11th May 2018

To: Equine Industry stakeholders.

Subject: Advice to the equine industry on vaccination of stallions against Equine Viral Arteritis including procedure for resumption of vaccination following vaccine shortage.

VACCINATION OF STALLIONS AGAINST EQUINE VIRAL ARTERITIS

There is a risk that Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA) may be introduced into Ireland and infect Irish horses. Provision of the inactivated EVA vaccine “EQUIP ARTERVAC” manufactured by Zoetis is under the control of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) for use in stallions only. It is advised that both thoroughbred and non-thoroughbred stallions including sport-horses, standard-breds and ponies should be vaccinated. In previous years the vaccine has been made available to veterinary practitioners under special licence. However due to unforeseen manufacturing circumstances, the vaccine has not been available in Ireland since mid-2017. As the vaccine has a six month booster requirement to ensure proper protection, this means that many vaccinated stallions have been forced to ‘lapse’ at least six months since their last vaccination and can no longer be considered sufficiently protected from EVA.

Recently, “EQUIP ARTERVAC” has become available again and stallions may resume their vaccination schedule. Following restoration of vaccine supplies, it will be necessary to provide evidence that any sero-positivity in stallions previously vaccinated with “EQUIP ARTERVAC” is associated with pre-2018 vaccination and not challenge by infection with EVA during the period of vaccine unavailability (i.e. during the 2018 breeding season), before vaccination can resume. At the start of February 2018, the DAFM National Disease Control Centre (NDCC) and Veterinary International Trade Division released an information notice regarding the implementation of an EVA testing and monitoring programme for stallions during the 2018 breeding season.
Samples collected during the 2018 breeding season would need to show a stable or declining antibody level against the virus during the period of vaccine unavailability to be considered consistent with absence of exposure to EVA infection during that period.

**2018 EVA Serological Surveillance Program - providing evidence that seropositivity in stallions in the period without vaccination is not due to infection**

- A serum sample (10mls. clotted blood) clearly labelled with the name of the stallion, and accompanied by the completed laboratory submission form in the attached Annex (including the stallion’s microchip number) to be submitted to the IEC, Johnstown, Co Kildare, **on or before the commencement of breeding** the stallion.
- A second serum sample (10mls. clotted blood) clearly labelled as above to be submitted to the above address **mid breeding season or by the 30th April 2018**.
- A third serum sample (10mls. clotted blood), clearly labelled as above to be submitted to the above address on or around at the **end of the stallions breeding season or at least by the 30th June 2018**.

(Cost of screening to be borne by the owner)

Results which show evidence of stable/declining antibody levels (titres) against the virus during the period without vaccination should be considered consistent with absence of exposure to EVA infection during that period. **Where there is a rise in antibody titres or where serology screening results are not provided for the risk period in question, DAFM will require additional measures to be taken to rule out exposure to EVA during that period in line with existing DAFM protocols which may include testing of semen for the presence of virus.**

**Stallions resuming an EVA vaccination schedule before 30th June 2018 will only be required to provide the first two samples mentioned above (i.e. beginning and mid breeding season samples).**
“EQUIP ARTERVAC” Vaccination Protocol

The correct protocol for use of “EQUIP ARTERVAC” will depend on whether:

1. A stallion is receiving “EQUIP ARTERVAC” for the first time
2. A stallion has been previously been vaccinated with “EQUIP ARTERVAC” **BUT** not in the last six months
3. A stallion that has been vaccinated with “EQUIP ARTERVAC” in the previous six months

**1. A STALLION RECEIVING “EQUIP ARTERVAC” FOR THE FIRST TIME:**

A. Primary Vaccination
   - **Horses must be blood sampled and found sero-negative for EVA antibodies before the first dose is administered.** This is essential since many countries will only allow the importation of vaccinated stallions provided they have been certified sero-negative for EVA before vaccination and have this recorded on their passports. Therefore, a serum sample (10 mls clotted blood) must accompany the application for vaccine.
   - Stallions being vaccinated for the first time require two inoculations (doses) of vaccine with a 3-6 week interval between the inoculations.
   - A second blood sample must be collected 14-21 days after administration of the second dose of vaccine for serological examination.

