Monday, January 9, 2015 at 3:17AM

Thanks M. for forwarding this enquiry.

I am afraid I don’t know much about vaccination in rhino or other stock - perhaps you could contact N. on this (copied on this email)? We have had some confirmed cases of Clostridia novyi in farmed white rhino, but there may have been underlying disease.

Kind regards
E.

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Dear Dr. Hines,

I am involved with a farm, which has a very high density of rhinos on a small camp. Last year, we had some deaths in a short period. Two out of nine were confirmed with Clostridium, but as Dr. L said, we are not sure if there weren’t underlying diseases.

During this period, we decided to vaccinate all rhinos and hope this would help the animals. The vaccination I gave: Covexin10 (dropout darts 2ml) and two weeks later ‘Swellen head OBP’ (dropout darts 2.5ml). There is no prove yet the vaccines work for rhinos though. For as far as I know, this is the problem with all vaccines in rhinos: no prove of efficacy nor side-effects.

The reason I gave drop-out darts (meaning IM injection): there were too many rhinos to anesthetize them all to give them the SC injection. The prescribed dose for Covexin10 is 2ml, the one for SwellenHead is 5ml in cattle, 2ml in sheep. I took 2.5ml for the second vaccine because this is the amount a normal dart can take and there is anyway no prescribed dose for rhinos. The biggest problem we saw with a few rhinos after being darted: the place were the dart went in with the Covexin10 vaccine, developed a wound. There was a lesion of several cm diameter around the dartplace and for the depth of the dart as well. So I suppose this Covexin10 vaccine is really harsh on the muscles and shouldn’t be injected IM. After treating the wound, it healed fast. We also decided not to give boosters, because we don’t know what the side effects could be.
Those are the only vaccines I have given to rhinos up till now.

In fact, there is so much we still have to learn about those animals, we almost don't know anything about treatments for them. So if a treatment has to be given, I usually extrapolate from treatments of horses. I'm not very keen on doing prophylactic treatments of rhinos with medicines we don't know how the animal will react on them. Therefore, if the requirements (e.g. for export) ask certain prophylactic treatments, and there is no evidence there will be any risks for importing diseases in new areas, I ask for exemption by writing a motivation letter, and in certain cases suggest to do a screening test as alternative to prove the animal is free of certain diseases.

Best regards!
N.