

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 27 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HORSES

SUBJECT MATTER: RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION (RFID) MICROCHIP
IDENTIFICATION OF IMPORTED EQUIDS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

With increased global livestock movement the disease risk is greater to the United States (US) horse population. Horse diseases considered high risk include, but are not exclusive to, equine piroplasmiasis, contagious equine metritis, dourine, glanders, equine infectious anemia, African horse sickness, equine viral arteritis and Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis.

Eradication efforts in the early 1900s eliminated the presence of diseases such as dourine and glanders in the US. To protect the US horse population, required importation testing and quarantine were implemented to minimize potential disease introduction into the US. Through national disease control programs, testing of both domestic and imported animals has limited the spread of diseases such as equine infectious anemia. Horses being imported to the US represent a risk of importation of various diseases. Therefore, traceability of these animals is a critical element in the protection of the US horse population.

A lack of a reliable and traceable permanent identification system for horses imported into the US makes it difficult to conduct trace back of animals that are potentially positive or exposed to an infectious disease. There is an immediate need to establish a standard method of permanent identification and traceability for all horses imported into the US.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to revise the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) to require all equids imported into, or returning to, the United States be identified with an implanted radio frequency identification (RFID) microchip as recommended by the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) Equine Species Working Group that complies with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 11784 and 11785 standards (134.2 kHz), unless already implanted with a readable 125 kHz microchip. 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 (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's (USAHA) concerns. The *Code of Federal Regulations* currently does not require permanent identification for horses being imported into or returning to the United States. However, the goal of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) is to provide timely traceback of animals in the event of a disease outbreak. VS is developing a proposed rule that will address the identification of several species of imported animals, including horses. Any species-specific requirements must fit under the umbrella of NAIS.

American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP)

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Microchip Identification of Imported Equids. Recommended support.