

Equine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Fall 2004

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Equine Working Group Provides Views to USDA on Animal ID

The Equine Species Working Group (ESWG) has advised the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that it supports the initial approach that the Department is taking in organizing a National Animal ID System (NAIS) to deal with animal diseases and their effects. But, the group cautioned that the horse industry has unique issues and concerns that must be considered in the process.

"We are pleased that USDA seems to be taking a prudent, methodical approach to implementing a National animal ID System," said Dan Fick, vice president of The Jockey Club and co-chair of the Equine Species Working Group (ESWG) in an American Horse Council press release. "The Department recognizes that data must be protected by any system and that all components must be in place and tested before any system can be made mandatory. These principles are fundamental since the horse industry is very concerned about confidentiality, practicality and cost."

The ESWG includes representatives from over thirty equine associations, state veterinarians and others involved in the horse industry. It has been evaluating the national animal ID plan, and considering how the industry might develop a system for equine identification that would fit into the national plan.

USDA Solicits Input

In July, USDA asked for comments on its approach to the much-discussed National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Specifically, it sought suggestions on a timetable, whether the system should be voluntary or mandatory, and to which species it should apply. The ESWG comments were submitted in response. USDA will now review all the responses and propose any new federal rules needed to implement a national animal ID system for disease control.

USDA noted that the primary purpose of a national animal ID system is to address animal health concerns. Presently, the system is calling for an identification number for each animal involved and a premises number so that animals can be "traced" in the event of a major disease outbreak.

ESWG Comments

In its comments, the ESWG noted that the horse industry is a very diverse industry that involves a wide variety of activities in all regions of the country. "One characteristic of horses not common to other livestock is how often they move, intrastate, interstate and internationally. The size, diversity and structure of the horse industry present unique issues in developing a national equine identification system."

See *Equine ID Working Group* | page 4

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EIA Leads Equine Topics at USAHA

Development of a national program to control equine infectious anemia (EIA) was approved by the United States Animal Health Association Committee on Infectious Diseases of Horses at its meeting in October in Greensboro, N.C.

During the past year, an EIA subcommittee developed a draft national EIA control program.

"The committee is now calling for USDA's Animal and Plant

Health Inspection Service (APHIS), working with the states and the horse industry, to develop a national state-federal EIA control program," said committee chair Dr. Peter Timoney of Lexington, Ky.

Dr. Timoney explained that testing for EIA currently costs a large amount of money. "Through a more rational science-based testing program, we can not only reduce these costs but also contribute to a lower prevalence of EIA and better control of the disease," he said. He estimated savings in the range of \$11 to \$12 million.

The draft plan calls for states to be placed in one of five categories, based on the prevalence of the disease and other factors.

USAHA Resolution #16

"The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), in collaboration with the USAHA, develop and annually update a National State-Federal Cooperative Program for the Control of Equine Infectious Anemia. It is further requested that USDA, APHIS, VS and states begin implementation of this control program as soon as possible."

Additionally, a resolution was passed directing the facilitation of lab connectivity for any state that wants to implement electronic EIA identification.

USAHA Resolution #4

"The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States

Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), in consultation with USAHA, provide laboratory connectivity to all states that wish to utilize or develop the electronic Equine Infectious Anemia (eEIA) application with digital identification. Through this system, states and other entities may either use the Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) application alone or in conjunction with Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection developed by GlobalVetLink under contract with USDA, APHIS, VS."

The committee also called for a two-year moratorium on approval of additional laboratories to conduct EIA testing.

With the presence of diseases like West Nile Virus and Vesicular Stomatitis, the committee discussed the importance of having better communication on infectious diseases. A resolution was passed, identifying USDA, APHIS, VS as the agency to strengthen data collection and information sharing with appropriate officials regarding infectious diseases in horses.

