

# Equine HEALTH REPORT

A National Institute for Animal Agriculture Publication

Fall/Winter 2006

## U.S. Hit with Three Infectious Equine Diseases in '06

Throughout the 2006 spring racing season and even in late October, equine herpes virus (EHV) resulted in various track and veterinary quarantines. Then, in June, equine viral arteritis (EVA) was discovered involving fetal losses among mares on a Quarter Horse breeding farm in New Mexico. Finally, two imported stallions in Wisconsin were found to be carrying contagious equine metritis (CEM).

"It is important that veterinarians and other equine professionals are aware of these dangerous diseases, and report any suspicion they might have regarding animals under their care that might be infected," Dr. Peter J. Timoney,

Department of Veterinary Science, Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center at the University of Kentucky.

The New Mexico Livestock Board has information regarding this outbreak on their website which can be accessed at <http://www.newmexicolivestockboard.com> under Critical Events. Information about EVA is available on the United States Department of Agriculture website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/equine/eva/>. Detailed information about EVA from the United States Department of Agriculture including history, transmission, symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and control is available at

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet\\_faq\\_notice/fs\\_ahequineva.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/pubs/fsheet_faq_notice/fs_ahequineva.html).

An article entitled "Equine Viral Arteritis: Is the Disease a Cause for Industry Concern?" by Dr. Timoney is also available in pdf format at the Gluck Center website [www.ca.uky.edu/gluck](http://www.ca.uky.edu/gluck).

Currently the United States is considered CEM free regarding international trade. That status is not expected to change because of the imported stallions, but if more cases are reported, it could jeopardize that status. For anyone wishing to find out more about CEM Dr. Timoney also is the author of an authoritative article published in 1996, on CEM. ●

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## Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) in New Jersey

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Animal Health issued a quarantine at the Mid-Atlantic Veterinary Clinic in Ringoes, Hunterdon County, after a horse recovering from surgery there tested positive for equine herpes virus (EHV).

The horse, which had been at Monmouth Park before a quarantine was established at the track on October 27, went to Mid-Atlantic for colic surgery. Mid-Atlantic tested the horse for EHV on October 23 after hearing about concerns at the racetrack, and the results were negative. However, a second test taken earlier in the week turned up a positive result.

Consequently, the department began efforts to identify all horses

that came into contact with the horse in question. In all, those "trace back" and "trace forward" measures identified 36 horses that were then tested for EHV.

"This case in Ringoes shows the vital importance of quarantines for diseases like equine herpes," said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Charles M. Kuperus. "Just one horse that left Monmouth Park before the quarantine was imposed there has now created the necessity for tests of 36 others. Multiply that by the more than 1,000 horses at the racetrack and you can see how diseases like this can spread exponentially unless quarantine measures are taken."

(As reported in *The Horse*) ●

## Hot Topics

# Surveillance, Wildlife Diseases High on Agenda at Animal Health Meetings

The U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) recently held their annual joint meeting in Minneapolis (October 12-18). USAHA is mainly an organization for state and federal government animal health officials (both scientists and administrators) with representation from various trade associations and professional societies. AAVLD is just what the name implies - an organization comprised of diagnosticians. The joint USAHA/AAVLD meeting often serves as an important venue for discussions regarding emerging issues surrounding animal diseases

and as a forum to begin resolving various issues of concern.

Two prevailing topics dominated this year's meeting: 1) Disease "surveillance" based on predictive models measuring prevalence and subsequent threat of these diseases to the total domestic herd/flock and to humans; 2) Zoonotic diseases in wildlife that affect domestic animals and possibly even

*"The NAHSS is an APHIS/VS initiative to integrate existing animal health monitoring programs and surveillance activities into a comprehensive and coordinated system, as well as to develop new surveillance methods and approaches,"*

DR. BRIAN MCCLUSKEY  
USDA CEAH

humans. AAVLD committee meetings often surround diagnostic issues and techniques; meanwhile, USAHA committees primarily deal with disease control policy.

