

The responsibilities of animal owners in terms of the Animal Diseases Act (Act 35 of 1984)

Notice: All owners of livestock



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It is a Constitutional right in South Africa to own animals, but every right also assumes responsibilities. For all animal owners and their staff, agents and family there are 7 responsibilities as contained in Section 11 of the Animal Diseases Act (Act 35 of 1984) and some of the related Animal Disease Regulations.

1. To take all reasonable steps to **prevent infection** of the animals with any animal disease or parasite, and;
2. To **prevent the spread** of diseases or parasites from that land or animals, or;
3. If the animals are infected with any animal disease or parasite, **to eradicate** the disease and parasites, and;
4. To apply prescribed and suitable **treatment** for these animals, and;
5. If there is a reasonable suspicion that it is controlled animal disease, **to report it to the local state veterinarian**.
6. In the case of the outbreak of controlled animal disease or the suspicion thereof, **to inform** his/her neighbour, any prospective buyer and any previous buyers of animals during the past 30 days.
7. Institute compulsory **preventive vaccinations and dipping** for animal diseases, which are described in Table 2 of the Animal Disease Regulations.

These vaccinations are:

- a. Anthrax for cattle
- b. Brucellosis for heifers, 4-8 months of age
- c. Rabies for all dogs and cats
- d. African horse sickness for all horses, but it is not compulsory in the AHS controlled area.
- e. Newcastle disease for chickens and ostriches
- f. Foot and mouth disease for cattle in the controlled area, under the supervision of the state veterinarian

Compulsory dipping includes:

- g. Sheep scab dip or treatment of sheep before movement

Contravention of the above legislated responsibilities by an animal owner is described as an offence in Article 32 of Animal Disease Act. There is also, however, concurrent liability should a **manager, worker, representative, agent or family member** of an animal owner **contravenes** any of the above.

Vicarious liability described in Article 34 (2) of the Animal Diseases Act includes a **manager, worker, representative, agent or family member of an animal or land owner** who by an act or omission is involved in the spreading of a controlled animal disease such as FMD. Such a person, deemed to serve under the control of the owner, will be guilty of an offence and liable to be convicted and sentenced as if he/she was the owner.