

Equine HEALTH REPORT

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Fall 2005

Equine Piroplasmosis Garners Attention at USAHA

A subcommittee has been formed to address the growing concerns of equine piroplasmosis by the Committee on Infectious Diseases of Horses at the U.S. Animal Health Association's (USAHA) annual meeting. Equine piroplasmosis, a parasitic horse disease spread by ticks, was a primary subject of discussion during the meeting, Nov. 8 in Hershey, Pa.

The committee discussed a number of facets in dealing with equine piroplasmosis, including:

- Whether states should implement post-entry testing of horses for piroplasmosis (as is currently required in Florida);
- The timeliness and value of a national serosurvey for equine piroplasmosis;

- Whether the time is appropriate for developing a "Uniform Methods and Rules" (UM&R); and
- The urgent need for research on the efficacy of treatment for elimination of the parasite in horses chronically infected with *Babesia caballi* and/or *B. equi*, the causative organisms of equine piroplasmosis.

The newly formed subcommittee will specifically address how horses found seropositive for *B. caballi* or *B. equi* should be handled at the state or national level.

In other committee action, members approved a recommendation calling on Veterinary Services of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to maintain a database of information on all imported stallions and mares that are confirmed carriers of the organism that causes contagious equine metritis (CEM).

As part of its meeting, the committee was provided with an update on the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) Equine 2005 Study. In planning this study, the intent was to build on the NAHMS Equine 1998 Study, which provided valuable information on the health and health management of the equine population. Therefore, the same 28 states that participated in the earlier study were also included in the Equine 2005 Study.

The study consists of two components: One that focuses on equine events and the other that

looks at on-farm health management factors relating to the control of equine infectious diseases.

The event component began in the spring of 2005 at selected equine gatherings, sales or shows in six of the 28 states (California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, New York and Texas). Up to 60 events from each of the six states were selected. Data were gathered by state and federal veterinarians regarding the use of health documents together with the description, origin and vaccination history of the participating animals, along with

their movements after leaving particular events. Data collection is on-going and the final report should be available in the summer of 2006.

The on-farm component, which began this past summer, has as its focus the collection of information on infection control strategies to overcome selected equine diseases. Premises included in the study were selected by USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) from its 2002 census. Relevant data collected in the current study will be compared to data collected during the Equine 1998 Study. This will help identify trends in equine health management as it relates to equine disease control and the economic consequences of selected equine diseases. Findings from the on-farm study should be available in the spring and summer of 2006. ●



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Private Database Leads Discussion Topics at USAHA's Livestock Identification Committee

A privately held database became a contentious issue at the U.S. Animal Health Association's (USAHA) Livestock Identification Committee in early November. The day-long meeting on Nov. 8, part of the organization's 109th annual meeting, hosted a variety of constituents interested in the future of the private animal tracking database.

A number of industry leaders spoke throughout the day about

the various components of animal identification, ranging from identification technology such as RFID and DNA, to pilot project updates and a state survey on legislation involving animal ID. USDA also provided an update on federal activities of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), including the database.

"Privatization of the animal tracking database is a significant issue; one that USDA takes very seriously," said Dr. John Clifford, APHIS deputy administrator for veterinary services. "Privatization of the database will help us achieve our end goal while strengthening our partnership with industry."

The collection of animal movement data, which is essential to achieving full-traceability in 48 hours, is the greatest challenge of the program, according to Clifford. He urged stakeholders to work collectively to resolve the data collection infrastructure questions and to remain focused on advancing premises registration and animal identification.

"While the privatization of the animal movement tracking database is a change from our initial direction, the overall fundamentals of NAIS continue to follow the direction that many of you helped establish over the past several years," said Clifford. "The key components as defined in the Draft Program Standards will continue to guide the implementation of NAIS."

During the business meeting, the private tracking database was discussed in depth by a number of committee members, following a pair of motions on the issue.

"We owe it to ourselves, to this debate, and we owe it to the Secretary to explore if and how

this can be implemented," said Matt Brockman, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, who advocated the defeat of a resolution that would recommend that USDA implement the tracking database as outlined in the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP), but to no avail. Other committee members argued that the industry was not properly represented in the decision to pursue a private database.