Here are some of the highlights of the presentations and discussions:

### Surveillance:

Surveillance has been an essential part of every effort to eradicate a given animal disease. But, surveillance in the 21st century is a far cry from not only your grandpa's surveillance of 50 years ago but

also your dad's of just 15 years ago. And this is just the beginning. Surveillance techniques are likely to grow and expand even more in the next 20 years according to some of the speakers at the USAHA/AAVLD meeting.

This rapid change has been driven by two factors: the threat of foreign animal diseases and the expansion of information technology capabilities that make it possible to collect, transmit and analyze an amazing amount of data.

Recognizing the ever-increasing disease threats and opportunities to expand export markets, the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service/Veterinary Service (APHIS, VS), working with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), began a review of the U.S. animal disease surveillance system. In addition to the 9/11 events, the occurrence of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and the global risk of foreign animal and emerging diseases spurred those efforts into high gear, and as a result, the National Animal Health Surveillance System (NAHSS) was created in 2003. The NAHSS is a network of alliances and partnerships among government agencies and private entities designed to facilitate information exchange, enhance current surveillance programs, and establish and maintain the necessary infrastructure for surveillance.

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## Equine Health Report

Fall/Winter 2006

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.

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surveillance methods and approaches," according to Dr. Brian McCluskey, USDA Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), who spoke at the Scientific Session of the joint meeting. Dr. McCluskey leads the National Surveillance Unit (NSU), the coordinating entity for animal health surveillance activities.

The goal of the NAHSS, says McCluskey, is to systematically collect, collate, and analyze animal health data and promptly disseminate animal health information, especially to those partners obligated to respond: other federal agencies including the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (for humans) and others such as State Veterinarians and USDA scientists in the field.

Surveillance, McCluskey says, depends upon many interrelated activities including sampling at slaughter and marketing facilities and reports by veterinarians and other animal health professionals in the field. "That's where the readers of the Health Reports come in. We need their first-hand knowledge of what's going on out there on the farms, ranches, and production facilities to make surveillance work. They've been great partners in the past and we hope that will continue," he says.

Dr. McCluskey noted a number of "successes" that have been achieved by the NAHSS including the incorporation of the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), which was created through the cooperation of the AAVLD, APHIS, and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. This network combines federal laboratory capacity with the facilities, professional expertise, and support of state and university animal health laboratories, enhancing the

detection and response for animal health emergencies, including foreign animal diseases.

In addition, guidelines and standards for the construction and operation of surveillance systems have been created, as well as surveillance plans for BSE, classical swine fever, and new targeted methods for pseudorabies and brucellosis. For more information go to the NSU website:

<http://nsu.aphis.usda.gov/>. For more information on how NSU/NAHSS fits with the work at USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) and the broader scope Bio-surveillance at the Department of Homeland Security see other presentations made at the meeting at [www.usaha.org](http://www.usaha.org).

#### **Wildlife:**

The fact that wildlife and domestic livestock and fowl can and do spread diseases to each other has resulted in government and industry eradication programs for such diseases as tuberculosis (TB) in cattle and pseudorabies in swine. Some of these diseases, such as TB, posed a human threat as well and fueled the need for eradication programs. But with the emergence of BSE/Mad Cow disease some years ago, and now with the extensive news coverage of a possible avian influenza (AI) H5N1 pandemic, even the general public is keenly aware of the overall problem of diseases spreading not only from wildlife to domestic animals but also to other species including humans. While these two high profile diseases grab most of the attention, a number of others issues, such as TB being transmitted from deer and bison to domestic cattle in Michigan and Wyoming and pseudorabies in wild boars threatening to re-infect the nation's swine herd, must be dealt with by animal health officials and the industry.

Another example, with a reverse twist, is the following: some wildlife officials theorize that Bighorn sheep in the Rocky Mountains are being infected with various diseases by way of domestic sheep grazing on public land. Therefore, there is a movement to ban domestic sheep from federally-owned public grazing land which would make sheep production impossible in many western states.

Numerous presentations, papers, and committee agenda items focused on these and other diseases, but of course, avian flu got by far the most attention at the USAHA-AAVLD meeting. For example, Robert Cook, of the Wildlife Conservation Society, described his organization's Global Avian Influenza Network (GAIN) for surveillance of wild birds. The goal of GAIN is not to duplicate efforts of countries such as the U.S. but to work in less developed nations where the governments have neither the resources nor the expertise to monitor the spread of the disease.

