14 December 2014

Dear SAEF Member

I have been made aware of a potential levy that will be paid by all sports horse riders registering with the SAEF. The planned levy of R22/ horse is a move by the SAEF to begin contributing to the research and development in Equine Diseases in South Africa.

This is a welcomed effort by the SAEF to initiate a contribution to a major effort by the Equine Health Fund, Wits University and the Equine Research Centre, University of Pretoria to develop a strategy for the improved control of major infectious diseases affecting the wellbeing of South African Horses. This investment has previously been entirely funded by the Racehorse Fraternity with support from Phumelela, Gold Circle, The Thoroughbred Racing Trust, Racing Association and Thoroughbred Breeders Association.

The Thoroughbred Breeders currently have a levy of around R600 per foal in place for the support of research initiatives.

In negotiations with the funders from racing, the question routinely arises whether the Sports Horse fraternity will begin to make a contribution to the research and development effort. To date we have benefited without making a contribution.

In this brief outline we would like to list the planned investment made by academic veterinary research into the future.

1. Development and implementation of a surveillance and movement control system for all horses in the country. The system will link into the national registration systems of the National Horse Racing Authority, SAEF, and National Stud Book. The maintenance of horse registration data, vaccination schedules, and linkage to the major testing laboratories will enable online movement control. GIS mapping of disease outbreaks of controlled diseases (e.g. AHS, Influenza, CEM, and Herpes) will enable real-time data on the extent of disease distribution in country. Movement certificate which currently require certification by Vets will be available on-line for all registered horses, depending on the AHS and Influenza data available for the district from which the horse is moving.

2. Further development on rapid and accurate diagnostics in African Horse Sickness and Equine Encephalitis to ensure that the PCR viral load testing is accessible throughout the country and linked to surveillance.

3. Development of an AHS vaccine based on a construct vaccine that is not infective to horses, as an alternative to the "live-attenuated vaccine" currently available. This is required to cover more of the strains of AHS not in the current vaccine, and to protect horses from a vaccine related disease. The development is well advanced in phase II research, but will require additional studies in 2015 to progress towards registration.

4. Continuous surveillance for diseases such as Influenza that may cause an outbreak in South Africa that could have a crippling effect on equine sport, with a significant impact on the wellbeing of horses infected.

5. Continuous surveillance of diseases that impact equine abortions, breeding diseases such as CEM, Herpes etc.

6. The Equine Research Centre continues to have a modest investment in physiology research that includes exercise and performance enhancement research, linked in part to the investigation of performance enhancing drugs (doping).

The main aim with maintaining and scaling the activities of the Equine Health Fund and Research is to improve the control of disease in South Africa. The methods applied are similar to those applied in HIV, Influenza and even Ebola world-wide. It is true that we are also hoping to create enough knowledge to improve the export opportunities for horses and the potential...
to host the Equine Olympics in South Africa in 2024. The modest sum that is being levied on each horse registration will go a long way to enable the Equine Health Fund to secure matching funds from the Department of Science and Technology, and the industry as a whole.

Please visit the Equine Health Fund website, [www.equinehealthfund.co.za](http://www.equinehealthfund.co.za), to find the detailed funding prospectus.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Ian Sanne
Associate Professor of Medicine
University of the Witwatersrand
Director of the Equine Health Fund,
Director of the Clinical HIV Research Unit and Ebola Response to Sierra Leone
CEO Right to Care Non-Profit Organization