

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 26 **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HORSES

SUBJECT MATTER: ENHANCED EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA PROGRAM
FUNDING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Equine infectious anemia (EIA) has been controlled in the United States because individual states with support of their equine industries have instituted regulations which require testing for entry, movement and/or congregation, as well as quarantine of test-positive equids. Testing for EIA has been widely accepted, and today includes both the agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID or Coggins) and enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) test formats. Each year, approximately 2 million equid samples are tested for EIA, and over the last three years, 0.01 percent of the samples were reported as positive. The true prevalence of the infection is not known. In recent years, many of the reported cases have been from states with historically low numbers of cases, and a substantial proportion of those positives were in equids not previously tested for EIA. It is assumed that a population of untested equids exists in the United States. The rate of EIA infection is expected to be higher for that population in those states with historically higher reported numbers of positive tests, such as Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and Mississippi.

In the considered opinion of experts and regulators, active surveillance should not be reduced but should be improved. Changes are needed because the traditional methods have reached their plateau, and testing in the mobile tested population greatly exceeds the actual risk. The changes deemed most appropriate are those directed toward: 1) identifying the true prevalence of the infection, 2) reducing the interval of testing where appropriate, 3) devising methods to address the untested population, with a focus on states with historically higher rates of test-positive equids, and 4) implementing a three tiered testing system utilizing sensitivity and specificity of tests in appropriate sequence for maximum efficiency.

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), in cooperation with states and the equine industry, such as the American Horse Council, state horse councils, American Association of Equine Practitioners and breed registries, request funding to support an enhanced Equine infectious anemia (EIA) control/eradication program. Three (3) basic components encompass:

Section A: Fund Program

1. USDA-APHIS-VS to incorporate specific elements of the Equine infectious anemia (EIA)

Uniform Methods and Rules (UMR) into the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 9, part 75, Communicable diseases in horses, asses, ponies, mules, and zebras, in order to assure that only equines having negative EIA testing status are moved interstate except as described under section 6;

2. Requests funding for an enhanced EIA control program leading to eradication with new money:
 - At -risk states are to receive focused federal funds in an eradication program; the initial funding emphasis should be in the states with historically higher rates of infection (Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi); and
 - At-risk states must meet certain minimum standards including: change of ownership testing, minimum 12 month negative test for interstate movement, required euthanasia of reactors (grandfather existing reactors that are isolated), individual permanent identification of tested horses, utilization of a 3-tiered testing system.

Section B: Prevalence Working Group

1. USDA-APHIS-VS should create a national EIA prevalence working group that includes representatives from all “At Risk” states.
2. The EIA prevalence working group would continue collaboration with the National Surveillance Unit (NSU), Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH) existing equine prevalence model for:
 - Identification of industry stakeholders;
 - Accurate equine census;
 - Accurate prevalence data;
 - Consistent case definition – herd vs. head; and
 - Address other issues as appropriate.

Section C: Diagnostic Laboratory Component

1. USDA-APHIS-VS should adopt national laboratory reporting system for accurate electronic test data.
2. Re-evaluate laboratory certification (moratorium) policy with input from state/federal regulatory authorities and National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL).
3. Utilize and request funding for a 3-tiered laboratory testing system (enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), agar gel immunodiffusion (AGID), immunoblot).
4. USDA-APHIS-VS should request funding for the NVSL laboratory system to fully support an expanded program.

RESPONSE:

USDA, APHIS Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) appreciates the United States Animal Health Association’s (USAHA) interest in an enhanced equine infectious anemia (EIA) control/eradication program, and we concur with the science and intent of the proposals. We also agree that currently funding for such efforts is not available. Although immediate and long-term budget uncertainties prevent us from making any commitments regarding future funding requests, we will consider your input in light of the priorities of the new Administration as we formulate future budgets.

VS is drafting a proposed rule that incorporates specific elements of the EIA Uniform Methods and Rules into title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 75.

VS will continue to work closely with the USAHA Infectious Diseases of Horses (IDOHC) EIA subcommittee. If a specific national EIA prevalence working group is to be developed, it should fall under the purview of the IDOHC EIA subcommittee. VS' National Surveillance Unit (NSU) will continue its close collaboration with the EIA subcommittee in adapting and updating the existing equine prevalence model to include recent equine census data, current testing information, and a review of risk categorization options (i.e., cluster of EIA cases). NSU also will address other issues as appropriate.

The National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) supports a national laboratory reporting system for accurate electronic test data. The moratorium on training personnel for new EIA laboratories has ended. However, due to budgetary issues, NVSL will continue to schedule the same number of EIA training sessions for the foreseeable future and to use the selection criteria that have been reviewed and approved by the USAHA IDOHC EIA subcommittee.

American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP)

Recommended support for this resolution, with the exception of the requirement for mandatory euthanasia of EIA positive horses.