

Press release: Enough Rift Valley Fever vaccine available

Date: 13 April 2010

Body: The Western Cape Department of Agriculture today confirmed that Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) has significantly increased its Rift Valley Fever (RVF) vaccine production. It is building up an adequate quantity of inactive RVF vaccine. The inactivated vaccine is safe to use on all animals, including pregnant animals. Currently OBP has more than 5 million doses of live RVF vaccine, but this type of vaccine may cause abortions in pregnant animals.

OBP was inundated with requests for inactivated vaccine when the first cases of RVF were reported in the Free State and Northern Cape, and subsequently ran out of stock. This situation has now been normalized, and the Department of Agriculture is urging all livestock farmers to vaccinate as many animals as possible against this mosquito born disease.

The Western Cape has so far only had two confirmed cases of Rift Valley Fever in animals, and one confirmed human case. All three cases were in the Beaufort West region of the Province. The person, a State Vet, has since fully recovered and resumed his duties. According to the Chief Directorate Director: Veterinary Services at the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, the Department's vaccination programme has so far procured and strategically distributed 80 000 units of vaccine at no cost to farmers.

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