USAHA Resolution #3

"The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to enhance its current program of gathering data on outbreaks of

See [USAHA Update](#) | page 3



Equine Health Report

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News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

Doug Corey Named 2005 AAEP Vice President

Doug Corey, DVM, of Adams, Ore., has been selected as the 2005 vice president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). He was inducted into office at the AAEP 50th Annual Convention, in early December in Denver, Colo.

Dr. Corey practices at Associated Veterinary Clinic, a five-person mixed animal practice. Since joining the AAEP in 1976, he has taken on many responsibilities within the organization, serving as chairman for the Research, Public Relations, Membership, Equine Welfare and 50th Anniversary committees, among others. He previously served on the AAEP board of directors from 1995 to 1998. Dr. Corey also is a past president and board member of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association and was honored as the 1997 Oregon

Veterinarian of the Year.

Within the equine community, Dr. Corey has devoted much of his attention to horse welfare issues, particularly through the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA). Instrumental in the establishment of a full-time animal welfare position at the PRCA, Dr. Corey helped develop minimum care guidelines for rodeo livestock as well as other welfare rules and guidelines for the PRCA. He has served on the Advisory Council to the PRCA on Animal Welfare for 23 years and has chaired the organization's Veterinary Advisory Committee.

VS Lingers in Western U.S.

A Dec. 2 report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) shows that 143 premises still remained quarantined because of Vesicular

Stomatitis. Colorado and New Mexico are the only states with quarantined premises, of which 138 are located in Colorado. Texas was released of all quarantined premises on Oct. 19, after all 15 premises in that state were cleared.

Currently, twenty-eight premises are in the 30-day countdown period to be released from quarantine. A total of 177 equine are involved in the current quarantines, compared to 30 bovine and one other ruminant case.

A total of 293 premises have been quarantined in the U.S. since the first report back in May. In all, 404 equine have been diagnosed with VS.

New Group Formed for Veterinary Technicians

Veterinary technicians have identified that animal owners are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about advances in medicine, both human and veterinary. Armed with this information, they now demand the same excellence in care for their animals as they expect for themselves. Because of this, the Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians (AIMVT), which encompasses cardiology, large and small animal medicine, neurology, and oncology, has been formed.

To attain specialty credentials, technicians need extensive experience and advanced skills in their field, and must meet specific criteria, including passing a certification examination.

AIMVT is the fourth specialty group, joining anesthesia, emergency and critical care, and dentistry disciplines. For more information, go on the Internet at www.aimvt.com. ●

USAHA Update | EIA Leads Topics

(continued from page 2)

infectious diseases with the cooperation of the states in order to provide up-to-date information on such outbreaks, as well as state and international movement restrictions and other pertinent information to stakeholders and state animal health officials on a regular and timely basis."

A report on a pilot program to evaluate a three-tiered laboratory system was presented by Dr. Eileen Ostlund with APHIS' National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). Georgia, Iowa, Oklahoma and Oregon participated in the pilot program, which required Tier 1 (private) laboratories to forward positive ELISA tests to Tier 2

(state/university) laboratories. Discrepant samples were forwarded to NVSL for resolution.

A number of other issues were discussed, including the 2004 vesicular stomatitis (VS) outbreak in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado; method to prevent and control strangles; West Nile virus; equine viral arteritis (EVA); quarantine facilities for contagious equine metritis (CEM); reclassification of diseases by the OIE, which will begin in 2005; and establishment of a working group to discuss equine trade and other issues with member states of the European Union. ●

Equine ID Working Group | Addressing Issues for Horse ID

(continued from page 1)

The ESWG comments stated, "that a very important concern to the horse industry is the confidentiality of any data collected and the access to such data. Without confidence that data is secure and accessibility well-controlled, the industry cannot support a national animal ID system."

The group maintained that any national system should allow the industry the flexibility to use existing identification systems or adopt new ones. It must respect the specific and individual needs of the species involved. There is no "one-size-fits-all" system.

An overriding concern is who pays for the development and infrastructure to implement an equine identification program. "Since disease control is of national import and under the supervision of the federal government, the major portion of any funding should be provided by the federal government as part of the federal budget," the ESWG said.

