



# SAVA Guidelines on Practice Services during Covid-19 Lockdown

26 March 2020

Ver 2.0

## GENERAL VETERINARY SERVICES

Service	Advice
Wellness visits	Postpone.
Food sales	Continue but maintain social distancing (see below), arrange delivery or use eCommerce.
Medication refills	Continue but maintain social distancing (see below), arrange drop-off or use eCommerce.
Rabies vaccination (1)	Routine vaccination (including previously unvaccinated animals) can be reasonably postponed if the owner is able to manage the animal in such a way as to minimize the risk of exposure until the animal can be vaccinated
Other vaccinations	Administer boosters of vaccine series that have started if deemed necessary based on the animal's condition and circumstances (e.g. risk of exposure). Postpone other vaccinations if the risk of exposure can be managed otherwise in the interim.
Heartworm prophylaxis	<p>If pets have been on prophylaxis in previous years, dispensing without a heartworm test is reasonable. Maintain social distancing (see below), arrange delivery or use eCommerce.</p> <p>If there are concerns about owner compliance or if prophylaxis history is unclear (or absent), risks should be discussed with the owner, but preventives can be dispensed without testing with owner consent. Visits to clinics for heartworm testing should be postponed.</p>
Flea/tick preventives	Dispense to established clients, maintaining social distancing or arranging for drop-off or delivery Establish VCPR via telemedicine for new clients prior to dispensing
Life threatening conditions	With cases from low-risk households, manage using social distancing (see below). With cases from high-risk households, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic (see below for description of low vs high risk households).
Management of painful conditions	Manage by telemedicine when possible. If examination is needed and the pet is from a low-risk household, admit for examination, maintaining social distancing.
Management of chronic conditions	Maintain by telemedicine when possible.

Service	Advice
	Schedule appointment if examination is needed and a delay would lead to a reasonably likelihood of a negative patient outcome.
Surgical procedures for painful disorders	<p>If the patient can be temporarily maintained on analgesics with a low risk of negative consequences, delay the surgery. If not, proceed with the surgery if household is low-risk.</p> <p>If household is high-risk, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic, or if possible isolate the animal from any high-risk individuals for 2-3 days to minimize the risk of contamination of the haircoat and then proceed with the surgery</p>
Other non-urgent surgical procedures	Postpone.
Routine hematologic monitoring	This should be postponed unless it is felt that a delay would substantially increase the risk of complications.
Routine faecal/urine testing	<p>Since these samples can be collected by the owner and dropped off without social interaction, testing can be performed. Packages should be handled by personnel wearing gloves and a lab coat, and handled as potentially infectious. Containers should be wiped with a disinfectant. If containers are retained (e.g. for subsequent testing) they should be placed in a new sealable bag.</p>
Euthanasia	<p>Humane euthanasia should proceed, limiting social interactions as much as is reasonable while respecting the needs of the human-animal bond.</p> <p>Consider necessary PPE for staff if the animal is from a high-risk household.</p>
House calls	Approach as per the individual procedures listed above, recognizing the greater risk to veterinary personnel entering a household and the need for owner risk assessment (see below). Maintain social distancing within the household as much as possible
Chemotherapy	<p>Continue ongoing treatment while maintaining social distancing. If possible, consider alternate regimes that may spare PPE supplies (e.g. oral) if there is minimal risk of a negative impact on the animal's condition.</p> <p>Consider the clinical implications of delays when deciding whether to start new chemotherapy treatment regimens</p>
Boarding, day care, grooming, and other ancillary services	Discontinue.
Sterilisations	Elective sterilisation for animals should not continue. However, if a pathological condition exists that necessitates the procedure being performed, it should be performed.
Mild to moderate skin cases	Use telemedicine
Mild to moderate gastro	Advise client to withhold food and should self-cure in most cases. Follow up with client daily. If required, schedule a consult as per the guidelines.
Heart/kidney/liver failure	Treat as emergency

Service	Advice
Post-operative check-ups	Clients can remove stitches themselves, follow up x-ray to be postponed. Use telemedicine.

- (1) Veterinarians must use their judgement in determining if the animal cannot be appropriately managed and is at increased risk of rabies exposure, and therefore routine rabies vaccination is essential. Rabies vaccination after a potential rabies exposure incident must continue to be given within 7 days if the offending animal (e.g. bat, wildlife) is not available for testing.

