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Circular LA 1/2021

5 January 2021

To all Livestock Agents

IMPLEMENTATION OF BIOSECURITY RULES FOR LIVESTOCK AGENTS

On 13 November 2020, the Biosecurity Rules for Livestock Agents were published in Government Gazette 43900, Board Notice 135 of 2020. These rules are primarily to ensure that the South African Livestock and Game industries comply with the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) terrestrial code to enhance international trade. Secondly, the rules are to regulate the livestock agent's industry with specific reference to required precautions that must be taken at auctions (as a second level of detection for animal diseases) to reduce the risk of spreading controlled, notifiable, and other animal diseases. For easy reference, a copy of the rules can be obtained from the Agricultural Produce Agents Council (APAC) website at www.apacouncil.org.za.

It is imperative that all livestock and game agents (also known as auctioneers) familiarise themselves with the content of the rules. This circular therefore serves to clarify the implementation process and the intent of some of the most important rules.

Period of implementation

Albeit that the rules came into effect on the date of publication (13 November 2020), an additional grace period of **6 months** will be allowed for all livestock agents to familiarise themselves with the content; adjust their infrastructure and processes where necessary; and prepare for overall compliance. Implementation of the Biosecurity Rules for Livestock Agents must be finalised on, or before **30 June 2021**.

Legislative framework

This circular must be read in conjunction with the following legislation:

- The Agricultural Produce Agents Act, Act No. 12 of 1992 and the Rules in Respect of Livestock Agents published in Government Gazette 41473 dated, 2 March 2018.
- The Animal Diseases Act, Act 35 of 1984 and the control measures therein.
- The Animal Identification Act, Act 6 of 2002 and the Regulations published in Government Gazette no 26732 of 21 November 2003.
- The Stock Theft Act, Act 57 of 1959 with specific reference to Section 6, 7 and 8 (Guidelines as to the completion of documentation).
- The Animal Protection Act, Act 72 of 1962.

Specific mandatory compliance

Each livestock agent is required to comply with the following:

- Compulsory registration with APAC. This includes livestock agents that conduct online and virtual auctions.
- An external audit of the auction facilities and all biosecurity procedures must be undertaken by an **independent auditor** bi-annually. The South African Meat Industry Company (SAMIC) will fulfil this role. SAMIC is accredited by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) and appointed by the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) as an Assignee for the application of sections 3(1)(a) and (b) and 8 of the Agricultural Product Standards Act, Act 119 of 1990 (classification and marking of meat intended for sale in the Republic of South Africa). Detailed information about the audit procedure and costing for the livestock agent will be provided at a later stage.
- Acceptance (in writing) of the responsibilities in Sections 11 and 26 of the Animal Diseases Act. This document of acceptance will form part of the external audit process. The first report is due on, or before **31 December 2021**.

- Every livestock agent must appoint a qualified “biosecurity practitioner” who must be registered with the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC). The category of professionals that can perform this function are:
 - Veterinarian.
 - Veterinarian Specialist.
 - Animal Health Technician.
 - Veterinary Nurse.
 - Veterinary Technologist.

The “biosecurity practitioner” is responsible for the auction Biosecurity Plan and must oversee compliance with minimum biosecurity requirements for all animals from different origins congregating for auctioning.

Record-keeping at the auction facility

Each livestock agent must implement a reliable and accurate biosecurity record-keeping system at an auction. This system must ensure that all transactions are carried out in accordance with an auditable and traceable process.

An animal destined for sale at an auction, must be registered by the owner at least 24 hours prior to the actual auction. The receipt and sale of livestock is defined in Part V of the Rules in Respect of Livestock Agents. In terms of the Biosecurity Rules for Livestock Agents the following additional documents must accompany any animal that arrives at the auction facility:

- Original valid Article 6 and/or 8 documents from the owner of the animal.
- Copy of the Brand Registration Certificate of the owner of the animal.
- Copy of the RSA ID of the owner of the animal.
- Original Animal Owner Health Attestation, that may have a confirmation of that attestation by a veterinarian, for the farm of origin and the specific animal.
- Complete details of the premises of origin on the Section 6 document: physical address, farm name, Surveyor General number and portion number, as

declared and signed by the owner of the animal, as well as the owner or manager of the premises of origin.