At the end of the day, the committee had passed the aforementioned resolution, which was in turn debated and passed again in the membership meeting.

Additionally, during the membership meeting, a directive was passed that, essentially, the USAHA president assemble a group of representative stakeholders to meet with the Secretary of Agriculture to discuss solutions for this resolution passed by the USAHA.

Another resolution for USAHA to help develop the necessary components for a privately held database, via a consortium, was tabled during the committee meeting and lacked votes to be brought back to the floor.

"Privatization of the animal tracking database is a significant issue; one that USDA takes very seriously."

DR. JOHN CLIFFORD
APHIS DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR
FOR VETERINARY SERVICES



Equine Health Report

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ID/INFO EXPO Offers ID Snapshot

ID/INFO EXPO 2005 was an opportunity for industry stakeholders to hear the latest information on animal identification in the U.S. And, the event proved to be an even more important chance for stakeholders to voice concerns and pose questions to industry leaders on the future direction of the system.

Hundreds of questions were posed to the 67 speakers at the one-of-a-kind conference and trade show, held Sept. 27-29 in Chicago. Approximately 530 individuals attended the event. The record attendance included producers, veterinarians, animal identification companies and service providers, state and federal animal health officials and other allied industry stakeholders.

Since the Aug. 30 announcement by Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns that the animal tracking database will be developed and implemented by the industry, stakeholders have been attentive to how this portion of the system will move forward.

Dr. John Clifford, deputy

administrator for USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services spoke to participants about USDA's expectations.

"What USDA is looking for is a single legal entity that represents all species groups and all allied industries that are affected by this program," he said. Clifford added that USDA would plan to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with this legal entity to carry out state and federal health officials' needs for an animal movement database. Clifford later clarified that health officials would need a single interface for 24/7 access to the data, indicating that a single, central database is not the only viable option.

Clifford also made it clear that there are no USDA dollars currently available to help establish or operate the private database. An Oct. 12 stakeholders meeting, hosted by USDA, provided an information session on how the system could work, further clarifying the industry's role.

Clifford, who was joined by Deputy Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs,

Dr. Chuck Lambert, both encouraged progress as USDA would continue with premises registration and the animal identification numbering system (AIN).

Dr. David Thain, State Veterinarian for Nevada and president of the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials, offered a state-level assessment of NAIS, noting that accomplishments have been made with premises registration, as well as some state legislation for animal ID. More importantly, he encouraged stakeholders to maintain a simple mindset to move ahead with animal ID, and to not "squander this opportunity."

Dr. Ken Olson, KEO Consulting, offered an industry perspective on NAIS.

"The public has to trust what we're doing, the international community has to trust what we're doing," said Olson. He added that some stakeholders were concerned with the credibility of an industry-managed database.

Aside from those concerns, progress is still happening in other facets of NAIS. USDA reported that all 50 states are capable of registering premises, and as of Nov. 15, 147,205 premises have been registered in the United States.

In addition to presentations on premises registration, reports on 20 pilot project reports were presented from across the country, featuring cattle, markets, transporters, sheep, swine and equine. Though many of the projects showed that technology still needs to be improved, many producers appear to be willing to participate and actively engage their operations in the national animal identification effort.

Presentations from the event can be accessed on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org. ●



Federal, State and Industry Perspectives was the title of ID/INFO EXPO 2005's opening general session. (l-r) USDA Under Secretary Dr. Chuck Lambert, APHIS Deputy Administrator Dr. John Clifford, Nevada State Veterinarian Dr. David Thain and Industry Consultant Dr. Ken Olson comprised the session's panel.

Equine ID: Focusing on Identification Methods

ID/INFO EXPO 2005, held in Chicago on Sept. 27-29, provided the chance for industry stakeholders to hear the latest updates from the various species working groups.

Amy Mann, American Horse Council, presented the Equine Species Working Group

update during a general session at the event. In her presentation, she highlighted some of the recent efforts of the ESWG, including the focus on incorporating existing ID methods, such as tattoos, DNA, brands and microchips.

