



Ref: VITT 1200/AHS South Africa  
Date: 23 April 2007

## **Update: African Horse Sickness (AHS) in South Africa Surveillance Zone - NOT confirmed**

*Note: Defra's Food and Farming Group International Animal Health (FFG-IAH) monitors outbreaks of specified disease around the world. African horse sickness (AHS) is among those diseases of concern.*

### **Disease Report**

The South African authorities reported an outbreak of AHS at Kunnenburg, Paarl, Western Cape Province (OIE, 2007). This outbreak was in the AHS surveillance zone approximately 50 km from the European Union (EU) approved export zone for registered horses in municipal Cape Town (see previous report). Subsequent detailed confirmation tests have now indicated that AHS virus was **not** involved in this incident (European Commission, 2007).

### **Situation Assessment**

As a consequence of the initial official outbreak report, Defra banned imports of horses from South Africa as from 23/03/2007.

On the basis of the new official update, horses may now continue to be imported under specified EU rules. These rules are considered sufficient to mitigate the likelihood of the introduction of AHS virus to a negligible level via legal trade in horses. That is, temporary admissions and permanent imports of registered horses are allowed subject to quarantine and official certification. These imports are only permitted from the 'AHS-free zone' in the municipal area of Cape Town, Western Cape Province. For this purpose, South Africa has established three zones within the Western Cape Province. A map of the AHS control zones in the Western Cape Province may be seen at <http://www.nda.agric.za/vetweb/Animal%20Disease/AHS%20new%20boundaries%20RSA.pdf>

### **Conclusion**

As a result of the new official information received, there will be no longer any justifiable grounds for maintaining the recently imposed Defra's ban on the importation of horses from South Africa to the UK under the existing EU rules. Defra will nevertheless continue to monitor the AHS developments in South Africa.

### **References**

OIE. (2007). OIE Alert Message ZAF 23-03-07. Received by e-mail 23 March 2007.

European Commission. (2007). Summary report on horse deaths due to infectious disease on the Cape Peninsula of South Africa in 2007 (11 April 2007). Presented at SCOFCAH on 12 April 2007.