

**Equine Health
Committee Report**

2007 NIAA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 4, 2007



The Equine Health Committee met on Wednesday, April 4, 2007 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. PDT, during the NIAA 2007 Annual Meeting in Sacramento, California with 24 people present. Ms. Amy Mann served as the Chair and Dr. Robert Stout served as the Vice Chair.

The committee session focused on current issues in equine health. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to significant disease concerns and issues facing the horse industry today.

Dr. LeeAnn Thomas, USDA/APHIS

Presentation Title: CEM Program Review

Dr. Thomas gave an excellent presentation covering the circumstances surrounding the discovery of three (3) stallions in Wisconsin that cultured positive for *Taylorella equigenitalis*, the causative agent for Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM). Dr. Thomas also updated the committee on the purpose and current progress of an extensive, in-depth review current USDA import requirements for horses imported from countries known to have cases of CEM, including the roles of Federal and State authorities, laboratory requirements and capabilities, and academia and industry interests, as ordered by Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator of Veterinary Services. Specific areas under review included, pre-import testing, Federal Animal Import Center activities, state facilities and procedures, State and Federal CEM regulations, Laboratory facilities, waivers, communications and program data, regulatory oversight, training, APHIS headquarters issues, liability and research needed.

Dr. Peter Timoney, University of Kentucky

Presentation Title: Report on 2006 Equine Viral Arteritis Outbreak, Vaccine use and Availability

Dr. Timoney reviewed the 2006 EVA Outbreak in a number of states. He began with a brief explanation of the disease and its causative agent, the history of the disease in the U.S. and its prevalence throughout the world. He then gave the epidemiology of the 2006 outbreak. He finished with a good discussion of the use of vaccine, including the off-label use of vaccine in pregnant mares. Committee discussion followed, focusing primarily on vaccination of breeding stallions and sexually immature colts, use of vaccine in pregnant mares and use of vaccine when isolation of newly vaccinated animals is impractical.

Dr. Kent Fowler, California Department of Food & Agriculture

Presentation Title: Equine Piroplasmiasis – USAHA IDOHC Subcommittee Update

Dr. Fowler gave a very interesting presentation on discussions and activities of the USAHA IDOHC subcommittee on Equine Piroplasmiasis to date. He began with a brief review of the pathogenesis of *Babesia caballi* and *Babesia equi* and the history of import testing in the U.S. He discussed the reason for the switch from use of the Complement Fixation test to a CELISA as the official import test. The CF test gave a number of false negatives that were manipulated to a certain extent by individuals determined to get EP positive horses into the U.S. who used certain chemotherapeutic measures to achieve a negative test result. Recognizing that a number of EP positive horses were imported by manipulating test results, the subcommittee recommended a seroprevalence study be conducted using horses at processing facilities. However, the recent court ruling outlawing horse slaughter interferes with those plans. Further discussion will be taking place. Dr. Fowler commented also on concerns raised among committee members about how any positive horses would be handled. This concern was mitigated with use of slaughter horses because any positives would be eliminated from the population. Studies using other populations will require some consideration of how to handle positive horses. Finally, there was

discussion of the research that is currently being conducted on the efficacy of clearance treatments. This is an area of great interest and should be included on next year's agenda when research should be revealing some findings. Additional areas of research were also discussed.

Dr. Lenn R. Harrison, University of Kentucky

Presentation Title: Equine Leptospirosis in Central Kentucky

Dr. Harrison reviewed the Leptospirosis situation in Central Kentucky that occurs each year and how the state is trying to address it.

Dr. Lenn R. Harrison, University of Kentucky

Presentation Title: Integrated Animal Health Information Management for Kentucky Agriculture

Dr. Harrison gave an intriguing presentation on the establishment of a biosurveillance program in Kentucky. He outlined the programs goals and purpose, which are to integrate animal health information resources statewide, to better serve Kentucky agriculture by improving animal health situational awareness for farmers and by providing state-of-the-art software tools to manage disease outbreaks. The program intends to conserve state and industry resources by working together so that everyone can be prepared to handle an animal health emergency or agroterrorist event in Kentucky.

Dr. Kent Fowler, California Department of Food & Agriculture

Presentation Title: California Equine Herpes Virus-1 Update—Responding to Non-Program Regulatory Diseases

Equine Herpes Virus-1 is an emerging disease in the horse industry that has had a major impact on the horse industry for the past year or more. Dr. Fowler reviewed the types of EHV found in horses and what the associated symptoms are. He discussed the question of whether a mutant form of EHV – 1 is in play concluding that it is likely given that a change in one nucleotide in the polymerase chain results in an increased viral load with a much higher (up to 5 times) viral load. There was also discussion about efficacy of vaccine against this particular strain. The vaccine is not labeled for such a claim but it does look as though it may provide some protection.

The committee discussed the need for a standardized response plan for addressing EHV-1 outbreaks, noting with concern the disparate manners with which states respond to diagnosis of the disease. He noted that EHV-1 is not a program disease, although it is reportable, in CA. If the industry did want it to be a program disease, then authority and funding would be sought and regulations would be developed. The committee agreed that consistent communication and education are key to how the industry and state authorities respond to outbreak.

Dr. Josie Traub-Dargatz, Colorado State University

Presentation Title: NAHMS Equine 2005

Dr. Traub Dargatz gave a quick update to the committee on the progress and findings of the NAHMS Equine 2005 study.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

- ❑ Action Items based on the following Information, Education and Solutions.
 - Information example: Equine Health wants to send letter to USDA, APHIS asking that RFID be required for horses imported into the U.S. or that are returning to the U.S.
- ❑ Number of new resolutions accepted- 1
- ❑ Number of existing resolutions amended or revised- 6
- ❑ Number that were removed- 1

General Discussion:

None

Committee Session adjourned at 12:54 pm.