## POULTRY GROUP

### *Message from the Poultry Group*

*The COVID-19 Lockdown will have considerable impact on our daily routines and livelihood. While veterinarians have been rightly deemed an essential service, as educated and responsible citizens of South Africa, I urge you to embrace the spirit of the lockdown and limit interactions and travel. As far as possible make use of IT solutions (calls, photos, instant messaging, video conferencing) to assist your clients.*

*Please be mindful that you may be travelling from a high-prevalence area such as Gauteng, to a low-prevalence rural area, that has poor health care infrastructure. In our labour-intensive poultry systems, it is essential that the farm labourers remain healthy during this period.*

*Below are guidelines for common services that will assist the veterinarian in decision making about farm and other premises visits. Under no circumstances should this guideline be taken to supersede the instructions issued by the Department of Health, SAPS, and other National Authorities.*

*Travel to farms or other premises should not be undertaken if you have symptoms which could be associated with COVID-19, test positive yourself for COVID-19 or have been in contact with people who tested positive*

*Ultimately, every Veterinarian will need to assess their own situation. You understand highly contagious diseases better than most people. Use your professional judgement, embrace the spirit of the lockdown and stay healthy.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Sean Wisdom*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Advice</b>
Routine farm visits	Postpone until after lockdown
Routine Post-mortems	Postpone until after lockdown
Routine audits e.g. welfare or vaccination	Postpone until after lockdown
Production meetings / health discussions	Make use of internet conferencing services.
Post-mortems from serious* mortality problems	Continue but maintain social distancing (arrange drop-off) and good personal hygiene levels. Use PPE if necessary.

*\*use your professional judgement*

*These guidelines were prepared by the Executive Committee of the Poultry Group of SAVA to be used as guidance by the members*

*Any enquiries can be directed to*

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## RUMINANT VETERINARY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

### Message from RuVASA

*The Ruminant Veterinary Association of South Africa (RuVASA) would like to inform large animal practitioners of suggested guidelines that can be followed during the lock-down period for the COVID-19 outbreak. This document serves a supplementary purpose to the suggested guidelines posted by the SAVA which was aimed primarily at small animal practitioners. This document will be updated as the situation unfold. In addition, see also the document sent out by DAFF, dated 25 March entitled: "Covid-19 contingency plan for animal production animal and veterinary services for the duration of the lockdown – 26th March – 16th April 2020". This document makes it clear that "It is therefore important that all non-essential services, whether they are in a facility that is regarded as essential or not, must be suspended for the duration of the lockdown."*

*It is accepted that large animal veterinarians would need to travel between farms. As such, vets will be in contact with different farms and will pose a risk in terms of contraction and spread of the disease. It is therefore very important to adhere to the principles as outlined by the letter from the SAVA. In this light, classifying services as essential and non-essential is important. Furthermore, owner/farm worker risk assessment, social distancing plus protective action should be performed.*

*Even though some veterinary services might generally be considered routine work, these visits should be evaluated on a case to case basis. It is accepted that some practices have these "routine" visits scheduled months or even a year in advance and as such, cannot reasonably postpone these services if no more space is available on their calendars. If these visits can be postponed, then do so. Some consultations can be performed telephonically, and clinical visits should only be performed if an examination is required. Revising/updating vaccination plans can be done and clients informed telephonically or via electronic medium.*

*It is up to each of us to make sure that food supply and farm animal welfare is maintained while at the same time limiting the spread of COVID-19. Make use of your own professional judgement and epidemiological knowledge to further the profession and serve the people of this country.*

*RuVASA would welcome any constructive suggestions and input that could be of value in this situation.*

RuVASA

Service	Advice
All visits:	<p>Phone beforehand and determine the risk status of the farm and instruct the client to provide gloves and masks to those that you will be in contact with. If the farm constitutes a high-risk then the need for the visit should be carefully considered. If a visit is essential and only single animals (sick animals/post mortems) are involved then arrange beforehand that the animal should be accessible upon your arrival. Only the minimum number of helpers should be available in case you need assistance. If you can manage by yourself, do so, even if it takes more time than usual. Observe all helpers/clients for respiratory signs and limit their involvement or recommend medical attention if relevant.</p> <p>For any farm visit it is recommended that you provide all clients and workers with gloves and masks if the farmer did not do so. Wear protective gear yourself as outlined by the SAVA document.</p> <p>Maintain social distancing throughout</p>

Service	Advice
Pregnancy diagnosis, Male fertility testing, Post-partal examinations, udder health or anoestrus visits and other routine work	Should be postponed if reasonably possible, however, in some farming operations, or as explained above, these visits cannot be postponed and must proceed provided adequate precautions are taken
Ddehorning, TB testing (routine biennial testing), castrations and other routine procedures	Should be postponed
Emergency work	Clinical cases, outbreaks, surgical cases and other relevant day to day emergencies should be continue as per usual, given the special precautions as outlined above and in the SAVA document
Medication or sales	Contact should be limited so it is recommended that you encourage your clients to phone/email in advance with their requirements or make use of e-commerce. The relevant products can then be packaged prior to their arrival. The packages can be handed over to the client without the need to enter your clinic. Another alternative would be to deliver the packages where possible
Clients visiting your hospital	Guidelines as per the SAVA document

## PIG VET SOCIETY

### *Message from the Pig Vet Society*

*SAVA has released Practice Recommendations which cover how veterinarians are expected to handle the lockdown period. Please see these if you haven't already.*

