

AFRICAN HORSESICKNESS

African Horsesickness is a highly infectious viral disease affecting horses, donkeys and mules.

HOW DO ANIMALS GET AHS?

The animals get sick when they are bitten by infected midges which occur mostly at night. This disease happens mostly in the wet season, when the midges breed.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

There are two forms, one form mainly affects the breathing and the other form causes swelling around the head. Animals often have a mixture of both forms.

Symptoms include: High fever, difficult breathing, a frothy discharge from the nose and collapse. There may be a swelling above the eyes and down the neck, a long lasting fever, red eyes, swollen and red mucus membranes of the eye, dark red/blue gums and tongue. The breathing may become fast and distressed. Death can occur within 24 hours to several weeks after the symptoms are seen. Some animals may recover.

CAN AHS BE TREATED?

There is no treatment for AHS.

HOW CAN AHS BE PREVENTED?

- Horses should be kept in midge - proof stables between sunset and sunrise.
- The use of an insect repellent spray may help
- Keep horses away from low lying, wet areas during the day
- Vaccinate your horses against AHS - this is the most effective means of control.

HORSESICKNESS VACCINATION

- ▶ The vaccination for AHS involves two injections, 3 weeks apart. Both vaccines are essential in order for horses to be protected.
- ▶ Horses should be vaccinated between August - September each year.
- ▶ The vaccine comes in a pack containing two small bottles, two syringes filled with a clear liquid (diluent) and two needles.
- ▶ Each pack contains enough vaccine for one horse.
- ▶ NB. Bottle 2 is not the same as bottle 1 therefore each horse must receive both vaccine doses.

HOW DO I VACCINATE FOR AHS?

- ▶ Remove bottle marked vaccine 1
- ▶ Take out 1 syringe and replace the cap with a needle.
- ▶ Inject the liquid (diluent) into bottle 1 and mix gently until all of the powder has dissolved. Avoid excessive heat and exposure to sunlight.
- ▶ Draw the vaccine back into the syringe (2mls).
- ▶ You are now ready to vaccinate.
- ▶ The vaccine is injected sub-cutaneously (under the skin).
- ▶ Place bottle marked vaccine 2 into the fridge. (Do not freeze) In three weeks time, mix in the same way and administer the second vaccination.
- ▶ It is important that the animals are not worked excessively for three weeks following the first vaccination.

VACCINATION SCHEDULE

FOALS		
Foal	Age	Dose\Route
From unvaccinated mares	< 1 month	2ml sub-C
From vaccinated mares	5-6 months	2ml sub-C
ADULT HORSES		
Horse	Time	Dose\Route
Adult Horse	Annually	2ml sub-C
Pregnant mares	6 weeks before foaling	2ml sub-C