



Equine influenza vaccination requirements temporarily relaxed owing to coronavirus outbreak

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA)'s cross-industry Veterinary Committee – in conjunction with the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) and British Equestrian Federation (BEF) – has today approved a proposal regarding the vaccination schedule for equine influenza in British racehorses. The move has been made in order to help trainers, owners and vets tackle the significant logistical challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and provide clarity for all.

During the remainder of 2020, for a horse to be eligible to compete in Britain it will be necessary to have received an approved equine influenza vaccination within the last 12 months, instead of the existing nine-month requirement. The 12-month approach reflects the policy that was in place in Britain prior to 2019.

The existing BHA policy that vaccinations must have taken place within the last nine months is an interim policy pending a full industry consultation on what the permanent protocol should be. However, the Veterinary Committee, BEVA and the BEF are in agreement that because of the movement restrictions currently in force, the levels of immunity in this population developed as a result of the intensive vaccination activity over the last 12 months, and the fact that there have been no reported equine influenza cases in the horse population in the UK this year, the move to the old vaccination protocol does not represent a significant risk for the remainder of 2020.

The reason for this change is to simplify the advice to owners, trainers and vets no matter how long the effect of COVID-19 impacts on equestrian sports and veterinary activities. It gives trainers and vets clear direction for the rest of the year and allows them to plan their vaccination schedules with certainty. It also reflects the difficulties for trainers and vets in administering vaccinations while restrictions on movement and human contact are in place and allows for the racing herd to return to full activities as soon as possible once racing resumes.

In order to continue to best protect the racing industry from the effects of equine influenza it is suggested that, where possible, the current nine-month regulations are adhered to. However, given the current COVID-19 government requirements it is clear that this will not always be achievable, and provided that a horse has had an approved vaccination within the last 12 months it will remain eligible to compete when racing resumes.

The initial vaccination intervals for primary vaccinations and booster vaccinations will also reflect the protocols that were in place under the old 12-month protocols.

The change to the policy is currently in place for 2020 **only**. The Veterinary Committee will continue to monitor the situation and make further recommendations when necessary. Previously the BHA had announced its intention to hold a consultation in 2020 on permanent changes to the vaccination protocols. This consultation will be temporarily delayed while



resources are dedicated to managing the coronavirus outbreak, but will be carried out as soon as is practicable.

Summary of Requirements for the remainder of 2020

- There will be a relaxation of the current requirement for a booster within 9 months of raceday – for the remainder of 2020, all horses must have received booster vaccinations of not more than one year apart.
- If any vaccination is administered late (either an annual booster over one year apart, or any of the primary course vaccinations), the horse will have to re-start a new primary course.
- For full details of primary course requirements, please see the [Vaccinations Code](#).
- The proposed consultation for vaccination harmonisation across Europe will be temporarily delayed, and carried out as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- The BHA Veterinary Committee will continue to monitor the situation, and make further recommendations when necessary.

Q&A

What if my horse goes over a year without a vaccination?

If this was to occur then you would need to restart your vaccination process from the beginning.

What if my horse goes over a year without a primary or secondary booster?

Again you would need to restart your program as from the beginning.

What will happen in 2021 – when will the nine months return?

This is yet to be determined and will depend on the consultation and also the wider situation regarding COVID-19 and the effect on routine vaccinations by stable veterinarians.

Are these calendar months or days?

12 months refers to 12 calendar months as per usual, rather than 365 days

What happens if my horse isn't racing – can he go over one year without having to re-start?

No, if the horse was to go over a year without a vaccination then it would need to restart a program from the beginning, whether it is racing or not.

Notes:

1. About the BHA Veterinary Committee

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA)'s Veterinary Committee advises on all veterinary matters affecting racing and the health and welfare of racehorses. It contains representatives of the BHA, Association of Racecourse Veterinary Surgeons (ARVS), British Equine



Veterinary Association (BEVA), National Trainers Federation (NTF), Racehorse Owners Association (ROA), Animal Health Trust (AHT), Thoroughbred Breeders Association (TBA), Racecourse Association (RCA) and Independent expertise.

2. About the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA)

BEVA is a world leading equine veterinary association committed to championing high standards of equine health and welfare. We advance the veterinary and allied sciences, promote scientific excellence and educate equine veterinary professionals throughout the world. More information: <https://www.beva.org.uk/About-BEVA>

3. About the British Equestrian Federation (BEF)

The British Equestrian Federation (BEF) is the National Governing Body for horse sports in the UK, affiliated to the Federation Equestre Internationale (FEI), the international governing body of equestrian sports. It exists to provide leadership, vision and purpose in steering the direction of equestrianism. Its patron is HRH The Duchess of Cornwall. More information: <https://www.bef.co.uk/Default.aspx>