



agriculture, forestry & fisheries

Department:
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CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS (CEM) OUTBREAK JANUARY 2017

Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) was first confirmed in South Africa in 2011 and due to compliance and support from horse owners, societies and veterinarians, the extent of the outbreak was quickly determined and the affected horses treated. Since 2013 no new cases of CEM were reported in South Africa.

Unfortunately, in January 2017, a donor stallion in the Gauteng Province tested positive for CEM as part of the routine surveillance programme for this disease. The strain in this case has been identified as the same one detected in the 2011 outbreak. Further investigations are ongoing under the direction of the State Veterinarian. The cooperation of all horse owners in this regard is requested.

Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) is a highly contagious venereal disease of equines and zebra caused by the bacterium *Taylorella equigenitalis*. It is associated with economic losses due to its detrimental effects on equine reproductive efficiency and the costs related to the treatment and testing for the disease. CEM is mainly transmitted by both natural and artificial breeding but can also be transmitted by direct or indirect contact e.g. through shared grooming equipment, halters and even clothes and people. Horses that contract CEM may remain infected for life and treatment for the disease is difficult and expensive.

Horse owners are reminded of the importance of obtaining a CEM clearance certificate for all stallions prior to any breeding. The current surveillance measures prescribed in the DAFF letter dated 10 May 2016 remain in place as follows:

- All existing CEM clearance certificates are valid for two years from the date of issue;
- All new CEM clearance certificates will be valid for a period of two years from the date of issue;
- For semen donation, stallions will require an annual CEM clearance certificate.

The situation will be updated as more information becomes available. Detailed information on CEM can be found on the DAFF website on the following link: <http://www.daff.gov.za/daffweb3/Branches/Agricultural-Production-Health-Food-Safety/Animal-Health/information/dahpolicy>.

The cooperation of all members of the horse industry is appreciated.

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