"The ESWG feels that a recommendation (on ID) should focus on an identification method that's most suitable for participation in NAIS," Mann said. She indicated the group feels that RFID appears to be the most practical at this time. Mann added that by establishing an



ID method that is uniformly accepted, the equine industry can have a program that is internationally compatible, permits 15-digit identification numbers, and allows for compatibility domestically.

Because many industry stakeholders may have questions regarding animal identification, in particular about microchips, the ESWG has developed a microchip paper. The paper can be found at www.horsecouncil.org, under the "equine identification" link. According to the American Horse Council, this paper supplies general information about microchips and scanners, and it includes the ESWG recommendations to the USDA regarding the identification of horses for purposes of the NAIS. The paper is designed to help horse owners better understand what

microchips are, the issues surrounding their use, and what is available and being used around the world.

The current RFID recommendations of the ESWG include:

- *ISO/ANSI compatible RFID chips (11784/85, 134.2 kHz). Implantation site: nuchal ligament on the left side, in the middle third of the neck, halfway between the ears and the withers.*
- *RFID scanners that, at a minimum read 134.2khz microchips and are able to identify the presence of a microchip in a horse.*
- *If the reader is unable to decode the chip, it must be able to identify who the manufacturer is so that the necessary reader can be obtained*

Mann said the ESWG would continue to address issues regarding tracking. The ESWG has also made strides in providing industry communication through the ESWG web site at www.horsecouncil.org. ●

Pilot Projects Exploring Multiple Options

Industry stakeholders interested in equine identification had the opportunity to hear about three pilot projects and their findings during ID/INFO EXPO 2005 in late September.

Projects from New Mexico, Colorado and New York featured practical application of technologies such as microchips and SmartCards, which resemble a driver's license for horses.

In the update on New Mexico, presented by Dr. Dave Fly of the New Mexico Livestock Board, microchips are being incorporated in with the New Mexico State Racing Commission. Fly added that premises registration is also a major focus of the state's efforts.

New York is another state that has plans to use microchips as the

preferred method of identification. The state currently offers the microchips at no cost to horse owners. The microchip is part of a broad-scale program developed in 2002, called the New York State Horse Health Assurance Program (NYSHHAP). The program encompasses a number of health issues, including biosecurity and identification, which was added in May 2005. Dr. George Merrill of the New York State Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, who presented the update, indicated that the program offers many incentives for horse owners in New York.

Colorado is taking a comprehensive approach to identification, exploring the use of a SmartCard. The card is intended to be used in conjunction with other types of

identification, such as microchips, brands, or other emerging technologies that might be used. Dr. Carl Heckendorf, Colorado Assistant State Veterinarian, said his state will be implanting approximately 1,000 microchips in their program to coincide with the use of the SmartCards. The cards allow for multiple approved users to add information in a number of fields, from health certificates and test results to brands and breed registry information. The card is linked to a web-based interface that would keep the information, which could ultimately help identify an animal, its history and health status.

For the full presentations, log on to www.animalagriculture.org, and click on the ID/INFO EXPO proceedings. ●

Equine Veterinarians Experience Opportunities at AAEP

The 51st Annual Convention of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), held Dec. 3-7 in Seattle, Wash., attracted a crowd of nearly 5,900 veterinary professionals, guests, and exhibitors, making it again the largest equine veterinary continuing education event in the world.

Attendance was the third largest in AAEP history, behind only the Denver convention (2004) and the New Orleans convention (2003).

"Seattle proved to be a popular destination with AAEP members. The facilities were excellent and the city itself served as a spectacular host for our 51st Annual Convention," said David L. Foley, CAE, AAEP executive director. "Dr. Tom Brokken and the Educational Programs Committee put together another outstanding scientific program for attendees."