"With so many questions outstanding, it is almost speculative to predict when a program should transition from a voluntary to a mandated system," the group concluded. "Nonetheless, making any animal ID system mandatory should only be considered after confidentiality is ensured; a consensus on the national standards formed; and technology and procedures tested, implemented and found successful. Making a system mandatory for any species before that species can comply with it will cause irreparable harm to this effort."

The group suggested, "that there be a transition period from voluntary to mandatory and that any requirements be phased-in for different livestock sectors as proposed by species working groups, including the ESWG."

The ESWG recommended that the food animals should be the initial focus of the ID system. Because of the scope of the required system, any animals, such as horses, that come into contact with or pose a disease threat to food animals can be included at a later date, as the system proves workable. But "the application of the system to each species should be pursuant to a timetable laid out by the various species working groups," according to the ESWG.

"The ESWG is working on these and other issues now," said Fick. "This is going to be a complicated process given the size and diversity of the horse industry, the mobility of horses and their owners, and existing horse ID systems that need to be considered for incorporation into any national system. Obviously there are many issues still to be resolved and the horse industry must be engaged at each step in the process." ●

Editor's Note: If you would like to see the ESWG comments in full and other information about the national animal ID system and the horse industry's involvement, please see the American Horse Council Web site: www.horsecouncil.org.

Mike Johanns Tapped for Ag Secretary

President Bush has announced the nomination of Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns to serve as the next Secretary of Agriculture. Johanns will succeed Ann Veneman in the position for the President's second term.



Gov. Mike Johanns

"He's been a leader on drought relief in Nebraska and throughout the Midwest," said President Bush. "He's a strong proponent of alternative energy sources, such as ethanol and biodiesel. He's traveled the world to promote American farm exports."

Johanns is a native Iowan, growing up on a dairy farm. He graduated from Osage (Iowa) Community High School, St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, and earned his law degree from Creighton University in Omaha. Johanns served as mayor of Lincoln, Neb., prior to being elected governor of the state in 1999.

"I congratulate Governor Johanns on being named today by the President to serve as the 28th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture," said outgoing Secretary Veneman. "He is a good friend whom I've worked with closely over the years to advance agriculture policy and trade opportunities for America's farmers and ranchers."

Johanns' appointment is pending Senate approval.

Identification Plans Making Progress

The U.S. Department of Agriculture continues progress with the implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Recent months have brought forth progress for the program.

Additional \$1.5 Million Allocated to States for NAIS

USDA has announced that an additional \$1.5 million is available for NAIS cooperative agreements with states.

"These funds have been set aside to support premises registration activities," said Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman. "A national animal identification system will help locate premises where animals are born, managed, marketed or exhibited. States that applied for funding in July and were not selected at that time are now eligible for a portion of the \$1.5 million if they meet specified requirements."

The \$11.64 million set aside earlier this year for cooperative agreements with state and tribal governments was dispersed among 29 agreements. A total of 40 applications were received by USDA for that funding. Now, the additional

\$1.5 million provides those 11 applicants with an opportunity to resubmit plans for a minimum of \$100,000. The revised applications were due Dec. 1 and must address any feedback received during the evaluation of their first-round application.

USDA states that the NAIS continues to be a priority. The President's fiscal year 2005 budget requests \$33 million to continue supporting its implementation and a portion of these funds would be used for additional cooperative agreements with states and tribes. They will continue to register premises and also phase in animal identification systems at a state or regional level.

States identified in this second funding effort include: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, New York, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin and Washington state.

Legislation Proposed for Data Confidentiality

In a presentation to the U.S. Animal Health Association's (USAHA) Livestock Identification Committee in October, Dr. John Clifford announced that USDA has sent draft legislation to Capitol Hill addressing confidentiality of data involved with the National Animal ID System. The legislation would provide an amendment to the Animal Health Protection Act to fit the needs of NAIS. Disclosure of information will be highly limited, yet still allow for animal health officials to trace back disease in 48 hours, the goal of NAIS. Further details on the draft legislation have

not been released, nor has Congress' timeline as to when the legislation will be introduced.

