

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 **APPROVED**

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

SUBJECT MATTER: **DOURINE AND GLANDERS TESTING OF DOMESTIC EQUIDS AT THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE, VETERINARY SERVICES, NATIONAL VETERINARY SERVICES LABORATORY**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), National Center for Import and Export (NCIE) requires that all horses entering the United States (US) test negative for dourine and glanders (among other diseases). On the USDA-APHIS-VS-NCIE equine importation webpage USDA states "...importers may wish to verify that the horse is not positive for dourine, glanders, equine piroplasmiasis, and equine infectious anemia (EIA) before exporting. Horses that test positive by USDA for any of these diseases will be refused entry." For this reason, many shippers recommend that US clients test their animals for dourine/glanders prior to exporting them out of the US to know their horse's status before shipping since a false positive test result for re-entry into the US could occur resulting in refused re-entry of the horse upon return. Additionally, this testing recommendation provided valuable national equine herd passive surveillance for these diseases with the testing expense being paid by the submitter.

In April 2012, a USDA-APHIS-VS-NCIE policy change was instituted dictating that the USDA-APHIS-VS, National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) would no longer test horses residing in the US for dourine or glanders, unless they were suspected of having the disease or were required to be tested by law (e.g., plasma donor horses). USDA-APHIS-VS-NVSL, the only US laboratory that performs these tests, is now prohibited from doing so on healthy horses residing in the US. So, despite the USDA recommendation that US horses be tested for these diseases prior to shipping out of the country, there is no longer a way to test them and the passive surveillance for these diseases is lost. This USDA-APHIS-VS-NCIE testing policy change was not communicated to diagnostic laboratories or equine exporters.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to re-evaluate the dourine and glanders testing policy change for United States domestic equids and allow this testing recommended by USDA-APHIS-VS, National Center for Import and Export upon request, at the owner's expense. This testing provides United States (US) owners exporting horses the opportunity to pre-test domestic horses and possibly avoid a domestic horse returning home from being denied entry into the US due to a false positive test. Reinstitution of the USDA-APHIS-VS, National Veterinary Services Laboratory testing of domestic equids for these diseases is necessary and valuable for the passive surveillance of our national equine herd.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association and appreciates the opportunity to respond. VS is drafting a policy on allowing U.S.-origin horses to be pretested for dourine and glanders before export. This policy will apply only to horses exported from the United States with the intention of future re-import. After completion, the policy will be communicated to the National Veterinary Services Laboratories, VS field personnel, and industry. The draft policy will be completed by July 2013.