In addition, two half-day sessions, one on various diagnostic tests for AI and the other covering more general information on its spread and control methods, were held. More than a dozen scholarly presentations were given while committees spent hours discussing what needs to be done and making several resolutions regarding AI.

And, these are just today's high profile diseases. Literally hundreds of papers and studies on everything from foot and mouth disease in pronghorn and mule deer to canine distemper to diseases of skunks and squirrels were presented and made available to attendees.

In addition to the USAHA website listed before, much more information on assorted aspects of wildlife diseases is also available at [www.aavld.org](http://www.aavld.org). ●

## Horse Committee Calls for Survey to Determine EP Prevalence

The U.S. Animal Health (USAHA) Committee on Infectious Diseases of Horses has called for the USDA to investigate the prevalence of equine piroplasmiasis (EP) in this country.

EP is a disease of horses, donkeys, mules, and zebras caused by protozoan parasites that invade red blood cells, causing their destruction. Two species of protozoa, *Babesia equi* and *Babesia caballi*, are present in 90 percent of the world inhabited by horses. Only Canada, the United States, Australia, Japan, England, and Ireland are not considered to be endemic areas. The disease is generally transmitted by ticks and other insects, although mechanical transmission is possible through improper disinfection of hypodermic needles or other instruments.

The Committee noted that the status of EP in the United States is in question, primarily because the CF test — which was commonly used prior to August 2005 — would occasionally yield “false negative” results. Unscrupulous owners, importers, and agents compounded the problem by purposely treating EP-infected horses with immunosuppressive medica-

tions to give rise to false negative reactions in the CF test. The CF test has been replaced by an upgraded C-ELISA test that is highly unlikely to yield false negative results on adult horses.

The Committee felt that a national survey of slaughter horses should provide an estimate of the prevalence of EP infection in the United States. The Committee further recommended that USDA establish a working group of representatives from equine industry groups, state animal health officials, researchers, and veterinarians knowledgeable about EP to evaluate the survey results and, if indicated, develop recommendations for control of EP-positive horses and/or elimination of the disease from the United States.

The Committee also heard a report on the National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) “Equine 2005 Study” which dealt with horse population estimates, on-farm health management and vaccination practices, biosecurity and equine movements. Two presentations covered the availability of electronic programs with respect to certification of animal movements, individual

animal status for equine infectious anemia (EIA), and transmission of diagnostic laboratory reports to appropriate parties in real time. ●

## Outbreak of Equine Infectious Anemia in Ireland

A number of clinical cases of equine infectious anemia (EIA) have been diagnosed in Ireland recently. Until these cases were defined on serologic tests, Ireland considered itself free of the infection and disease caused by EIA virus. Details of the investigations and findings from this outbreak can be found at the website of the Irish Department of Agriculture & Food (<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/>). Additional information about EIA and its impact on horses in the U.S. can be found at the website of the USDA (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/equine/eia/>) including Uniform Methods and Rules (UM&R) for control of EIA and maps showing distribution of cases from 1972-2005. The outbreak of EIA in Ireland is of interest because it may involve international standards for safety of equine blood products and a potential novel means of iatrogenic transmission of the virus. Drs. C.J. Issel and R.F. Cook from the Department of Veterinary Science's Gluck Equine Research Center visited Ireland at the request of the Irish Thoroughbred Breeders Association (<http://www.itba.ie/index1.htm>) and the Irish Equine Centre (<http://www.irish-equine-centre.ie/>) to share their insights on diagnosis and control of EIA and research on the genetics of EIA virus. ●

### USDA Releases 2005 U.S. Animal Health Report

The USDA released in October the 2005 U.S. Animal Health Report, a national overview.

The report addresses the many components of the U.S. animal health infrastructure, animal population demographics, approaches to foreign animal disease surveillance, and new initiatives.

The 2005 U.S. Animal Health Report is available on the APHIS website at [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/content/printable\\_version/2005\\_us\\_animal\\_health\\_report.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/2005_us_animal_health_report.pdf).