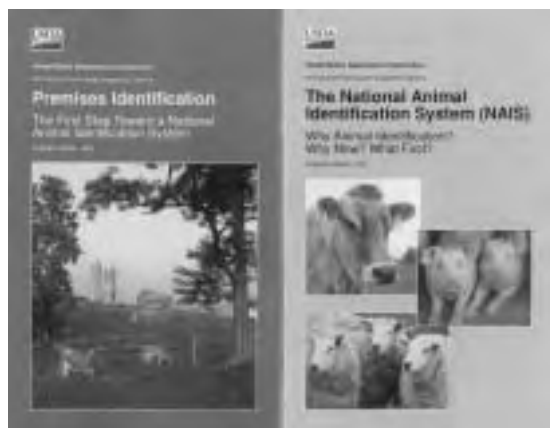
Interim Rule Announced for Alternatives in ID Numbering System

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) says it is going to recognize additional numbering systems for the identification of animals. The systems will apply to interstate commerce and cooperative disease control and eradication programs for animals. Additionally, APHIS will authorize the use of a national numbering system to identify premises where animals are managed or held. The new numbering systems come as another step in the establishment of NAIS, which is being implemented on a voluntary basis.

The move points NAIS in a direction that would create a standardized numbering system, which is widely supported by industry and government. Currently, many producers use separate identification numbers or methods for official animal health programs, interstate commerce purposes and industry programs such as breed registries. An animal or group of animals would be identified with the same official number under multiple programs, instead of being identified with a different number under each program. The data associated with each program could still be maintained separately, however.

Accordingly, APHIS is amending the regulations to recognize for official use the 15-character animal identification number, 13-character group/lot identification number

See *ID Progress* | page 6



USDA now has available brochures about the National Animal Identification System. Download them at www.usda.gov/nais.

ID Progress | Rules, Legislation Underway (continued from page 5)

and 7-character premises identification number. The new official animal numbering system will allow producers to transition into the use of a one-number, one-animal system if they wish to do so.

This interim rule does not change the requirements defining which animals must be officially identified, nor does it require that producers use the new numbering systems. The rule merely ensures that the new numbering systems are recognized as official, allowing those who want to use such systems to do so.

The rule also provides an amendment to prohibit the removal of official identification devices, including those recognized as official on livestock imported from other countries.

This interim rule was published in the Nov. 8 Federal Register and became effective upon publication. APHIS documents published in the Federal Register and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Jan. 7, 2005.

USAHA ID Committee Offers Two Resolutions

The U.S. Animal Health Association has long played an important part in the development of animal identification, and this year proved no different. USAHA's Committee on Livestock Identification sent forth two resolutions out of the late-October meeting in Greensboro, N.C. The first

resolution urges for industry, state and federal cooperation on the development of an appropriate animal traceability database. The second resolution recommends that all states begin use of electronic Interstate Certificates of Veterinary Inspection. The full resolutions are as follows:

USAHA Resolution #2

"In order to expedite the development of a data management system to meet all stakeholders' needs and expectations, the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) Subcommittee of the Secretary of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases to request the United States Department of Agriculture to facilitate the cooperative development of an appropriate animal traceability database system through the joint leadership of the species and segment working groups, issue-based working groups, and state animal health officials."

USAHA Resolution #28

"The United States Animal Health Association recommends that the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services should commit to bring all 50 states onto electronic Interstate Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (ICVI) and provides the necessary support within the next 18-24 months. In addition, ICVI should be referenced through the *Code of Federal Regulations*." ●

WNV on the Decline

West Nile virus (WNV) has been a source of concern for many horse owners since it was first detected in 1999 in the western hemisphere. In 2002, more than 15,250 equine cases were reported in the U.S., most notably in the central portion from Texas to Minnesota. While the mosquito-borne virus has continued to be prevalent, the latest numbers from USDA show that WNV has been decreasing in the United States. As of mid-December, a total of 1,341 cases of WNV in equine have been reported, less than 10 percent of the 2002 totals. In 2003, 5,181 equine cases were reported.