*Because our work as veterinarians in the pig industry is quite unique we need to have an additional set of more specific guidelines, hence this document.*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Advice</b>
Routine consultation	Postpone
Routine diagnostics	Postpone all routine diagnostics that can be postponed. This includes abattoir surveillance, routine bleeding and BHHMS. Note that primary animal production for the supply of meat is an essential service and this should not be threatened by a postponement of service.
Pork 360 Audits	Postpone
Compartmentalisation visits	Postpone all routine work. Compartments needing renewal in March/April will be given an extension until end of May to get visits and serology done.
Emergency veterinary services	Continue. These may include for example a farm visit where mortality is rate is extraordinarily high, where a welfare problem is developing or where there may be a food safety problem. Try to as far as possible solve the problem remotely and reserve a site visit as the last option.
Controlled diseases	The control of controlled diseases is restricted to Foot and Mouth, African Swine Fever, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza and Rabies. Suspicion of other controlled diseases would however fall into the category of an emergency veterinary service as this could lead to high mortality rates on farm and risk to the food supply chain.
Supply of medication and equipment	Continue. Medication, vaccines and products essential to the running of the farm need to continue. Try to perform this function in such a way as to minimise any human contact - see SAVA document.
Supply chain reporting	Please report the disruption of supply, of any essentials to the supply chain. These essentials include raw materials for feed, essential health products, disinfectants and spares. Report to Peter Evans at SAPPO.

*It is clear that our discretion will be needed in some cases. Please try to comply with the lockdown as far as possible and where you have to come into contact with people or public areas please do so in a way as to minimise the risk to yourself and to others.*

*We are a nice small group so please feel free to contact me directly if you have any concerns or queries.*

*Be safe, guide those around you and let's get through this difficult time as best we can.*

*Andrew Tucker*

*082 858 6021*

## **WILDLIFE GROUP**

*Wildlife veterinarians support their clients with all essential wildlife work that should not be postponed for animal welfare reasons. That includes e.g. moving animals to another camp if that is necessary from a fodder availability, treating sick animals or separating fighting animals.*

*Management tasks must be postponed unless essential for the welfare of the animals*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Advice</b>
Pre-arrival preparation	Animal to be placed in a crush prior to arrival.
Consultation	Minimise staff numbers, no more than 3 in a room

## SOUTH AFRICAN EQUINE VETERINARY ASSOCIATION

*Input as received from the South African Equine Veterinary Association*

Service	Advice
House calls	As most consultations will fall within this category for equine practice, recognize the greater risk to veterinary personnel entering a holding and the need for owner risk assessment (see attached document). Maintain social distancing within the household as much as possible and consider the need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as necessary
Wellness Call outs	Postpone.
Food sales	Continue but maintain social distancing (see attached document), arrange delivery or use eCommerce.
Medication refills	Continue but maintain social distancing (see attached document), arrange drop-off or use eCommerce.
vaccinations	Administer boosters of vaccine series that have started if deemed absolutely necessary based on the animal's condition and circumstances (e.g. risk of exposure). Postpone other vaccinations if the risk of exposure can be managed otherwise in the interim.
Life threatening conditions	Manage using social distancing. With cases from high-risk households, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic (see attached document for description of low vs high risk households).
Management of painful conditions	Manage by telemedicine when possible. Remember the requirement for record keeping is essentially the same in these conditions as it would be for a normal consult. If examination is needed and the horse is from a low-risk holding, examination and a call out maybe be necessary, maintaining social distancing.
Management of chronic conditions	Maintain by telemedicine/ telephonic consultation when possible. Remember record keeping requirements
Surgical procedures for emergency reasons	If the patient can be temporarily maintained on analgesics with a low risk of negative consequences, delay the surgery. If not, proceed with the surgery if holding is low-risk. If holding is high-risk, determine the required PPE and whether the case can be managed at your clinic or on the farm, or if possible isolate the animal from any high-risk individuals for 2-3 days to minimize the risk of contamination of the haircoat and then proceed with the surgery
Other non-urgent surgical procedures	Postpone.

Service	Advice
Routine hematologic monitoring	This should be postponed unless it is felt that a delay would substantially increase the risk of complications.
Routine faecal/urine testing	Postpone
Euthanasia	Humane euthanasia should proceed, limiting social interactions as much as is reasonable while respecting the needs of the human-animal bond. Elective Euthanasia should be postponed. Consider necessary PPE for staff if the animal is from a high-risk household.
Visitation of hospitalised patients by clients	Restricted
Boarding, day care, grooming, and other ancillary services	Discontinue.
Sterilisations	Elective sterilisation for animals in high-risk households should not continue.

- (1) All effort should be made in all ways to limit spread of the COVID 19 virus from one holding to another, this should include but is not limited to the use of disinfectant sprays of clothing and equipment as well as the use of protection clothing and hand sanitation.
- (2) As a general comment anything that can wait for 3 weeks without affecting the health or welfare of the horse should be postponed, including but not limited to vaccinations, surgeries and lameness workups.
- (3) Principles of social distancing described in the accompanying SAVA document, together with allowing as few people as is necessary for any procedure or consultation, and PPE where indicated should be followed.
- (4) Please remember that as a profession we are expected to act responsibly and professionally during these uncertain times and the fact that we are able to continue practicing for emergency purposes should not be abused.