



RESOLUTION NUMBER: 6 and 14 Combined **APPROVED**

SOURCE: **COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASE OF HORSES**
COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK id

SUBJECT MATTER: **Record and Electronically Capture Name and Description of Mexican Imported Equine**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

With increased equine movement from Mexico, the disease risk is increased to the United States equine population. Diseases of concern include, but are not limited to, equine piroplasmiasis, contagious equine metritis, equine infectious anemia (EIA), and Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis. Recent equine disease events involving horses imported to the U.S. demonstrate the risk of importation. Traceability of equine imported from Mexico is a critical element in the protection of the U.S. equine population.

In September 2015, a three-year-old racing Mexican-born Quarter Horse filly, imported from Mexico in June of 2015, was confirmed positive for EIA in California. At the owner's request, the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) conducted an investigation to determine potential time of exposure. As part of the investigation, a request for the EIA laboratory test result and Mexican border crossing documentation for the import of the horse was sent to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). USDA was unable to verify or provide the laboratory test report for this imported horse due to the failure to record the horse's name and physical description at the border crossing. The investigation revealed that at the Mexican border crossing, the current USDA practice is to record only a temporary neck tag number, age, color and, sometimes, markings of the horse being tested for importation. No record is made of the horse's name, any permanent identification present, radio frequency identification (RFID) microchip number, breed or complete physical description of the animal. The lack of adequate data capture of equine identification on import test documents at Mexican border crossings has proven to be an impediment for disease investigation traceback. There is an immediate need for enhancement of equine identification import test documents for traceability of all equids imported from Mexico into the United States.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services to require USDA border personnel to electronically capture and record adequate official animal identification on all equids imported into, or returning to, the United States from Mexico. Adequate official animal identification, at a minimum, is the equid's name and any permanent identification present, to include radio frequency identification microchip number, and breed, sex, age, color, and all markings. Record of this information should be on all border crossing laboratory testing paperwork and be captured electronically in a searchable database accessible to state and federal animal health officials for use during a disease investigation.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the U.S. Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS agrees that the ability to easily search and identify information about previously imported animals is valuable in disease investigation. APHIS identified one of the major contributing factors to decreased ability to find specific animal information in the Animal Import Database as the variability in Agency data capture processes. Examples include the lack of microchip readers at all ports of entry and inconsistent entry of identifying information into database fields. In response to this finding, APHIS developed the following plan:

- APHIS has established a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for recording equine identification information in the Animal Import Database, which will facilitate searching for animals based on their microchip number or other identification, such as tattoo.
- APHIS employees will implement an SOP to capture data on equids imported through animal import centers.
- APHIS will obtain additional equipment (such as microchip readers), provide training on data capture processes, and implement the SOP at all southern border ports.

The identification of an equid in the Import Animal Database and the corresponding Form VS 17-30, verifies that the equid met APHIS import requirements, including negative results on mandatory tests. These records will be maintained in the Animal Import Database, and VS will make them available to State and Federal health officials in the event of a disease investigation.