To all Veterinarians, Paraveterinary professionals and zebra owners,

CERTIFICATION FOR THE EXPORT OF ZEBRAS FROM SOUTH AFRICA – AFRICAN HORSE SICKNESS (AHS) RISK

Dear Colleagues,

Reference is made to the letter dated 31 March 2017 which was addressed to all Private Veterinarians (attached for easy reference).

It has come to the attention of the Directorate Animal Health that there are consignments of zebras being exported to various trade partners. South Africa is endemic in large parts of the country for AHS which occurs seasonally.

AHS is a controlled disease with an active surveillance programme only in the AHS controlled area of the Western Cape. In the rest of the country there is no active surveillance programme that would allow for certain areas to be declared free of the disease. Thus to export zebra from South Africa without undue risk of a possible transmission of AHS virus to the importing country is very difficult.

Should we inadvertently export AHS from South Africa to a free country, this could have very serious consequences for our equid trade, our reputation as a trade partner as well as potential questions of liability of the certifying private and provincial veterinarian.
We thus advise that all requests for clarity be referred to the Provincial State Veterinarian responsible for the facility that wishes to export zebra. Your urgent attention and assistance is appreciated.

Kind regards

[Signature]

DR MPHO MAJA
DIRECTOR, ANIMAL HEALTH

DATE: 2019-09-20
To all Private Veterinarians

THE EXPORTATION OF ZEBRAS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Colleagues,

The Directorate Animal Health has been made aware of consignments of zebras being exported to various countries.

South Africa is endemic for African Horse Sickness (AHS). AHS is a controlled disease with an effective surveillance programme only in the AHS controlled area of the Western Cape. In the rest of the country AHS is a notifiable disease but there is no active surveillance programme that would allow for certain areas to be declared free of the disease.

Many countries demand certification for freedom of AHS which is not possible or ethical to certify outside the AHS controlled area. This is of particular concern during the AHS high risk summer season but also during the low risk season since some areas report cases virtually all year round.

The reason for concern is that should we inadvertently export AHS virus from South Africa to a free country, it would have very serious consequences for our reputation as a trade partner, our equid trade as well as potential liability for the certifying veterinarian.

In order to prevent unintended export of the AHSV, DAFF strongly recommends that exports of equids including zebras from the AHS infected zone (outside the Western Cape Province AHS free and surveillance zones) be limited to the low vector season from July to October.
In addition it is strongly recommended that such equids be tested negative for AHS infection prior to export according to the OIE guidelines. There are 2 options that can be used for this purpose. It is recommended that animals be held in isolation in a vector-protected establishment:-

a) for a period of at least 40 days and serological tests to detect antibodies against AHSV were carried out with no significant increase in antibody titre on blood samples collected on two occasions, with an interval of not less than 21 days, the first sample being collected at least 7 days after introduction into the vector-protected establishment; or

b) for a period of at least 14 days and an agent identification (PCR) test was carried out with a negative result on a blood sample collected not less than 14 days after introduction into the vector-protected establishment (Preferred option).

In addition the animals must be protected from Culicoides at all times during transportation (including transportation to and at the place of shipment).

Your understanding in protecting our reputation while safeguarding trade partners’ disease status is appreciated. You are welcome to contact this office for additional information and especially if the conditions on the veterinary import permit do not coincide with the recommendations above.

Kind regards

[Signature]

DR MPHO MAJA
DIRECTOR ANIMAL HEALTH

DATE: 2017-03-31