## USDA Holds Firm to Voluntary NAIS, Other Policies

Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns has some clear ideas about how the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) should work. During his address at the ID INFO EXPO 2006 in August, Johanns shared these thoughts, outlining what he believes is the best approach for the program: 1) NAIS is a voluntary system driven by the States and the private sector; 2) NAIS is a State-Federal-Industry partnership that allows for competitive forces in the free market to keep costs down; and 3) The Federal government does not control animal identification or movement records.

These same messages were reiterated by other U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officials throughout ID INFO EXPO and again at the U.S. Animal Health Association's annual meeting in Minneapolis in mid-October. They were also key points in USDA's launch of the NAIS Community Outreach Program two weeks later at a workshop in Kansas City for State/Federal Animal ID coordinators and industry representatives.

Johanns and staff emphasized that the goals of NAIS can be achieved with a voluntary system, but still acknowledged the challenges a voluntary program can bring. They stressed the importance of educating producers about the value of NAIS and motivating them to participate in the program. A key part of this effort, they said, is listening to producer concerns and taking action to address them. USDA's decision to house animal movement records in private and State databases was in keeping with this approach.

USDA officials pledged to continue collaborating on NAIS with the States, industry, and producers to create a versatile, quality system. Through the new outreach campaign, USDA is working together with its

State and industry partners to seek feedback on the program and ensure that NAIS makes sense for everyone.

As part of these efforts, USDA has recently published a draft NAIS User Guide at <http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/userguide.shtml>. The Guide provides helpful information about what NAIS is and how it can help protect producers' animals and their investment. The Guide is intended as a resource to help producers make informed decisions about participation in NAIS. USDA is also accepting comments on the Guide through January 22, 2007, to gain producers' insights on the program.

There are three components of NAIS: premises registration, animal identification, and animal tracing. The first priority of NAIS has been implementing premises registration – the foundation of the program. USDA and the States are close to their goal of registering 25 percent of premises in the United States (estimated to be at least 1.4 million) by January 31, 2007. The number of premises registered across the country stands today at more than 333,000, or 24 percent, and continues to rise each week.

The second component of NAIS, identifying animals individually or by group/lot with a unique identification number, is progressing. Animal identification is available now for several species. The States and industry continue working on this component so that it will eventually be an option for all species. In support of this work, USDA has approved two companies to manufacture animal identification number (AIN) devices, and a third has submitted devices for approval. USDA is also in the process of approving AIN managers who will be authorized to distribute devices. Another recent change is USDA's plan for the distribution records of AIN

devices to be submitted to private- or State-operated AIN Device Distribution Databases, rather than to USDA's AIN Management System. Animal health officials will request access to the AIN device distribution records only when there is an animal disease issue that warrants their use. This change is slated for implementation in April 2007.

The final component of NAIS, animal tracing, is under development by the States and private sector. Once this component is complete, producers will be able to choose an animal tracking database (ATD)—operated and maintained by private industry groups or States—and report certain animal movements. In the case of an animal health emergency, these databases will be accessible by animal health officials through a "communications system" called the Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS). ATDs are currently being approved on an interim basis and agreements signed relative to their operation.

Johanns and staff remained firm on their position that the Federal government should maintain only limited NAIS information, and that the AIN Device Distribution Databases and ATDs should be operated privately and/or by State governments to ensure the protection of information. As NAIS moves forward, USDA is demonstrating a strong commitment to producers by ensuring that the program continues to evolve to meet their needs.

The Species Working Groups (EG) reported on their current recommendations at ID INFO EXPO. They are similar to reports made to the National Animal Identification System Subcommittee of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Disease. The fol-

## How to Reduce Gastric Ulcer Risk in Horses

Ulcers are a man-made disease, affecting up to 90 percent of racehorses and 60 percent of show horses. Stall confinement alone can lead to the development of ulcers. A horse's feeding schedule also can be a factor. When horses are fed just twice a day, the stomach is subjected to a prolonged period without feed to neutralize its naturally produced acid. In addition, high-grain diets produce volatile fatty acids that can also contribute to the development of ulcers.

