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BHS and BRC Flu Vaccination Shortage Statement

The equestrian world is in the midst of an unprecedented equine influenza vaccination shortage which has been caused by supply chain issues with one of the major vaccine manufacturers. There are simply not enough doses available to meet the demand of the equestrian population. Action must be taken now to preserve doses to protect those equines most at risk from influenza, until more doses of the vaccine are produced, and availability once again meets demand.

As such, The British Horse Society (incorporating British Riding Clubs), will be acting on scientific advice from BEVA and the BEF with regard to flu vaccination guidance for horse owners and riding school proprietors. This will also impact the mandatory regulations for BRC members attending qualifiers and/or championships.

From 1 September and for the duration of the shortage, the BHS and BRC will be allowing a 15-month interval instead of the usual 12 months for the annual booster vaccination. This 15-month booster must be followed by another booster, no more than 9 months later. Essentially still ensuring 2 annual boosters are given in a 24-month period.

Vets should stamp the passport of the horse to indicate that the delay in the booster was due to the vaccination shortage. This will act as dispensation for future BHS and BRC competitions and ensure that the vaccination schedule does not need to be re-started.

Further communication will be released as and when the situation changes and an end date will be communicated in good time once it becomes available.

For any BRC queries please email jennie.pallett@bhs.org.uk

For BHS queries please email welfare@bhs.org.uk or call 02476 840517

Flu Vaccination Shortage FAQs

Q: How long will the shortage last for?

A: At the moment it is hoped that the vaccination shortage won't last long and the situation should be resolved in the coming months. The BHS and BRC are working closely with BEVA and the BEF and we will be updating our members regularly.

Q: My horse's vaccination is due on 15 September and I am competing at the BRC DTM Championships. Will I still be able to attend with my horse?

A: Yes, you can still attend the Championships. The BRC volunteers will all be well briefed on the annual vaccination extension to 15 months.

Q: When will I need my horse to be vaccinated by? His vaccination due date is 15 September.

A: Your horse will need to be vaccinated on or before 15 December.

Q: When will he need his next booster?

A: The next booster is due no later than nine months after the extended vaccination date. So for this horse, which has his annual vaccination extended to 15 months and is vaccinated on 15 December, it will require the next booster on or before 15 September 2023. This will ensure that the horse has two annual boosters within 24 months.

Q: Will the vet include a note in my horse's vaccination record?

A: BEVA are recommending that vets should require that the affected horses' passport is signed, dated and stamped by a veterinary surgeon to document '12-month booster delayed due to vaccine shortage; due before <<< vet will insert date >>>'. It will be acceptable for this passport entry to be made any time from one month prior to the vaccine's original (12 month) due date until the date on which the 15-month extension has elapsed, provided that it has been signed before the horse attends a gathering.

Q: Are there any other precautions which I should take before attending a competition if my vaccination has lapsed.

A: You should always make sure that your horse is fit and healthy before competing. Check for any nasal discharge or signs of lethargy, you should also make yourself familiar with your horse's normal resting temperature. A raised temperature is often the first sign that your horse may be unwell, so knowing your horse's normal resting temperature means you can identify any increase early.

Take a look at our website for further guidance which is specific to events and steps to take, before, during and after to prevent the spread of disease:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/horse-care-and-welfare/health-care-management/horse-health/disease-prevention/disease-prevention-at-events/>

Q: Is there a self declaration form to complete?

A: The BEF have produced a 'self-declaration of health and freedom from disease' and we recommend that you complete this before attending a BRC Qualifier or Championship and bring it with you when your horse's passport is checked.

Q. Will my BRC club committee know that there are vaccination dispensations in place?

A. Yes, we will communicate with all BRC clubs and officials and advise them of the current situation.

Q. I also compete with BD, does this change in vaccination requirements also apply to BD?

A. It's important to note that owners of horses who would fall into the criteria below are

strongly advised to stay within the 12 month vaccination requirement to meet requirements or be at risk of having to restart the vaccination course or be refused entry:

- **plan to affiliate** with any member body with a current 12-month vaccination requirement in their rules
- are destined to race under **BHA rules**
- have international aspirations to compete under **FEI rules**
- currently or in the future plan to take part in activities which **require competition and/or stabling at a racecourse, agricultural/equestrian college or equestrian venue** which operates a six and/or 12 monthly vaccination requirement. BEF is liaising closely with these venues and will provide specific information should any decide to allow horses vaccinated between 12 and 15 months during the vaccine shortage to use their facilities at present and in the future.