

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION-2007

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 59 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON PARASITIC DISEASES

SUBJECT MATTER: IMPORT REPTILE TICK CONTROL

DATE: RENO, NEVADA OCTOBER 18 – 24, 2007

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Very high numbers reptiles infested with exotic ticks continue to be brought into the United States (US) from countries throughout the world, and these imported exotic ticks may serve as vectors for animal diseases such as heartwater, that threaten the US livestock industry. Program components have been drafted to permit, certify, inspect, and treat, if necessary, such imported reptiles. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the Animal Health Protection Act has clear authority and responsibility to prohibit or restrict the importation of animals and to impose post-importation quarantine measures to prevent the introduction or dissemination of any pest or disease into the United States.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) requests the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) expedite the implementation of regulations to require permits and inspection certification for reptiles entering the United States. USAHA also urges USDA-APHIS-VS to carry out a program in collaboration with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Customs and Border Protection (CBP); and the United States Department of Interior (DOI), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); and, in conjunction with affected states, to ensure effective control measures are taken to eliminate any ticks imported on reptiles into the United States.

RESPONSE

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection

CBP acknowledges USAHA's position regarding the apparent risk presented by imported reptiles. In accordance with Article 7 of the Memorandum of Agreement between the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and USDA, CBP enforces USDA's, Animal and Plant Health Services (APHIS) regulations,

policies and procedures at our nation's ports of entry. CBP will work with USDA-APHIS on any draft regulation and protocol they propose in response to your request. CBP takes any threat to U.S. agriculture seriously, and we are committed to the prevention of harmful agriculture pests and diseases.

USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the United States Animal Health Association's concerns and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS has recently completed a pathways analysis to identify some of the exposure pathways by which ticks and other vectors might introduce heartwater disease into the United States. A risk assessment describing the possible consequences of discontinuing the tropical bont tick program in St. Croix has also been completed. Based on this information, VS will determine the best method to address these risks. VS will work in consultation with other Federal agencies to develop new import regulations for reptiles, strengthen existing regulations for importation of heartwater-susceptible species from affected countries, and verify the import controls put in place by Canada and Mexico to prevent introduction of heartwater into their national herds.