B. Booster Vaccination
   - A single “booster” dose of vaccine is required every 6 months for animals that have received a primary vaccination. For serological purposes, a clotted blood sample must be collected before the first booster dose is administered each year. In addition, a second blood sample must be collected 14-21 days after the first annual booster.
2. **A STALLION THAT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY VACCINATED WITH “EQUIP ARTERVAC” BUT NOT IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS**

A. Stallions must have test results which show a stable or declining antibody level (titres) against EVA during the period without vaccination (full details of 2018 EVA serological surveillance program is described at page 2). These results should be considered consistent with absence of exposure to EVA infection during that period and vaccination can resume as described below.

Stallions resuming vaccination before June 30th will require results for the beginning and mid breeding season. This will apply to shuttle stallions travelling to Australia for example. All other stallions resuming vaccination after the end of the 2018 breeding season will require three test results.

**However, where there is a rise in antibody titre or where serology screening results are not provided for the risk period in question, DAFM will require additional measures to be taken to rule out exposure to EVA during that period in line with existing DAFM protocols which may include testing of semen for the presence of virus.**

B. **Primary Vaccination**

- Stallions resuming a vaccination schedule against EVA after a period of longer than 6 months require two inoculations (doses) of vaccine with a 3-6 week interval between the inoculations.
- A second blood sample must be collected 14 -21 days after administration of the second dose of vaccine for serological examination.

C. **Booster Vaccination**

- A single “booster” dose of vaccine **every 6 months is necessary** for animals that have received a primary vaccination. For serological purposes, a **clotted blood**
sample must be collected before the first booster dose is administered each year. In addition, a second blood sample must be collected 14-21 days after the first annual booster.

3. **STALLIONS THAT HAVE RECEIVED A BOOSTER VACCINE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS**

A single “booster” dose of vaccine **every 6 months is necessary** for animals that have received a primary vaccination. For serological purposes, **a clotted blood sample must be collected before the first booster dose is administered each year**. In addition, a second blood sample must be collected 14-21 days after the first annual booster.
Procedure for Obtaining “EQUIP ARTERVAC”

Applications should be made to: Virology Division, Central Veterinary Research Laboratory, Backweston Campus, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, W23 X3PH.

The vaccine will only be issued if applications are accompanied by:

1. A signed and dated EVA-1 form that identifies the stallion (s), the date of last vaccination and states whether a primary/booster vaccination is required.

2. A serum sample from each stallion as outlined above.

3. Stallions that were previously vaccinated prior to the period of unavailability will need to provide test results which show a stable or declining antibody level (titres) against the virus during the period without vaccination (i.e. 2018 breeding season).

Please tick the box in Form EVA 1 to indicate the supplier with whom you wish to have your order placed. On receipt of the completed application form the Virology Division will email the supplier with the name and address of the veterinary practitioner and the number of doses of vaccine required. The supplier will send the vaccine and invoice directly to the veterinary practitioner. The regulations governing distribution prohibits the supplier from releasing the vaccine except on receipt of an instruction from the Virology Division.
A PERSON WHO CONTRAVENES BY ACT OR OMISSION A CONDITION UNDER WHICH ARTERVAC IS MADE AVAILABLE SHALL BE GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE.

Please note that it is imperative that the twice yearly vaccination schedule as described by the manufacturers is properly adhered to in order to ensure proper protection of horses against EVA.

For export purposes, a number of countries require that stallions vaccinated previously for EVA must continue to receive booster doses every 6 months.

For further information on the requirements concerning shuttle stallions, please contact Sean Ashe at Sean.Ashe@agriculture.gov.ie.

Issued by:
NDCC and CVRL Virology Division
11 May 2018
## Annex: Laboratory Submission Form

**Irish Equine Centre**  
Johnstown, Naas, Co. Kildare  
Tel: +353-45-866266  
Fax: +353-45-866273  
Email:

### Request Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vet Name:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vet Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Name:</td>
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### Sample Submitted

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<th>Urine:</th>
<th>Faeces:</th>
<th>Swab:</th>
<th>Tissue:</th>
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Details:

### Procedure Required

- **Virology**
- **Equine Arteritis Virus Titre**