

microchip that complies with the International Organization for Standardization 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. Additionally, the USAHA urges VS to, at the time of equid importation into the United States, record microchips of imported equidae and electronically capture microchip data in a searchable database accessible to animal health officials during a disease investigation.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond. We recognize the significant advances in the implementation of required microchips in the domestic horse population. However, at this time APHIS does not anticipate changing our import regulations to require an implanted radio frequency identification (RFID) microchip in all horses imported into or returning to, the United States. Our current identification requirements for imported horses follow requirements for domestic movement, as outlined in the National Animal Identification System. Acceptable forms of identification include microchips, tattoos, and descriptions (including markings). There is no requirement of microchips for domestic interstate movement of horses; however, some imported horses have RFID implants when they arrive to the United States. When a microchip is present, APHIS captures the microchip numbers on these horses in the Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) import module. Upon request, VS personnel will provide State Animal Health Officials with available VSPS microchip information in the event of a disease outbreak.