**For immediate release – 2 April 2020**

**BEF vaccination update**

**The British Equestrian Federation, in conjunction with the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) and the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), has approved a proposal regarding the vaccination schedule for equine influenza in competition horses competing under its member bodies. The move has been made in order to help riders, owners and vets tackle the significant logistical challenges caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and provide clarity for all.**

All competitive disciplines under the BEF umbrella currently operate a requirement for an annual booster every 12 months after an initial course of two injections and the first booster injection. This will remain the case throughout 2020, which means that any horse who goes beyond their annual renewal date will be required to start again. The initial vaccination intervals for primary and booster vaccinations will also remain in place as normal.

Those member bodies who have rules in place for six monthly booster injections before competing will look implement a transition period to allow riders to bring vaccinations up to date, once the current suspension of activity is lifted. This will be communicated to the members of each governing body in due course, when it becomes clearer when competition activity is able to resume.

The BHA has moved to a 12 month booster vaccination requirement, from their policy of nine months, to cover horses racing in the United Kingdom for the remainder of 2020.

Interim BEF Chief Executive Iain Graham commented; “The length of the coronavirus pandemic is unknown but we wanted to provide those who compete with our Member Bodies some clarity on our current position. Equine vets are under strict guidance to carry out emergency work only at present – and as booster vaccinations are classified as routine injections, they will not be carried out.

“We appreciate that some horse owners will fall outside the required 12 month period and will therefore need to start again, which is unfortunate. However, we cannot allow vaccinations to go beyond 12 months as the efficacy of the vaccine cannot be guaranteed beyond that date.

“Each member body will be outlining their six month booster requirements individually ahead of competition restarting. I’d like to thank our colleagues in BEVA and BHA for their collaboration on this so that much of the equine industry is aligned.”

*- ends -*

Media contact:

Winnie Murphy, BEF Head of Communications
E | winnie.murphy@bef.co.uk
M | 07809 826842