

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 5 APPROVED AS AMENDED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: Equine Infectious Anemia Testing for Horses Imported through Southern Border Ports

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Horses imported from Mexico have been identified as a high-risk population of horses which pose a significant risk to the health of the national equine population. Over the past few years, there have been numerous horses confirmed to be infected with Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) at the southern border ports. Mexico importers recognize the issue, and one importer has suggested to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) port veterinarian that positive horses identified in the United States be branded to prevent dissemination of disease. USDA policy is to reject entry of EIA positive horses and their cohorts. However, while awaiting test results, these positive horses remain in the border pens with insect vectors which have the potential to spread disease to all horses in the pens at the Mexican border. These exposed horses enter the United States incubating disease and have the potential to distribute EIA infection throughout the United States. Additionally, once rejected the exposed horses are not tracked or monitored and have the potential for re-presentation at the same border port or another Mexican border port. Lastly, the official EIA test used for entry purposes is the agar gel immunodiffusion test which has the potential for not identifying early incubation of the disease agent. With the prevalence of disease in Mexico, the border port identification challenges, the lack of vector control at the ports and the challenges in diagnostic testing, additional measures are necessary to protect the health of the U.S. equine population.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to take the following actions regarding equine entering through the southern border ports:

1. Implement a 45-90 day pre-import negative Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) Agar Gel Immunodiffusion (AGID) test requirement for all equidae entering through a Southern Border Port. The test must be performed by a laboratory approved by the

National Government Animal Health Authority.

2. Require a statement on the importing health certificate which states “Between the time of EIA test and export, the equid has not been on an EIA infected premises or exposed to an EIA positive equid.”
3. The positive equid and all exposed equidae in the lot with the EIA reactor animal shall be requested to be microchipped, and the identification information be recorded in a searchable database. This database shall be developed to have the ability to identify and recognize these equidae and prevent the exposed equidae from being allowed entry for 45 days.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) on equine entering through the Southern Border Ports, and interest in protecting the health of the U.S. equine population from Equine Infectious Anemia. VS is currently reviewing our equine import protocols with Mexico to ensure the protection of the U.S. equine population. VS will update USAHA on the status and results of that review.