Stress, both environmental and physical, can increase the likelihood of ulcers, as can hauling, training and mixing groups of horses. Strenuous exercise can decrease the emptying of the stomach and the blood flow to the stomach, thus contributing to the problem.

The treatment and prevention of gastric ulcers is directed at removing these predisposing factors, thus decreasing acid production within the horse's stomach. Follow these tips from the American Association of Equine

Practitioners (AAEP) to properly treat your horse's ulcers:

1. Allow free-choice access to grass or hay. Horses are designed to be grazers with a regular intake of roughage.
2. If the horse must be stalled, arrange for the horse to see the horses he socializes with. Consider offering a ball or other object that the horse can enjoy in his stall.
3. Feed the horse more frequently to help buffer the acid in the stomach.
4. Decrease grains that form volatile fatty acids.
5. Medications that decrease acid production are available, but are only necessary in horses showing signs of clinical disease or when the predisposing factors, such as stress, cannot be removed.



The prevention of ulcers is the key. Limiting stressful situations along with frequent feeding or free-choice access to grass or hay is imperative. Neutralizing the production of stomach acid is nature's best antacid. For more information about gastric ulcers, ask your equine veterinarian for the "Equine Gastric Ulcers" brochure provided by the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) in association with Nutrena, an AAEP Educational Partner. Additional information also can be found on the AAEP's horse-health Web site, [www.myHorseMatters.com](http://www.myHorseMatters.com). ●

*Mark Your Calendars for April 2-5, 2007!*

### SACRAMENTO TO HOST 2007 NIAA ANNUAL MEETING

*BioFuels Energy: Animal Agriculture at the Crossroads*—That's the theme of the 2007 National Institute for Animal Agriculture's annual meeting which will be held April 2-5 at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento.

"BioFuels are taking off," says Annual Meeting Chair Jim Fraley. "Is that generally good for animal agriculture, or frankly, will it drive up our feed costs?



Can we pass those costs on to consumers? These are questions everyone in animal agriculture is asking him/herself, and we'll try to answer them in Sacramento this spring," he says.

As usual the planning com-

mittee has scheduled an extra, one-day symposium on the 5th (Thursday) with a special "hot topic" emphasis. This one is expected to be based on the recent outbreak of E. coli. The program will feature local accounts and experts. "And, what better place to do it, but in the capital of the state where the problem originated. It should be both fascinating and informative," Fraley adds.

## News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

### Benjamin Richey Named Exec. Dir. of USAHA

Benjamin Richey has been named Executive Director of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA). He took the helm as chief administrator of the organization on Nov. 1. As Executive Director, Richey will be responsible for relocating the central office to the Kansas City area, expanding membership, and coordinating the work and reports of some 33 committees.

Richey is a graduate of Purdue University. Previously, he has served as Director of Communications for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) and as an account executive for a Kansas City-based advertising agency.

### Drs. Reed and McElwain Receive APHIS Animal Health Award

Dr. Willie Reed and Dr. Terry McElwain were presented with the APHIS Animal Health Award by Dr. Ron DeHaven, Administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), during the opening joint general session of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD).

In presenting the awards, DeHaven noted that both recipients have served as president of AAVLD, Reed in 2003 and McElwain in 2004. "Both of these men are passionate about veterinary diagnostics," DeHaven said, "and each will take every opportunity to share their vision with anyone who will listen."

Reed recently accepted the posi-

tion of Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Purdue University. Prior to that he was Director of the Animal Health Diagnostic Laboratory at Michigan State University as well as Chair of the Department of Pathobiology and Diagnostic Investigation there.

McElwain is Executive Director of the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. He is a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists and holds an academic appointment as full Professor of Pathology in the Department of Veterinary Microbiology and Pathology at Washington State University.

"The dedication, pride and integrity that Dr. Reed and Dr. McElwain demonstrate every day reflect positively on the activities they direct and on their states, AAVLD, USAHA and animal agriculture in this country," DeHaven said.

### 'Medal of Distinction' Awarded to Dr. Campbell and Dr. McCapes

Dr. Clarence Campbell and Dr. Dick McCapes were the first recipients of the new U.S. Animal Health Association's "Medal of Distinction," the highest award presented to an Association member.