Highlights include:

- Installation of new officers and board members: The 2006 Executive Committee and new members of the board of directors took office on Dec. 6. The members of the Executive Committee are: Tom Brokken, DVM, Cooper City, Fla., president; Doug Corey, DVM, Adams, Ore., president-elect; Eleanor M. Green, DVM, Gainesville, Fla., vice president; Scott Palmer, VMD, Clarksburg, N.J., immediate past president; and R. Reynolds Cowles, Jr., DVM, Free Union, Va., treasurer. New members of the board of directors are: Ann E. Dwyer, DVM, District I; John P. Hurtgen, DVM, District II; Dana Zimmer, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM, ABVP, District III; R. Stuart Showmaker, DVM, Dipl. ACVS, District IX; Kathleen M. Anderson, DVM, director at large; and Sergio H. Salinas, MVZ, international director.

- Frank J. Milne State-of-the-Art Lecture: World-renowned orthopedic surgeon C. Wayne McIlwraith, BVSc, PhD, DSc, FRCVS, Dipl. ACVS, presented this year's lecture, "From Arthroscopy to Gene Therapy: Thirty Years of Looking in Joints."
- Horseman's Day: The sixth annual day of seminars for horse owners attracted 260 attendees. Each presentation from Horseman's Day will be available on the AAEP's horse-health web site, www.myHorseMatters.com.
- Auctions raise funds for AAEP Foundation: The annual live and silent auctions held during the Foundation Celebration raised more than \$116,000 to go toward programs to help the horse. The AAEP Foundation's new brand and updated mission also were unveiled during the convention.
- AAEP partners with Fort Dodge to promote equine wellness: The AAEP and Fort Dodge Animal Health announced plans for a joint educational initiative to raise awareness about the importance of twice-a-year wellness exams and professionally managed preventive care for horses.
- AAEP Foundation and the Foundation for Biomedical Research (FBR) join forces to promote the role of research in advancing veterinary medicine: FBR and the AAEP Foundation launched a new educational program entitled *Horse Facts* to promote public understanding, respect and support for the vital role that lab animal research plays in advancing equine veterinary health and medicine. ●



AAEP Makes Medication Recommendation for Public Auction Horses

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) Task Force on Medication Issues at Public Auction has released its recommendations for medication usage in horses presented for sale at public auctions. The objective of the recommendations is to establish best practices for the presentation of horses at public auction for fair and equitable establishment of the horse's value and to discourage the use of medication that may cloud the horse's true health status.

The Task Force, chaired by AAEP Past President Larry Bramlage, DVM, MS, evaluated the use of medication in the sales horse during three critical time periods: pre-sale, on the sales grounds and post-sale. The common medications given to horses intended for sales have been grouped into four categories in order to address such as issues as medications allowable at therapeutic levels in the horse and medications that should not be allowable once the horse arrives at the sales ground.

The AAEP board of directors approved the recommendations at its Dec. 2, 2005 meeting in Seattle, Wash. In addition to Dr. Bramlage, other members of the Task Force are Craig Van Balen, DVM; Jeffrey Berk, VMD; Sam Ferguson, DVM; Roger Murphy, DVM; and Scott Pierce, DVM.

For the full document, log on to www.aaep.org. For more information about the work of the Task Force, please contact the AAEP office at (859) 233-0147.

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AAEP Foundation Donates \$50,000 to Help Horses Affected by Hurricane

The AAEP Foundation, Inc. has donated \$50,000 to aid Gulf Coast horses affected by Hurricane Katrina. Donations of \$25,000 each have been made to the Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association (LVMA) and the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association (MVMA). The AAEP Foundation created its Equine Disaster Relief Fund in early September to aid horses affected by Hurricane Katrina and other natural disasters.

"The Foundation is delighted to donate a portion of our disaster relief funds to such worthy and respected organizations as the LVMA and MVMA," said Nathaniel White, DVM, chairman of the AAEP Foundation Advisory Committee. "These organizations have been at the forefront in helping horses during both hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and with the support of their equine practitioner members, both will continue providing immediate and long-term help to horses that are most in need."

Due to generous contributions from AAEP members, their clients and other organizations within the equine industry, the fund has received over \$100,000 in donations. The Foundation remains in contact with veterinarians and other equine organizations in the affected areas in order to continually assess long-term needs.

Donations to the Equine Disaster Relief Fund are still being accepted. Additional information and a donation form are available on the AAEP Web site at www.aaep.org/foundation.php.

Michigan State Course Offers Insight to OIE

Michigan State University's Institute for Food Laws and Regulations has expanded its distance education program to include a course focusing on OIE, the World Organization for Animal Health, including a broad range of modules on OIE's role in global animal health.

A total of eight courses are available in the certificate program, including the OIE course. They are available completely over the Internet. The spring semester 2006 begins Jan. 9, 2006, and the fall semester begins Aug. 28, 2006.

The award winning program offers courses taught by an international network of food science, academic, regulatory and legal professionals who understand the legal complexities of the food laws and how they impact the flow of food, plants, animals and agricultural products across national boundaries.

To learn more about these opportunities, log onto the Internet at vu.msu.edu/preview/anr-ifl/.

USAHA Elects New Leadership

Dr. Bret Marsh, Indiana State Veterinarian, was elected president of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) at its 109th annual meeting in Hershey, Pa. on Nov. 9.

More than 1,400 people – a record-breaking attendance for the fourth consecutive year – attended this year's week-long conference, held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD), to discuss issues related

to the health of farm livestock, wildlife, poultry and fish. Health concerns at the interface of wildlife, people and domestic animals was the featured topic at this year's general session.

"Over the next year, we will work together with input from the membership and, more specifically, from the Board of Directors to discover our core values," Dr. Marsh said. "We will use this foundation to plan for the future strategically."

President-elect of USAHA is Dr. Lee M. Myers, Georgia State Veterinarian. Other officers are James Leafstedt, South Dakota pork producer, first vice-president; Dr. Don Hoenig, Maine State Veterinarian, second vice-president; Dr. Richard Breitmeyer, California State Veterinarian, third vice-president; Dr. William L. Hartmann, Minnesota State Veterinarian, treasurer; and Dr. J Lee Alley, retired Alabama State Veterinarian, secretary.

NAHRS Participation Increases

All but eight states are now actively participating in the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS), according to a report presented at a meeting of the Committee on Animal Health Information Systems here this week. The committee is a joint effort of the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD).

According to the report, several other states are finalizing their reporting procedures. The 42 participating states represent 86 percent of the cattle, 66 percent of the swine, 90 percent of the sheep, 67

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percent of the poultry and 84 percent of the catfish value of U.S. production for these commodities.

Under NAHRS, state animal health officials report on a monthly basis on the occurrence or non-occurrence of specific diseases listed by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE). The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service uses this information in a number of different ways. The data provides the basis for the annual report that the United States is obligated to make to OIE.

The information also supports trade negotiations and is useful in providing access for U.S. animal agriculture products in world markets.

The report indicated an increasing number of states are reporting their disease and health information through a web-based NAHRS secure and confidential online reporting system. Participating states have access to all of their own monthly reports, a state cumulative report for their state, and a national cumulative report. Twenty-eight of the 42 states in the system are using this method of reporting.

Texas Offers Tips on Equine Purchases

The Texas Animal Health Commission has offered a friendly reminder for individuals interested in purchasing or receiving horses, donkeys, mules or other domestic equine. For purchases, trades or gifts, officials encourage that individuals check that it has been tested negative for equine infectious anemia (EIA).

Texas law, for example, requires that equine animals eight months of age or older have a negative blood test for EIA, an incurable

viral disease, within 12 months prior to a change of ownership. (Nursing foals, transferred with their tested dams, are exempt from the test.) The EIA test document, also known as a VS 10-11, is sufficient proof of testing.

EIA can cause equine animals to develop severe anemia. Although some infected animals exhibit no obvious clinical signs, others may become depressed, exhausted, lose weight, or be unable to exercise or work. In acute cases, the animal

will die.

No EIA vaccine is approved in the U.S., so animals must be protected from exposure to the virus. The disease is spread through blood-to-blood contact, an event that can occur when biting flies feed on an infected equine animal, then move to a nearby "clean" horse. Blood transfusions or reusing contaminated needles or veterinary medical instruments also can mechanically carry the virus from infected to clean animals. ●

AAEP Honors Members

Charles F. Reid, DVM, was honored for his significant achievements in the training of equine practitioners during the American Association of Equine Practitioners' (AAEP) 51st Annual Convention in Seattle. He received the Distinguished Educator Award, presented during the President's Luncheon on Dec. 6.

Reid joined the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center in 1963, where he spent the next 35 years specializing in radiology. He chaired both the Section of Radiology and the Department of Clinical Studies, retiring as Emeritus Professor in 1998.

Thomas R. Lenz, DVM, MS, Dip. ACT, and an AAEP past president, has been named the 2005 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award from the AAEP. This award honors individuals who have provided exemplary service to the AAEP or a similar organization to the benefit of the horse, horse industry or equine veterinary medicine.

In addition to serving as 2003 AAEP president, Lenz has provided service to the organization as chair-

man of the Owner Education Task Force and as a member of the Public Policy, Educational Programs and Abstract Review committees, the AAEP Foundation board of directors, the AAEP board of directors and the AAEP Executive Committee. He is currently chairman of the association's Equine Welfare Committee.

Professor Edward L. Squires has been selected as the 2005 recipient of the AAEP's George Stubbs Award, an honor that recognizes contributions made to equine veterinary medicine by individuals other than veterinarians.

Squires' research on equine reproduction has had a considerable impact on the health and breeding of horses. His interest in the field started early in life, as he received his B.S. degree in animal science (1969) and his M.S. in reproductive physiology (1971) from West Virginia University before pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. In 1976 he came to teach at Colorado State University (CSU), where today he continues educating and mentoring students.

VS, WNV Decrease as Winter Approaches

Equine premises previously quarantined for vesicular stomatitis (VS) have all been cleared with the exception of two in Colorado, according to the latest disease report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. One of the Colorado premises is in the 21-day countdown period for release. Wyoming, the only other state with quarantined equine premises remaining in early December, has since released all quarantines for VS.

To date in 2005, a total of 445 premises have been quarantined for VS in the U.S. The number is a significant increase from the 2004 totals, which was 294. This year, from the infected premises, 584 horses/ equine have been diagnosed with VS, up from 405 in 2004. Bovine numbers have also increased from last year to 2005.

This year, the following states

have or had VS: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Colorado, Utah and Wyoming each had 100 or more premises quarantined during 2005.

Meanwhile, West Nile Virus (WNV) has remained prevalent in California with a total of 455 cases as of Dec. 14. Across the U.S. in 2005, 1,074 cases have been reported, which is a decrease from the 1,406 reported in 2004 and 5,181 in 2003. Most states have seen a decrease or similar numbers of WNV reported. Only Idaho and Utah have reported significantly higher numbers in 2005. Texas, Arizona, Nevada and Louisiana experienced a large decrease in WNV cases. Louisiana reported no cases in 2005, compared to 70 in 2004.

Eleven other continental states did not report any cases

this year, including Arkansas, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

States such as Nebraska, North Dakota and Washington that did not report cases in 2004, reported nine, four and one cases (respectively) in 2005. Twenty-six states reported less than 25 cases in 2005. Nine others reported less than 115 cases through USDA, APHIS' last reporting period in mid-December. ●



Bush Signs Horse Slaughter Amendment

President Bush on Nov. 10 signed into law, as part of the 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill, an amendment that would prevent federal dollars from paying for inspection of horse meat by federal inspectors. The amendment will effectively remove federal inspection money in March 2006, and the hold would last through Oct. 31, the close of USDA's fiscal year.

Essentially, the bill would not allow horse slaughter plants to export horse meat to major markets, such as with Europe and Asian countries.

The bill is derived from the intention to close slaughter plants, which has become a contentious

issue throughout the horse industry. While proponents advocate that horse slaughter is wrong and causes suffering among horses, opponents cite unwanted horses become a burden and may also endure suffering.

A potential loophole in the amendment may exist, according to multiple media reports. The plants may in fact have the capability of paying for the inspectors themselves, thus allowing the continued exportation of horse meat.

Officials are apparently reviewing this, as advocates continue to push for a more permanent ban. ●

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