

FEI Rule change in FEI requirements for Equine Influenza vaccination

Introduction

Equine Influenza is a viral respiratory disease which is highly contagious to susceptible horses. Outbreaks of the disease are occurring with increased frequency worldwide despite the widespread use of vaccines. The highly contagious nature of equine influenza means that it has the potential to seriously compromise international movement of horses. For a number of years the FEI rules have required an annual booster vaccination, but recent research indicates that, for many vaccines protection declines after a few months. This means that towards the end of the vaccination year horses may become susceptible to infection again, but may not show clinical signs of disease. These cases are particularly dangerous as they can spread virus and could initiate a serious outbreak of disease.

As a consequence of the risks involved the FEI Bureau and General Assembly have approved a rule-change requiring all horses competing in FEI competition to be vaccinated every 6 months. This rule will be reviewed annually by the FEI Veterinary Committee and can be altered if the vaccination or disease situation changes.

Rule change approved by the General Assembly 2004

“The FEI requirement for equine influenza vaccination will be for booster vaccinations at 6-month intervals as from 1 January 2005.”

Implementation of the Rule change

- 1 **Primary course of vaccination** - a primary course should always be given according to the manufacturer's instructions by injection or intranasal administration. For routine intramuscular administration, 2 doses of vaccine have to be administered between a minimum of 21 to a maximum of 92 days apart (1-3 months). The first booster vaccination must be given no more than 6 months +21 days (see item 5) after the second vaccination of the primary course; a shorter vaccination interval is obviously permitted.
- 2 **Route of administration** - the vaccine should be administered according to the manufacturer's instructions (i.e. intramuscular injection or intranasal). The FEI will accept intranasal vaccines for both primary and booster doses. However, it is not possible to change the route of administration between the first and second vaccination of the primary course.
- 3 **Specification of Vaccine** - all proprietary equine influenza vaccines are acceptable to the FEI irrespective of the route of administration. Univalent vaccines are to be preferred over combination vaccines, especially with regard to vaccination against tetanus.
- 4 **Details of Administration** - vaccines must be administered by a veterinarian and the details of the vaccine, serial/batch number, the date and route of administration must be recorded in the FEI passport. No injections must have been given within the preceding 7 days including the day of the competition or of entry into the competition stables.
- 5 **Booster vaccinations** must be given at 6-month intervals. However, to avoid interruption of the horses' competition schedule, it is permissible to extend the 6-month booster date by a maximum of 21 days. This provides a 3-week window after the 6-month date to vaccinate the horse. *(For example, a horse vaccinated on 18 March, has a window for the next vaccination from 18 Sep to 9 Oct).* A shorter vaccination interval is obviously permitted.

- 6 **The entering of vaccination details** in new FEI passports/recognition cards or duplicates – if the vaccination history of a horse is very long, the veterinarian who has filled in the descriptive page of the passport/recognition card may use a specific statement to certify that the vaccinations have been administered in accordance with FEI regulations (for the exact wording see veterinary regulations, Annex II.I.11). Please note that until 31 December 2004, annual booster vaccinations are permitted and **from 1 January 2005, bi-annual boosters are required.**
- 7 **Change in the vaccination schedule** - When the vaccination schedule is changed from annual to bi-annual, the horse does not need a new primary vaccination.
- 8 **On competition grounds** – All horses taking part in FEI competitions **must** have been given, within 6 months +21 days of the day of the competition, a booster vaccination or a primary set of vaccinations. If not, the sanction under point 10.2.4 must be applied.
- 9 **Temporary non-competing horses** – if a horse is not currently competing in FEI competitions, a booster within a maximum of 12 months is at least required.

Sanctions

- 10 The Bureau has approved the following table for warnings and sanctions of passport irregularities:
- 10.1 **Warnings** were issued by the FEI from 1 January 2005 until 31 December 2005 as a reminder that 6-month booster vaccination for influenza was mandatory.
- 10.2 As from 1 January 2006 a system of fines is being imposed by the Appeal Committee/Ground Jury for failure to comply with 6-month booster vaccinations.
- Less than one week after the 3-week vaccination window: **CHF 200**
 - Less than two weeks after the 3-week vaccination window: **CHF 300**
 - Less than four weeks after the 3-week vaccination window: **CHF 400**
 - More than four weeks after the 3-week vaccination window: **CHF 500, and cancellation of the horse's participation in the event.**
- 10.3 Fines for other infringements relating to influenza vaccination will be as follows:
- a) if no evidence of any current vaccination in passport: a maximum penalty of CHF 500. The horse should not be allowed to compete, it must be put in isolation and sent away from the event as soon as possible.
- b) any infringements of vaccination dates should be noted in the passport so that it is not reported again at a future event. Please write in CAPITAL letters; remember that others will be dependent on the information that you have written in the passport.
- c) no information available on the primary vaccination course need not lead to a penalty, and a repeat primary course is not required, provided the current passport contains a statement that the vaccination history of the horse has been checked and found to be correct (for exact wording see Veterinary Regulations, Annex II.I.11).

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