"These two individuals are highly deserving of this award," said Dr. Bret Marsh, USAHA president, as he presented the medals. Marsh said the new medal, which was established in May will be awarded annually to recognize one or more USAHA members who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, provided exemplary service, and have made significant contributions to the

advancement of the Association.

Campbell retired as Florida State Veterinarian in 1991 after 38 years of service. McCapes retired from the faculty of the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California at Davis, in 1994.

Both individuals served as president of USAHA — Campbell in 1966 and McCapes in 1999.

### National Assembly Award Presented to Dr. Holland

Dr. Sam Holland, South Dakota State Veterinarian, was honored the National Assembly's Award by state regulatory officials during the opening joint general session of the U.S. Animal Health Association (USAHA) and the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) at their joint meeting in Minneapolis in October. ●

### New Rules Govern How Horses Can be Shipped to Slaughter

Effective December 7, 2006, the five-year phase out of double-decked "pot-belly" trucks for transporting horses to slaughter or feedlots will be complete, and any shipper using these trucks will be subject to penalties of the law. These horses must be accompanied by certificates of ownership as well.

The double-decked pot-belly trucks resulted in overcrowding and too little head room that caused injuries and pain to many horses. Also, the steep ramps into and out of the "belly" resulted in numerous leg injuries.

## AAEP Task Force Issues Guidelines for Equine Infectious Disease Outbreaks

The Infectious Disease Task Force of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) has developed guidelines for the control of contagious infectious disease within the horse population. Recommendations are provided for the control of suspected cases of infectious respiratory, neurologic, diarrheal, and vesicular disease. The symptom-based guidelines provide a detailed action plan for veterinarians as they address a possible infectious disease outbreak. From the point at which a case of infectious disease is suspected, the guidelines offer measures to control the spread of infection, diagnostic testing options, and communication considerations.

Highlights of "Equine Infectious Disease Outbreak: AAEP Control Guidelines" include:

- Biosecurity instructions in English

and Spanish for grooms and other horse caretakers;

- Recommendations for the implementation of a management plan before an outbreak occurs; and
- Guidelines for specific diseases, such as Equine Herpesvirus and *strep. equi* infection, which can be employed after a diagnosis has been made.

The Task Force stresses that the veterinarian on scene is the most qualified person to initiate the outbreak control plan and is critical to effective outbreak management. Each infectious disease outbreak is unique, and an existing plan may require modification for specific situations.

"When a large group of horses gathers, be it at a racetrack or a horse show, all those involved in the horses'

care should be vigilant about monitoring the health of the animals. It is key that the presence of contagious disease be quickly identified and responsibly addressed," said Mary C. Scollay, DVM, chair of the AAEP Infectious Disease Task Force. "Our expectation is that the AAEP guidelines will assist veterinarians and equine caretakers in minimizing the impact of infectious disease in a given horse population."

The guidelines are available to veterinarians and can be accessed through the members-only area of the AAEP website, <http://www.aaep.org/>. For questions about the guidelines or how to gain access, contact Sally J. Baker, AAEP director of marketing and public relations, at [sbaker@aaep.org](mailto:sbaker@aaep.org) or (859) 233-0147. ●

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## USDA Holds Firm (continued from page 5)

lowing are major point reported by the Equine Species Working Group for direction and implementation of NAIS:

### Equine:

The Equine Species Working Group started its recommendations by identifying the benefits of a national identification program as follows:

- Protect our horses
- Reduce potential effects and enhance control of disease outbreaks
- Protect human health
- Address the threat of bioterrorism
- Identify lost, stolen or displaced horses
- Maintain a stable economic environment
- Insure freedom of movement and export of horses
- Be a responsible member of the

livestock industry

### Regarding Premises ID:

- All aspects are, and should continue to be, defined by the state governments
- Is important for racetracks and in the prevention of disease

Animal Identification System should be microchips/RFID because:

- AIN is a 15-digit number
- It is the most practical ID for the most horse owners
- It's compatible within the industry and with international standards

Movement Records should consist of:

- CVIs, Brand Inspections, VS-127, International CVI, noting that reporting mechanisms would be a heavy burden on horse owners or premises/owners. ●