

**Equine Health
Committee Report**

2008 NIAA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 2, 2008



The Equine Health Committee met on Wednesday, April 2, 2008 from 8:00 am to 11:30 am EST, during the NIAA 2008 Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana with 35 people present. Ms. Kerry Thompson served as the Interim Chair and Dr. Robert Stout served as the Vice Chair.

The committee session focused on several current equine health issues. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to the current equine disease and industry issues:

Dr. Kent Fowler, California Department of Agriculture, presented "Equine Piroplasmiasis Topics." Dr. Fowler gave a report on the USAHA Infectious Diseases of Horses Committee's (IDOHC) Equine Piroplasmiasis Subcommittee. This subcommittee was formed to ensure that EP does not become endemic in the resident horse population of the U.S. Dr. Fowler gave a great overview of the disease and the issue at hand. Through USAHA resolutions, the subcommittee urges USDA to fund research on the treatment for elimination of the carrier state of EP, and to fund and conduct a serosurvey to establish the seroprevalence of EP in the U.S. Dr. Fowler concluded with details on the serosurvey and on research being conducted, as well as what the subcommittee plans to work on in the future.

Dr. Peter Timoney, University of Kentucky, presented "Recent Advances in our Understanding of Equine Herpesvirus-1 Myeloencephalopathy." Dr. Timoney gave an informative presentation on Equine Herpesvirus-1 Myeloencephalopathy, which he describes as an "evolving virus giving rise to an emerging disease." Dr. Timoney reported on the recent increase in the incidence of neurologic EHV-1 outbreak and increase in mutant strain detections above the wild type strain. He discussed the difference between strains and the relationship with the development of neurologic disease and the pathogenic consequences of the mutant strain. He concluded the presentation by discussing vaccination prospects for future disease prevention.

Dr. Josie Traub-Dargatz, Colorado State University & Centers for Epidemiology & Animal Health, presented "Update on Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy Project." Dr. Traub-Dargatz gave an overview of a project that is being conducted in an effort to gather information related to the management of Equine Herpes Myeloencephalopathy (EHM). For this project, many EHM experts as well as people who have mitigated recent EHM outbreaks have been interviewed, and a draft report has been developed and reviewed. Some topics that were covered in the interviews include the scope of outbreaks, challenges that were faced, and areas of needed research and education. The final report will be an important resource to those who will be involved in the mitigation of future outbreaks. Dr. Traub-Dargatz also reported on the ACVIM consensus statement on EHV that is being developed and is expected to be finalized during the summer of 2009. This consensus statement will cover all aspects of EHV, including outbreak response, diagnostic testing, vaccination, disease control, treatment and more.

Dr. Andrea Morgan, USDA/APHIS/VS, presented, "USDA Quarantine Protocol." Dr. Morgan gave a great presentation on the various regulations in place for importing horses into the U.S. and the quarantine policies and procedures. She reviewed the basic requirements for importing a horse into the U.S. and the three specific quarantine periods based on the country of origin. Dr. Morgan then discussed the quarantine facilities and protocols, including what precautions are taken when a horse shows signs of illness during the quarantine period. She concluded by mentioning some items that USDA is currently working on, such as a review of the Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) program and a review of USDA protocols to determine if any changes need to be made to further safeguard against foreign animal diseases.

Mr. Jack Kelly, 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games, presented "2010 World Equestrian Games." Mr. Kelly gave a quick introduction then showed a 5 minute video which gave a visual of what happens at the World Equestrian Games and the excitement that can be expected at the upcoming 2010 World Equestrian Games, to be held for the first time in the United States, in Lexington, KY. After the video, Mr. Kelly gave an overview of the preparations going into the games, including the construction of new facilities, working out equine health and importation issues, coordinating volunteers and ticket sales, etc. It was a great opportunity to get a sneak peak at what is expected to take place during the 2010 World Games, and the impacts it will have on the U.S. equine and general economy.

Dr. Dee Ellis, Texas Animal Health Commission, presented, "Future Equine Infectious Anemia Program Possibilities." Dr. Ellis reported on Equine Infectious Anemia and the future possibilities for the control of the disease. He gave an overview of what EIA is, with some history of the disease, its distribution in the U.S., and the current testing and control practices. Dr. Ellis continued by discussing the details of a possible program to further the control of EIA and lead to eradication of the disease. This proposed program includes identifying high risk states, increasing surveillance within those states, locate untested reservoirs, regionalizing testing requirements, and using a three-tiered laboratory system.

Dr. Tom Chambers, University of Kentucky, presented "Equine Influenza, Australia 2007." Dr. Chambers gave an informative report on the Equine Influenza outbreak that occurred in Australia in 2007. He gave an overview of the equine influenza virus and the 2007 outbreaks in Japan and Australia. Australia was historically free of EI, and because of this, vaccination was not practiced. Once the virus was introduced into the naive population, it spread exponentially through the equine population. Dr. Chambers discussed the timeline of the outbreak, the strategic vaccination campaign, control and eradication methods, and the new quarantine protocols which were put in place for horses from the US.

Old Business:

The responses from USDA/AHPIS/VS concerning particular 2007 NIAA Equine Health Committee resolutions were reported to the committee.

New Business:

- Dr. Geiger, Chair of the Animal Care Committee, discussed the possibility of having a resolution/position statement come from the Equine Health Committee regarding horse slaughter. The wording of this resolution could simply be that the NIAA supports the position of the American Association of Equine Practitioners regarding equine slaughter. Due to the small number of committee members in attendance during this discussion, it was decided that this issue will be further pursued after the NIAA Annual Meeting, possibly via conference call at a later date.
- No new action was taken.

General discussion: None

Committee Session adjourned at 12:30 pm.