

## UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 40 Combined with 62      APPROVED**

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION

COMMITTEE ON IMPORT/EXPORT

**SUBJECT MATTER:** EQUINE IDENTIFICATION: IMPORTED AND RETURNING HORSES

**DATES:** RENO, NEVADA, OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Equine Piroplasmosis (EP) is classified as a Foreign Animal Disease in the United States. However, it is assumed that the infection exists at some undetermined prevalence level in horses that have been imported into the United States. This assumption is based on the fact that prior to February 1, 2004, the “official test” for Piroplasmosis, conducted on equine animals presented for importation into the United States, was the Complement Fixation (CF) test, a test that is known to occasionally yield “false negative” results. Some horse owners, importers or agents have compounded the problem by purposely treating EP infected horses with immunosuppressive medications resulting in these animals giving a false negative response to the CF test. An upgraded competitive enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (C-ELISA) test was specified as the “official test” for importation of equine into the United States on August 22, 2005, and is highly unlikely to yield “false negative” results in adult horses.

The lack of a reliable and traceable permanent identification system for horses imported into the United States makes it difficult to trace back potentially serologically-positive animals. An available option to determine the prevalence of EP in the equine population would be to conduct a serological survey. While a serological survey of the equine population may suggest a meaningful prevalence of EP in the resident horse population, it will neither be as effective or efficient as the detailed traceback that would be present with a highly functional traceability system in place. This has underscored the immediate need, as it pertains to dealing with EP and other important equine diseases, to establish a standard method of permanent identification and traceability for all horses imported into the United States.

### **RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) implement provisions that require all horses imported into, or returning to, the United States be identified with permanent individual Identification and/or Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) microchips that comply with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 11784 and 11785 standards (134.2 kHz).

Universal RFID readers should be present at all import centers and border stations to read both 125 and 134.2 kHz microchips.

**RESPONSE:**

**USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns and appreciates the opportunity to respond. The *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) currently does not require permanent identification for horses being imported into or returning to the United States. VS' National Center for Import and Export will initiate a regulatory amendment to modify the existing horse import requirements in title 9 CFR parts 93.300 – 93.326 to require such identification. These changes would apply to all horses imported into the United States, including horses imported from Canada and Mexico.