Animal identification

An animal verified and accepted at an auction must be properly and permanently marked with the owner's registered mark in accordance with the Animal Identification Act and Regulations published in Government Gazette no 25732 of 21 November 2003.

Before offloading of an animal at an auction, the livestock agent must ensure that the registered brand belongs to the owner, check the brand marking certificate and the ID of the owner and driver/transporter where applicable.

The following is not allowed:

- Offloading of an animal at the arrival area (dirty area), without a registered mark, is prohibited. If the ear tag / identity tag for each animal's individual identification, as per the Livestock Identification and Traceability System, does not correspond with the list of animals in the Original Animal Owner Health Attestation, then such an animal may not be offloaded or received at an auction.
- A freshly branded animal may not be offloaded and accepted.
- An animal with wet paint marks of a previous auction may not be accepted within a period of 28 days after the previous sale.
- The branding or marking of an animal at the auction premises is prohibited.

A suspicious animal, or an animal that does not comply with marking requirements, or a suspected stolen animal must immediately be reported to the local Stock Theft Unit (SAPS). The contact details and after-hours details of the stock theft unit must be available and displayed at the auction premises.

Demarcated areas at an auction facility

An auction facility must be divided into areas of varying risk. A flow diagram and a standard operating procedure that clearly indicate the different areas, must be available that will form part of the external audit process. The following areas are required:

An arrival area (dirty area)

Any vehicle offloading an animal at an auction is subject to a proper cleaning process before entering the arrival area.

The arrival area must include a pre-quarantine facility with a crush and proper neck clamp to examine an animal, for suspected lesions, clinical signs of disease or external parasites. Specific attention must be given to a suspect animal for the presence of overt signs of disease and external parasites. In addition, an animal must be checked for official marks/brands indicating any of the controlled animal diseases such as Brucellosis, Tuberculosis and Foot and Mouth disease. If there is any suspicion of an infectious disease, such an animal should not be allowed into the biosecure area and be placed and isolated in a detainment area (designated camp). Any such an animal must be reported to the state veterinarian in compliance with section 11(2) of the Animal Diseases Act. The contact details and after-hours details of the state veterinarian must be available and displayed at the auction premises.

A vehicle parking area

The arrival area must include a parking area where vehicles that offload and reload can be cleaned and/or disinfected. Proper and functional cleaning equipment must be provided by the livestock agent or owner of the premises. This area may not be close or in contact with any animal or the auction pens.

Biosecure areas (clean areas)

The biosecure areas must be clearly demarcated with specific access points, and notice boards to give guidance of biosecurity protocols to be followed. Personnel must wear clearly identified clothing (predominantly coloured overalls dedicated to specific areas) with movement between areas restricted to “essential only”. If movement is required, including vehicles entering biosecure areas, decontamination protocols must be followed.

Biosecure areas for third parties

All movement of third parties in biosecure areas are subject to the biosecure protocols (included in the Biosecurity Plan) and must be diligently recorded, monitored, and managed. Contact and exposure between third parties and animals should be avoided as far as possible.

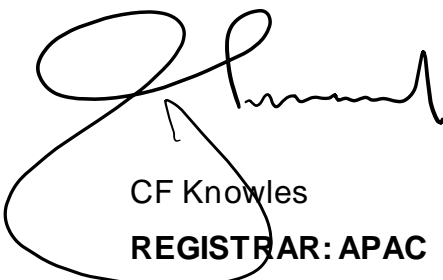
Special attention must be given to Covid-19 protocols. The Covid-19 Directions Regarding Livestock Auctions, published in Government Gazette 43571 published on 31 July 2020 will serve as baseline.

Cleaning and disinfection of biosecure areas after an auction

The entire biosecure area must be cleaned and disinfected after every auction.

Should you require any additional information please contact Me. Stephanie Nel at (011) 894-3680 or stephanie.nel@apacouncil.co.za.

Yours sincerely



CF Knowles
REGISTRAR: APAC