



# SAFETY ALERT

# Live Vaccine Safety

Name:

Date Read:

**Busy vaccination season? Don't skip the safety check.**

Always read the current Safe Administration Guidelines for every vaccine — especially live vaccines. At this time of the year, you may be busy with vaccinations. Remember to invest a minute in reading the Safety Data Sheet for the product you're using - especially if they are live vaccines. It's easy to forget key information, or the vaccine may have changed in some way since the last time you checked. Here is a very recent example of the importance of staying current and being aware of the vaccination risks to you and your workers.

## WHAT HAPPENED

A farm team were discussing the upcoming toxoplasma vaccination and who would be involved. During the discussion, one of the team raised the risks involved to the people handling the vaccine - including potential risks to female health. Often people think the risk is only during pregnancy, but the warning is wider and includes females of childbearing age because the live organism (*Toxoplasma gondii*) in the vaccine can cause abortions in humans. In response, the team re-organised to lower risk, and they completed the vaccination safely.

## KEY LESSONS

### Why this matters

Live vaccines can pose serious health risks to handlers, not just animals.

- Open team discussion helps surface risks early and enables safer task allocation.
- Make sure everyone is trained in good vaccination technique for the appropriate type of livestock and equipment.
- Reading the current New Zealand Safety Data Sheet before use is essential. Risk is not limited to pregnancy, females of child-bearing age are also at risk.
- People with weakened immune systems must not handle live vaccines.
- Accidental self-injection or contamination can cause severe illness and requires immediate medical attention.
- Good practice is to wear one glove on the hand that is not vaccinating, but closest to the vaccination site.
- Slow down- the day is not a race.



**Download, print and share this Safety Alert with your team.**

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