

# UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2008 RESOLUTION

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**RESOLUTION NUMBER:** 28      **APPROVED AS AMENDED**

**SOURCE:** COMMITTEE ON INFECTIOUS DISEASES OF HORSES

**SUBJECT MATTER:** EQUINE PIROPLASMOSIS RESEARCH FUNDING

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## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Equine piroplasmosis (EP) is classified as a foreign animal disease to the United States (US). However, there is an unknown prevalence of EP in the resident horse population. Prior to February 1, 2004, the official test for importation was the complement fixation (CF) test that occasionally yielded false negative results. The problem was compounded because known seropositive horses could purposely be treated with immunosuppressive medications to produce an upcoming transient negative import test. An upgraded competitive enzyme linked immunosorbent assay (cELISA) test was specified as the official test on August 22, 2005, and is highly unlikely to yield false negative results on adult horses.

Therefore, seropositive horses exist in the resident US horse population at an unknown level and have the potential to infect multiple competent resident tick vectors and possibly establish the disease as endemic. There is no conclusive evidence that treatment of a bona fide carrier of either of the two strains of EP (*Babesia caballi* and *Babesia equi*) is a fail-proof viable option.

## **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) and USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to request expanded funding for research into finding an effective and safe treatment for elimination of the carrier state for *Babesia caballi* and *Babesia equi*.

## **RESPONSES:**

### **USDA, Agriculture Research Service**

ARS has an active research program at our Pullman location to solve problems relevant to equine piroplasmosis, including the development of new treatments for this disease. We agree that this work is critical to ensuring the protection of the U.S. horse population. 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 budget initiatives for Congress.

**USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's (USAHA) concerns. The partnership between APHIS and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) has provided for an active research program at the ARS Pullman location to solve problems relevant to equine piroplasmiasis, including the development of new treatments for this disease, and we agree that this work is critical to ensuring the protection of the U.S. horse population. Although immediate and long-term budget uncertainties prevent us from making any commitments regarding future funding requests, we will consider USAHA's input in light of the priorities of the new Administration as we formulate future budgets.

**American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP)**

Equine Piroplasmiasis Research Funding. Recommended support.