

Equine Health Committee

Mid-Year Report

August 27, 2004

Current Issues & Activities

a) *Issues of significance affecting equine industry.*

- i) Recurrence of vesicular stomatitis in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado and consequent economic impact on industries in those states, including restrictions on interstate movement.
- ii) Recurrence and further spread of West Nile virus, especially in southwestern and western states and resultant morbidity and mortality losses.
- iii) Efforts to achieve greater national control over equine infectious anemia and reduce the overall annual amount spent on diagnostic testing for this disease.
- iv) Formulation and implementation of a plan to screen imported stallions and equine semen for equine arteritis virus.
- v) Improvement in the quality and reliability of pre-entry testing for certain diseases on equids imported from the EU and also in the standards of pre-entry veterinary inspection and certification.

b) *Committee activities.*

Since the annual meeting of the committee this past spring, I have implemented a program of frequent electronic communication with membership of the committee on any disease occurrence or other items that I consider would be of topical interest. The information circularized is largely drawn from Livestock Health Alerts provided by the USAHA and from relevant postings on ProMED. The goal of this exercise is to help the committee keep abreast of what is occurring nationally and to a lesser extent, internationally in the field of equine health.

c) *Action on 2004/05 resolutions.*

Of three resolutions put forward by the committee, there has been considerable progress on development of a proposed plan to achieve greater national control of equine infectious anemia. The plan will be discussed at next month's meeting of the Infectious Diseases of Horses Committee at the annual meeting of the USAHA. Regarding the UM&R for EVA, so far there has not been a serious attempt to develop a plan to implement these guidelines by USDA APHIS VS. Finally, the committee still awaits a response from the USDA over what actions have been taken to this point to implement the recommendations put forward on the Animal Health Safeguarding Review.

d) *Action on 2004/05 position statements.*

I am pleased to relate that progress (albeit slow) is being achieved on the USDA's focus group concluding its deliberations on revisions to the equine CEM import testing protocol.

e) *Current and future plans for the committee.*

At this time, perhaps the most pressing issue confronting this committee is the need to enhance membership participation in its activities. Due in part to scheduling issues at the annual meeting, attendance at last spring's committee meeting was abysmal. I would strongly recommend that much greater consideration be given by the board when drawing up the program for next year's annual meeting to facilitating attendance at various species committee meetings. Scheduling presentations on major livestock issues at the same time as the committee meetings will be a continuing detractant in terms of participation at this and other committee meetings.