

Horse plague almost wiped out, says dept

Kingdom a step closer to being AHS-free



A worker sprays wood vinegar in a private stable in Chai Nat to protect horses from insects. (Photo by Katesuda Meteeviwat)

African Horse Sickness (AHS) has been successfully contained to a limited area, according to the Department of Livestock Development, making the country one step closer to being AHS-free.

Sorawit Thanito, director-general of the department, on Tuesday said Thailand is now in the response stage of its anti-AHS operational plan, which was drafted to restore the kingdom's AHS-free status from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

AHS infections in the country are now contained to a limited area, Mr Sorawit said.

If there are no reports of AHS-related deaths for 30 consecutive days, Thailand will enter the plan's second stage, which is to conduct surveillance on horses and prevent the return of AHS.

The last stage will seek to declare the country free from AHS.

- African horse sickness vaccines en route
- AHS vaccination
- AHS outbreak kills 154 horses

The director-general noted that public-private partnership between all sides, particularly the kingdom's equestrian associations and horse breeders, is key to Thailand's fight against AHS.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has animals in the equine family, including zebras, listed in the Animal Epidemic Act BE 2558 to regulate import and animal movement.

"The department has sent a letter to all horse farms to comply with regulations," Mr Sorawit said. "Nakhon Ratchasima Zoo and Khao Kheow Songkhla Zoo, under the Zoological Park Organisation, are already keeping their zebras under [mosquito] nets."

"The department will travel to the zoos to inspect their compliance," the director-general of the department added.

Mr Sorawit said zebras in zoos must be kept under mosquito nets and horse-safe pesticides must be sprayed to prevent AHS carried by insects.

Failure to conform could result in penalties in accordance with the Animal Epidemic Act BE 2558.

The director-general proposed the use of a temporary vaccine bank in Asia, the Middle East and Oceania to reduce AHS infections during a meeting between regional OIE committees on June 10.

No zebras have been imported into Thailand since April 8, Mr Sorawit said.

Source <https://www.bangkokpost.com/thailand/general/1936048/horse-plague-almost-wiped-out-says-dept> Date 17 June 2020