Contrasting the national trend, California has seen a sharp increase in WNV equine cases. In 2003, the golden state had only one case of WNV in equine. This year, they have reported in excess of 500 equine infected with the virus. This is likely attributed to significant detection of WNV in sentinel chickens, mosquito pools, and dead bird submissions throughout California in 2004, according to the California Dept. of Food and Agriculture. Other states have shown significant decreases from 2003 numbers, such as Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Pennsylvania.

The most effective method for protecting horses against WNV is mosquito control practices, such as reducing potential sources of water where mosquitoes can breed. Additionally, both a killed vaccine and live-vectored recombinant vaccines are available to help protect equine against the virus. ●

Take the Readership Survey: Your thoughts on Equine Health Report

Equine Health Report is an important means of communication to key stakeholders in the equine industry.

In order to ensure that Equine Health Report best serves your needs, we are providing you with an opportunity to give us your input. The Readership Survey, which can be found on page 8 of

this issue, is a brief 15-question survey that will allow us to better understand what you look for in a publication.

The survey is located on the last page of this publication. Simply fill it out and detach this portion, fold the page in thirds and place a stamp as indicated.

We hope that you'll take a few

minutes to complete the survey and return it. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Take the Survey Online!

Or, if you prefer, the survey can be completed online. Simply go to www.animalagriculture.org/survey/equinehealth.htm to submit your thoughts electronically.

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EQUINE HEALTH REPORT

Readership Survey 2004

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- Producer
- Producer/Farm/Commodity Association Executive
- State Employee
- Federal Employee
- Practicing Veterinarian or Veterinary Association Executive
- Academician/Extension/Researcher/Diagnostician
- Allied Industry Stakeholder
- Media/Communications
- Other (please list) _____

2. In which Time Zone are you located?

- Eastern
- Central
- Mountain
- Pacific

3. What is your primary source of agriculture information? (choose one)

- Trade Publication (Newspaper, Magazine)
- Industry Newsletters
- Email/Internet
- Television/Radio
- Personal Contact
- Other (please list) _____

4. Rate the usefulness of this quarterly publication to you.

- 1 poor
- 2 fair
- 3 average
- 4 good
- 5 excellent

5. How much of Equine Health Report do you typically read?

- None
- Very little
- Some
- Most
- All

6. The timeliness of information is:

- New and timely
- Outdated
- Not new, but still informative

7. The depth of information in Equine Health Report is:

- too basic
- about right
- too technical

8. In the Equine Health Report, I would like:

- More news items
- More in-depth analysis of key issues
- Better balance of news and in-depth information
- No changes at all

9. I find the layout/design to be:

- Attractive, easy to read
- Attractive, but hard to read
- Plain, but easy to read
- Plain, hard to read

10. The length of articles is:

- too long
- about right
- too short

11. Layout suggestions, (choose all that apply):

- More pictures/graphics
- More text/information
- Change Color/improve general appearance
- Other (please list) _____

12. How would you prefer to receive Equine Health Report?

- Through mail, as I currently do
- Through email in an electronic format

13. Please prioritize the following areas, based upon your interests, to be covered in Equine Health Report: (rank 1-7)

- ___ News, information and progress updates on federal disease eradication and emerging disease activity
- ___ State and national activities addressing the increasing prevalence of economically significant diseases
- ___ Highlights on health/biosecurity strategies and other industry initiatives
- ___ News and information on topics pertaining to animal health emergency management and international trade
- ___ Findings from NAHMS and other research/scientific studies
- ___ Features on advancements in animal ID and other emerging topics
- ___ Other (please list) _____

14. Would you prefer a magazine-style publication that would include information from multiple species, rather than species specific?

- Yes
- No

15. Other comments that would make Equine Health Report more useful to you:
