

Equine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Spring 2005

NIAA Equine ID Subcommittee Reaches Consensus on RFID

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) Equine ID Subcommittee, part of the NIAA Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee made recommendations for equine identification standards during the organization's annual meeting in April. The resolution, approved by the full committee and NIAA Board of Directors, reads:

BACKGROUND: *The equine industry has historically used varied methods of identification for a variety of reasons; while adequate for their purposes, not all current identification methods provide a unique method of permanent identification of the horse. By establishing a uniformly accepted method of*

identification, like RFID technology, these conditions are met:

- *Internationally compatible;*
- *Permits a 15-digit identification number;*
- *Allows for compatibility with current equine registration conventions.*

RESOLUTION: *The National Institute for Animal Agriculture has determined that the use of ISO/ANSI compatible RFID chips (11784/85, 134.2 kHz) should be the required form of equine identification to comply with the United States National Animal Identification System (NAIS) for the purpose of disease traceback.*

The subcommittee was established in 2002 to address specific issues about equine identification as

pertaining to a national animal identification system.

"The NIAA equine ID subcommittee has come a long way in a short period of time," said chair J. Amelita Facchiano. "We realize the importance of our need to be proactive in this arena and in regards to ISO (International Standards Organization) compliance as we work together with the NAIS Equine Species Working Group.

"When we look at disease issues today and their potential effects, equine ID is about assuring the health/welfare, economic growth and prosperity of our industry both in the US and internationally," she said. ●

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ID/INFO EXPO 2005 Slated for Chicago in September

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) has opened registration for ID/INFO EXPO 2005, scheduled for September 27-29 at the Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare Hotel. Space may become limited for participants, so don't miss this opportunity to take part in this one-of-a-kind conference and trade show devoted to the implementation of a national animal identification system.

"We are expecting a great meeting for the latest information in animal identification and information systems," said Glenn Slack, NIAA President and CEO. "Our planning committee is working dili-

ID•INFO
EXPO 2005

gently in finalizing what looks to be an excellent program."

The program will feature:

- NAIS updates from across the country, including accomplishments, future plans and on pilot projects;
- Implementation challenges as well as a look at private industry proposals for expediting a national ID system;

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VS Resurfacing in Southwest

Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) is again infecting livestock in the southwestern United States. The virus has affected horses and cattle in 2005, however it can infect a variety of other hosts, such as swine and occasionally sheep and goats.

In affected livestock, VS causes blister-like lesions to form in the mouth and on the dental pad, tongue, lips, nostrils, hooves and teats. These blisters swell and break, leaving raw tissue that is so painful that infected animals gener-

ally refuse to eat or drink and show signs of lameness. Severe weight loss usually follows, and in dairy cows, a severe drop in milk production commonly occurs. Affected dairy cattle can appear to be normal and will continue to eat about half of their feed intake.

As of June, four states have reported cases of VS, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Utah. On April 27, 2005, the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa, confirmed the finding of VS in horses at one premises in Grant County, New Mexico. The index case was identified by virus isolation. The isolate was vesicular stomatitis virus - New Jersey. This was the first confirmed case of VS in the U.S. in 2005.

On May 2, NVSL confirmed the finding of VS in a horse at a premises in Maricopa County, Ariz. On May 18, NVSL confirmed the finding of VS in a horse currently located on a premises in Travis County, Texas. The horse, which was serologically positive for antibodies to VS-New Jersey, has an epidemiologic link to Yavapai County, Ariz. To date, there is no evidence of transmission of VS within the state of Texas in 2005.

On June 17, NVSL confirmed the finding of VS in a horse at a premises in Garfield County, Utah, near the town of Boulder. Utah had no cases of vesicular stomatitis in 2004. On June 22, the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (FADDL) in Plum Island, N.Y., confirmed the first case of VS in one bovine animal from a small herd of 25 head in Socorro County, N.M.

For more information on VS, including current situation reports, movement requirements and gen-

eral VS information, log on to the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncahs/nsu/surveillance/vs/vs.htm. ●

Midge Identified as VS Vector

A small, hardy fly called a biting midge may play an important role in spreading vesicular stomatitis (VS), which infects cattle, horses and swine, according to Agricultural Research Service (ARS) microbiologist Barbara Drolet.

VS causes significant economic losses to the livestock industry from sickened animals, quarantines and subsequent export/import restrictions.

Drolet, at the ARS Arthropod-Borne Animal Diseases Research Laboratory in Laramie, Wyo., and colleagues now have proof that VS is capable of surviving and spreading throughout the blood-sucking midge, *Culicoides sonorensis*. To verify that *Culicoides* propagated VS, the scientists had to find a way to show, without killing the midge, that virus ingested in a blood meal could survive the insect's midgut, then replicate and escape from the midgut to infect other organs.

Using an artificial feeding system, Drolet fed midges a viral meal and tracked the ensuing infections over time to show that VS infects the midge's salivary glands and eggs and is shed in the midge's droppings. Drolet used a genetic technique to verify that the virus is able to replicate within the insect.



Equine Health Report

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Glenn N. Slack, *President & CEO*

Benjamin Richey, *Editor*

Equine Health Report provides the latest information on issues pertinent to equine health initiatives, strategies, research and regulatory action. It is a communications initiative of the NIAA Equine Health Committee and is produced in cooperation with USDA-APHIS. Reprinting is encouraged.

For a free subscription, send your name and mailing address to NIAA at:
1910 Lyda Avenue

Bowling Green, KY 42104-5809
ph.: 270-782-9798 fax: 270-782-0188
e-mail: NIAA@animalagriculture.org
Web site: www.animalagriculture.org

NIAA Equine Health Committee Adopts EVA Position

The Equine Health Committee met in April during the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minn. Dr. Peter Timoney, University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center, serves as the committee chair, and Amy Mann of the American Horse Council serves as the vice chair. The committee meeting focused on current equine health concerns. Speakers at the session included:

Amelita Fachianno, then with GlobalVetLink, LC, presented information on Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) and the Proposed National Control Program for EIA.

The proposal presents many options for the horse industry regarding the potential for a new approach for EIA control. The premise of the program is to reduce surveillance testing and not increase the risk of EIA by targeting testing to high-risk equids and events.

Amy Mann spoke on equine piroplasmiasis and the technical issues surrounding the use of c-ELISA testing of horses imported to the U.S. The presentation highlighted implementation of the c-ELISA and the problems encountered at the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).

Dr. Josie Traub-Dargatz, professor at Colorado State University, introduced the 2005 Equine National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) study. Traub-Dargatz provided a preview of the newly initiated NAHMS study for equine, explaining that the study would look at equine health and equine health management practices at premises with more than five horses and at equine events. A final

report of the study is expected to be available in 2006.

Dr. Sabrina Swenson, with the USDA, APHIS, National Veterinary Services Laboratory, presented a federal perspective of the 2004 Vesicular Stomatitis (VS) experience.



Dr. Peter Timoney

Swenson briefed the committee on the outbreaks of VS during the summer and fall in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado, providing historical and epidemiological insight to the disease, and how it could impact the U.S. in the future.

Dr. Annette Whiteford, of the

California Department of Food and Agriculture, presented information on West Nile Virus (WNV) from 2004. Whiteford discussed California's experience with WNV this past year, being one of the hardest-hit states.

Dr. Tim Cordes, with USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, spoke on the World Animal Health Organization's (OIE) new disease reclassification system relating to Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA). Cordes gave an extensive overview of the new OIE list of diseases in which the former List A and List B diseases have been reconfigured into a new system, relating what impacts this might have for the U.S. horse industry. Cordes followed with an update on the National Animal Health Reporting System (NAHRS) and the work of the Equine Commodity Working Group. Cordes also gave a presentation regarding Equine Viral Arteritis (EVA) and the efforts to establish post-entry screen testing to determine the EVA virus status of imported stallions and equine

semen.

Based upon discussions on EVA, the Equine Health Committee brought forth a position statement encouraging a national meeting on the issue.

The position statement is as follows: *The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) supports a national meeting hosted by the American Horse Council and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services Veterinary Services to address domestic and international issues surrounding Equine Viral Arteritis.*

To view presentations from the NIAA annual meeting, log on to the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org/Proceedings/2005AMProceedings.asp. ●

ID/INFO EXPO Scheduled

(continued from page 1)

- New technology in animal identification and information systems, and consideration of other sectors' needs from a coordinated national system; and
- A field perspective of practical technology experience.

NIAA is offering early registration discounts before August 31, in addition to NIAA member discounts. Information, including registration, lodging and a preliminary schedule of events, is available on the Internet. Sponsorship and exhibitor is also available. Simply log on to the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org and click on the ID/INFO EXPO 2005 logo. Information can also be obtained by calling 270-782-9798. ●

Risk Reduction for Equine Diseases

Infectious diseases are a constant risk to the health and welfare of horses. The threat of strangles, influenza, equine herpesvirus, rotavirus, Salmonella, Rhodococcus, etc. are only some of the reasons for a comprehensive vaccination program. However, no vaccine is 100 percent effective, and vaccines are not commercially available for many diseases, including the dreaded salmonellosis.

However, multiple farm management techniques can have a significant influence on reducing the risk of disease outbreaks. Not all are as labor intensive as completely disinfecting stalls and aisleways. These techniques include:

- Group horses of similar uses. Show horses, yearlings, broodmares, riding horses, should not be commingled.
- Plan a traffic pattern to take farriers, veterinarians, and other personnel to barns and pastures with at-risk horses (e.g., pregnant mares or mares and foals) first, and work toward horses that have multiple exposures to pathogens (show and trail riding horses).
- Isolate any new horses to the farm for a minimum of 14 days, and ideally 21 days. The horse can be monitored for infectious diseases, and any necessary vaccinations and deworming can be completed at that time.
- Isolate horses returning from a hospital stay for similar periods of time. The stress of transportation and medical procedures can lower horses' immunity, and they may come in contact with other equine patients, some of which may be shedding pathogens.
- If a horse is observed as being sick (cough, runny nose/eyes, diarrhea, fever, etc.), it should be isolat-

ed immediately and protective clothing utilized by everyone working with the animal: disposable gloves and booties and coveralls should be re-used only with that horse. Be sure to provide alternative gloves for employees who are allergic to latex, such as gloves made of nitrile or vinyl.

- Stalls of sick horses should be mucked out last, and preferably separately, using pitchforks, shovels, and other tools that are properly disinfected prior to their next use. Alternatively, use separate tools for healthy horses' stalls and a different set for sick animals' stalls.
- Manure and bedding from stalls housing sick animals, including those experiencing abortions, should not be spread on fields. This material should be composted away from all animals or disposed of in a manner approved by local ordinances.
- In every barn provide running water, liquid hand soap (pump-style container), and disposable paper towels for handwashing. All employees should wash their hands prior to leaving at the end of their shift, and in the midst of a disease problem, they should thoroughly wash their hands after working with sick animals, whether or not they were wearing disposable

gloves. During an outbreak or when running water is not available, have waterless hand foams or gels (at least 62 percent ethyl alcohol) to use after handling horses. Remind employees that these products are flammable!

- Rodent control is paramount year-round! One barn mouse can ingest Salmonella and be a multiplication factory better than any petri dish. The mouse droppings contain enormous amounts of bacteria that can effectively seed the horse's environment and feed supply with infectious bacteria. Insect, bird, and bat control are also important. Remove standing water, bird nests, and other habitats. Hire professionals for removal of bat roosts and also for difficult rodent or wildlife control.
- Clean and disinfect stalls, water buckets, grooming tools, pitchforks, and other items routinely, and increase the frequency during an outbreak situation.
- Most importantly, communicate and educate employees and enforce biosecurity procedures on the farm. ●

Source: Equine Disease Quarterly; Dr. Roberta Dwyer, rmdwyer@uky.edu, Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center, University of Kentucky.



California Reports First Equine WNV Case

The first positive equine case of West Nile virus (WNV) in California in 2005 has been reported in Plumas County. The horse, which is recovering, is a 3-year-old quarter horse mare. The case was confirmed about a month earlier than the first case of 2004. Florida has also confirmed cases of WNV, as far back as March of this year.

Since the initial confirmation, a total of three cases have been reported in California. As of June 21, 2005 avian or animal WNV infections have been reported to CDC ArboNET from the following states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming.

WNV is a mosquito-borne virus that was first detected in the United States in 1999 in the New York City area. It may cause a wide range of clinical illnesses from mild, "flu-like" symptoms to

encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) that may be fatal to both humans and horses. While horses are susceptible to WNV, many horses infected with the disease will not develop any illness and will recover uneventfully. Currently, there is no specific treatment for WNV.

California became the focus for West Nile Virus in 2004 with 540 confirmed clinical equine cases. Over 40 percent of clinically affected horses died or were euthanized. In 2004, WNV was detected in all California counties. The Centers for Disease Control has predicted that California will again be the epicenter for WNV in 2005.

Evidence of the virus has been found in all 48 of the continental U.S. since 1999. The virus has previously been found in Africa, western Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean region of Europe. Only birds are known to infect mosquitoes with West Nile virus, and mosquitoes spread the disease to horses and humans.

More information about West

Nile virus is available on the Internet at www.aphis.usda.gov/vs. For information about human health issues related to West Nile virus, log on to www.cdc.gov. ●

Clinical Signs of WNV in Horses

Although West Nile Virus has become less prevalent in most U.S. states, the disease can still affect some horse owners.

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services offers a few signs that might indicate that a horse is infected with WNV.

- Ataxia or stumbling and incoordination;
- Depression or apprehension;
- Weakness of limbs, partial paralysis, or the inability to stand;
- Muscle twitching; or
- Death.

Horses may become infected without showing any clinical signs. Fever is not a common sign.

Florida Offers Equine ID Cards For Movement

The Florida Division of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is now offering laminated cards, containing digital pictures of the horse, as a voluntary alternative to the current paper EIA test document (VS Form 10-11) and the Equine Event Extension. There are two types of cards available:

1. The Negative EIA Test Verification Card will be accepted as proof of a negative EIA test within the state of Florida. The card has the same expiration date as the VS form 10-11 (Coggins

form). This card is not valid for change of ownership, only the original VS form 10-11 or certified lab copy of the VS form 10-11 (coggins form) can be used for this purpose.

2. The Equine Interstate Passport Card will be accepted by participating states as proof of a negative EIA test and an Official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection within the previous six months, for interstate movement to equine events. This card is intended for the owner who frequents equine events in participating states. When traveling the OCVI and EIA

do not need to accompany the Passport Card as it contains the OCVI, EIA, owner and veterinarian information. This card is not valid for change of ownership, only the original VS form 10-11 or certified lab copy of the VS form 10-11 can be used for this purpose.

The states currently honoring the Florida Equine Passport Card and the Equine Event Extensions are: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. ●

Cornell Research Demonstrates MLV Prevention for Equine Herpes Virus

Following the recent deadly outbreak of equine herpes virus at Churchill Downs, home of the Kentucky Derby, a Cornell University virologist says his preliminary research indicates that vaccines containing weakened live viruses, called modified live vaccines (MLV), appear to be more effective in preventing horse herpes than other more widely used vaccines.

"It's important that people know that the MLV has been in use for decades, has proven to be reasonably safe, and – in my opinion – it should be the vaccine of choice, at least in non-pregnant animals," said Klaus Osterrieder, associate professor of virology in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell. The college is home to the Animal Health Diagnostic Center, the official regulatory diagnostic laboratory for equine diseases in New York state.

On May 18, two horses stabled at Churchill Downs showed symptoms of the neurological form of equine herpes and were euthanized, leading to concern at the May 22 Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Course near Baltimore. In anticipation of the June 11, \$1 million Belmont Stakes, the third leg of the Triple Crown, in Belmont, N.Y., the New York Racing Association (NYRA) on May 18 issued travel restrictions for all horses that might have been exposed to equine herpes virus, with special attention paid to those stabled at Churchill Downs since May 1.

In some 90 percent of infected horses, equine herpes virus type 1 (EHV-1) leads to a mild upper respiratory infection with fever, nasal

discharge and fatigue for a day or two. The virus can also cause pregnant mares to abort, and in its severest form it can lead to neurological disorders, loss of coordination and even death. The virus is spread mainly by close contact between horses. Once infected, a horse carries the virus for the rest of its life in a "latent" (dormant) state. The same symptoms from the initial infection can be reactivated by stress later in life.

Osterrieder's preliminary study compared the effectiveness of MLV vaccines to another more widely used vaccine for equine herpes. Owners and veterinarians have been wary of live vaccines because of past incidences in which a previously MLV that was incompletely weakened caused neurological disease symptoms after it was administered. The more widely used type of vaccine, called an inactivated vaccine, employs a killed virus to activate the horse's immune response. Osterrieder vaccinated five horses with an MLV and five with an inactivated virus; five received no vaccination. None of the 15 horses were pregnant. The horses were then exposed to the herpes virus.

The study found that the horses with MLV vaccinations consistently had lower fevers, no neurological disorders and less virus in nasal fluids. One horse vaccinated with the inactivated virus and one from the control group showed mild neurological symptoms. All the horses, however, have fully recovered. Osterrieder decided to announce the results of the study prior to peer-reviewed publication because of the recent virus outbreaks. Following the outbreak at Churchill

Downs, three barns and some 100 horses were quarantined. The quarantine was fully lifted May 24, when no other horses showed signs of infection.

Eight horses housed at Churchill Downs during the outbreak were cleared to run in the Preakness. However, two horses scheduled in supporting races at the Pimlico Race Course were not allowed to race due to the Churchill Downs quarantine.

Previous studies on horses have found the inactivated vaccines are ineffective in lowering equine virus levels in the blood or preventing abortions caused by the virus.

"Based on recent reports and our preliminary findings, many inactivated vaccines, especially when given too often, don't appear to do much good," said Osterrieder. ●

Biosecurity Information Available

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has produced a new brochure called *Biosecurity—The Key to Keeping your Horses Healthy*. It gives tips for reducing the chances of an infectious disease being carried onto your farm by people, animals, equipment or vehicles.

The brochure is particularly useful for youth and adults involved in showing horses. To order a copy (or multiple copies), contact APHIS at 301-734-7799.

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Tax Deduction Available to Horse Breeders for 2005

Horse breeders should be aware of a new tax advantage that begins in 2005 and increases over the next five years until fully implemented in 2010. The deduction can shelter up to three percent of 2005 profit from the sale of horses a breeder bred and sold.

The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004, passed by Congress at the end of 2004, provided a new tax benefit, which lowers the tax on income from U.S. production. Specifically, it applies to income from the sale of property that was "manufactured, produced or grown" by a taxpayer in the U.S. Although enacted to compensate American companies for export incentives ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization several years ago and repealed by Congress, the provision applies to all "qualified production activities income," including income realized by breeders from breeding and selling horses.

The deduction is three percent of profits in 2005 and 2006, six percent in 2007 through 2009, and nine percent in 2010 and thereafter. For example, if a breeder makes a profit of \$100,000 in 2005 from the sale of horses bred, the breeder can deduct \$3,000 on his or her tax return. This is in addition to any other deductions to which the breeder is entitled. That deduction rises to \$6,000 in 2007 and tops out at \$9,000 in 2010 and thereafter.

The new deduction applies to sales of horses by an individual, partnership, proprietorship, corporations, S Corporation or Limited Liability Company. But it is limit-

ed. It cannot exceed the profit from breeding sales, although it appears that a breeder could get a deduction even though the overall horse business incurs a loss. In addition, it cannot exceed 50 percent of wages paid to employees. "Wages" are the sum of wages and deferrals required to be included on IRS Form W-2.

This explanation is based on a preliminary analysis of the new provision. The American Horse Council recommends that horse breeders consult with their tax advisors to see how this new change affects their specific breeding activities.

Wisconsin Goes Online with EIA Tests

Online submission forms and test results are now recognized by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for equine infectious anemia tests, which are required to import, sell, or exhibit horses in Wisconsin.

The online service, provided by GlobalVetLink, is voluntary. It saves time for veterinarians, yields quicker test results for their clients, and provides greater biosecurity. The other 49 states also accept the electronic "paperwork" for EIA tests. GlobalVetLink is a private company that provides this online service, for a charge.

For veterinarians who choose the new service, it will replace the multi-part paper forms that they now mail to the laboratory along with the blood sample, and the paper reports that they receive from the lab via mail. Users can register once at www.globalvetlink.com, and will not have to re-enter information about their practices each time

they submit a sample to the lab. They will get results faster, an important service to clients.

Wisconsin requires that the online submission forms include digital photos of the horse inserted into the document, replacing the old method of hand-drawing the horse's identifying markings. Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama and Missouri also require digital photos.

"We're encouraging fairs, associations, and other show organizers also to accept these results in lieu of the traditional certificates. This system makes it easier for owners and veterinarians to comply with the law, and offers the event organizers greater certainty that the results reported match the horse being presented," said State Veterinarian Dr. Robert Ehlenfeldt. "It's harder to forge these documents, because of the photos. Forgery isn't a common problem, but it's not unheard of."

While the electronic submission and reporting process offers improved convenience, speed and biosecurity, Ehlenfeldt advises veterinarians or their clients to check with organizers of individual fairs or shows to see whether they will accept the forms, and to check with GlobalVetLink to find out what laboratories are participating.

AAEP Welcomes New Director of Industry Relations

Keith Kleine has joined the staff of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) as director of industry relations. His chief responsibilities include coordinating the AAEP's Educational Partner and sponsorship programs and serving as liaison to the horse industry on public policy and

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equine health-care issues. He also will oversee the work of the AAEP's research and benevolent arm, the AAEP Foundation, Inc.

Kleine brings 13 years of equine industry experience to the AAEP. Prior to his most recent position as executive director of the newly formed Lebanon, Kentucky Tourist and Convention Commission, he served stints in marketing and publicity at historic Churchill Downs, Retama Park in San Antonio, Tex., and the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA). A native of St. Louis, Mo., who grew up in Richmond, Ky., Kleine spent his high school and college summers working on Arabian and Thoroughbred farms in Nebraska and Kentucky and also completed an internship at The Red Mile in Lexington, Ky.

"The AAEP has an excellent reputation for association management, promoting the health and

welfare of horses and providing quality programs that benefit its members, industry partners and horse owners," said Kleine. "I'm looking forward to helping the AAEP and its membership achieve their goals."

Kleine can be reached in the AAEP office at 859-233-0147 or kkleine@aaep.org.

Unwanted Horse Summit Report Released

The report outlining the work of those who participated in the nation's first-ever Unwanted Horse Summit is now available from the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP). The Summit was hosted on April 19, 2005, in Washington, D.C., by the AAEP with the purpose of identifying long-term solutions designed to improve the quality of life of unwanted horses. Over 25 equine-industry organizations and individuals participated.

Attendees worked in small groups during the Summit to examine the causes of unwanted horses and the approaches to dealing with this segment of the equine population. Also discussed were the groups within the industry who can play a direct role in solving the problem. At the end of the Summit participants reached complete consensus on the following key action steps:

- The formation of a national steering committee to direct efforts on behalf of unwanted horses.
- Working groups to be formed as part of this body to work on specific issues such as education, funding and rescue/retirement facility standards.

"This is an ambitious and ongoing effort that will take the active

participation of the entire horse industry to be successful," said Scott E. Palmer, VMD, 2005 AAEP president. "The Summit was our first step and we're encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment of those who participated."

House Passes Amendment to Protect Wild Horses

The U.S. House of Representatives recently approved a measure to reinstate the Federal government's humane policy of protecting wild horses from slaughter.

The amendment was championed by Rep. Nick Rahall, (D-WV), the Ranking Democrat on the House Resources Committee, and U.S. Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-KY), with the support of U.S. Rep. John Sweeney (R-NY) and U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC). With the votes of 78 House Republicans, the amendment passed with 249 votes.

"The very notion that wild American horses would be slaughtered as a food source for foreign consumption abroad has struck a chord with the American people. Tonight, the people's House of Representatives acted on the will of its constituents," said Rahall.

The bipartisan amendment prevents funds from being used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to implement the rider attached to last December's omnibus appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2005 that allowed the sale for slaughter of wild horses. The rider overturned 34 years of federal policy protecting wild horses from the commercial sale for slaughter. ●

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National Institute for Animal Agriculture
1910 Lyda Avenue
Bowling Green, KY 42104

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