the country will be able to regain its CEM free status.

In order to determine the extent of the infection and to protect the equine industry in South Africa, every stallion, irrespective of the breed, must be tested at least twice at an interval of no less than 7(seven) days and have negative results for both CEM tests prior to breeding or semen collection.

In terms of Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act, the Director: Animal Health hereby issues an instruction/order to every owner/manager of stallions that no stallion irrespective of breed may be used or allowed to be used to breed (natural mating or artificial insemination), unless an official CEM clearance certificate has been issued. An official CEM clearance certificate will **only** be issued by the Faculty of Veterinary Science, Equine Research Centre, once two negative tests have been done.

The Director further encourages all mare owners to be vigilant this coming breeding season and ascertain that a stallion has a CEM clearance certificate prior to mating or using the semen on their mares. Any owner/manager of a mare who wants to check whether a stallion has tested negative for CEM and has been issued with an official CEM clearance certificate can do so by checking the information on the following website: www.cemsa.co.za

This instruction/order will take effect from **31 August 2011**.

All stallions must be screened for CEM annually from 1 July to 31 September, prior to the breeding season.

This instruction is valid until the Director: Animal Health declares South Africa free of CEM.

A Procedural Manual for Screening Stallions for CEM has been compiled which explains how veterinarians should collect samples and how samples should be transported to the laboratory. This information is vital to ensure samples are collected and transported correctly and can be obtained from: PA.DAH@daff.gov.za or AyandaMp@daff.gov.za or from the following websites: www.cemsa.co.za; www.daff.gov.za → Divisions → Food and Veterinary Services → Information → DAH Policy Documents → Procedure Manual Screening for CEM.

As a result of the economic consequences of CEM, it is in the interest of all horse owners to prevent the spread of CEM in South Africa. In terms of Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act No. 35, 1984, it is the responsibility of owners of animals to take all reasonable steps to prevent the infection of animals with any animal disease or parasite and the spreading thereof. Testing stallions for CEM will be at the expense of individual owners.

In terms of the Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act No. 62 of 1998), the Registrar of the Animal Improvement Act hereby declares that an official CEM clearance certificate is a mandatory condition for any application made after 31 August 2011 for the registration of a donor stallion or a foal born as a result of a mating or artificial insemination after 31 August 2011.

Please distribute the information to all your members and to all owners of equidae.

Kind Regards,

Dr Mpho Maja
Director : Animal Health

The Registrar
Animal Improvement Act