agriculture,
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Department:
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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To: All individual horse owners, Breed Registering Authorities and Societies, AI centers, South African Equine Federation, Equine Health Fund, South African Veterinary Association, South African Veterinary Council, South African Equine Health and Protocols, University of Pretoria- Equine Research Centre, Directors of Provincial Veterinary Services and other interested parties.

REVIEW OF THE CONTAGIOUS EQUINE METRITIS (CEM) SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL AND EXTENSION OF THE VALIDITY OF CEM CLEARANCE CERTIFICATES

In 2016, the revision of the existing CEM surveillance protocol was undertaken by DAFF in consultation with representatives from various registering authorities, laboratories and experts. The outcomes of these were communicated in the following letters:

- *"Contagious Equine Metritis Annual Screening to Continue in South Africa"* dated 16 September 2015
- *"Re: Review Of Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) Surveillance Protocol and the Validity Extension of CEM Clearance Certificates"* dated 10 May 2016

In 2017, an outbreak of CEM delayed the revision of the CEM surveillance protocol and prolonged the implementation of the interim CEM surveillance measures until the extent of the outbreak could be determined. The invaluable support and action of the equine industry, expert veterinarians and the state veterinarian swiftly contained the outbreak and determined that it had been limited to the initially identified horses only and was linked to the outbreak that had been detected in 2011. We are therefore confident that the 2017 incident should not delay further revision of the CEM surveillance protocol in South Africa.

In consultation with the equine industry, the CEM surveillance protocol has been revised in line with the current CEM status of South Africa. These revisions will be included in the Manuals for CEM control that are currently being reworked in this regard. However, to

prevent any further delays in the implementation of the revised CEM surveillance protocol, the following is hereby adopted:

1. All stallions used exclusively for natural service must be tested and obtain a CEM Clearance Certificate once every five years. This means that all new CEM Clearance Certificates for stallions used exclusively for natural service are valid for five years. In addition, the validity of all existing CEM Clearance Certificates issued for stallions used exclusively for natural service are hereby extended to five years from the date of issue;
2. All stallions used for semen donation for any reason must be tested and obtain a CEM Clearance Certificate each year. This means that CEM Clearance Certificates issued for stallions used for semen donation are only valid for one year from date of issue.
3. Foals may not be registered with the relevant registering authorities if their sire had not been issued with a CEM Clearance Certificate valid at the time of breeding; Formal written exemption by the Director: Animal Health and full compliance with any testing and other requirements stipulated therein are required for the registration of any foal for which the sire did not have a valid CEM Clearance Certificate at the time of breeding. Applications for such exemptions must be sent through the relevant registering authority to the Directorate: Animal Health at DAFF.
4. Stallions to be used for breeding for the first time must be tested and be issued with a CEM Clearance Certificate prior to the commencement of breeding and thereafter according to their use;
5. Semen must not be collected from any stallion that does not have a valid CEM Clearance Certificate;
6. Semen, irrespective of when it was collected (even before 2011), should never be used unless the donor stallion had been issued with a CEM Clearance Certificate valid at the time of semen collection and a copy thereof is available to the inseminator. Formal written exemption by the Director: Animal Health and full compliance with any testing and other requirements stipulated therein are required for any semen for which a valid CEM Clearance Certificate is not available. Applications for such exemptions must be sent through the relevant registering authority to the Directorate: Animal Health at DAFF. With regard to imported semen, the legal status of the importation and the required CEM testing of the donor stallion at origin must be confirmed by the Directorate: Animal Health at DAFF. Applications

must also be sent through the relevant registering authority to the Directorate: Animal Health at DAFF.

7. Imported stallions are tested for CEM during the importation process. Evidence of the CEM tests performed in post importation quarantine in South Africa may be regarded as a valid CEM Clearance Certificate and may be used to register foals until the stallion is due to be tested again according to South African CEM surveillance requirements;

8. Horses imported from countries recognized by South Africa as free from CEM are not tested during the importation process. Foals from these stallions may be registered from the date of importation of the stallion until the stallion is due to be tested again according to South African CEM surveillance requirements

The above requirements are compulsory for all stallions, irrespective of whether they and their foals are registered with a breeding society or not.

Further, as all of the CEM outbreaks are now closed with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and with the support of the equine industry for ongoing CEM surveillance, we have initiated the process of declaring South Africa as free from CEM with the OIE.

We thank you for your continued support and will provide future updates as further milestones are reached.

Yours sincerely,

Maja.

Dr. Mpho Maja
DIRECTOR: ANIMAL HEALTH

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