

## Equine Committee Report

2014 NIAA Annual Conference

Tuesday, April 1, 2014



The Equine Committee met on Tuesday, April 1, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. during the 2014 NIAA Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, with about 21 people present. Dr. Carl Heckendorf and Dr. Tom Lenz served as Co-Chairs.

The committee session focused Media Crisis Management utilizing the Equine Disease Communication Center as a facilitator by Dr. Josie Traub-Dargatz, R.J.Layer, and Malissa Fritz. The following speakers presented relevant information pertaining to all of the above stated focus as well as the National Equine Health Plan:

**Mr. R. J. Layher – Director of Health and Regulatory Affairs, American Horse Council**, presented “National Equine Health Plan Update” The talking points for the National Equine Health Plan were as follows: 1. Protect the health and welfare of the US. Equine Industry. 2. Establish the role of the industry, state and federal officials when dealing with a disease outbreak. 3. Facilitate the continued movement of horses both domestically and internationally. 4. Maintain the economic viability of the equine industry.

**Josie Traub-Dargatz, DVM MS DACVIM – Colorado State University**, presented “Member of AAEP Task Force for EDCC Status of the Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC)”

### Status of the Equine Disease Communication Center

Effective management of equine infectious disease outbreaks requires preplanning and communication between all equine industry stakeholders including individual owners, venue managers, industry associations, SAHOs and USDA- APHIS-VS. A June 2010 *Impact of Equine Diseases* workshop, co-hosted by USDA- APHIS-VS and the American Horse Council (AHC), highlighted the need for the equine industry to have a comprehensive national equine health plan (NEHP) outlining prevention, diagnosis and control of equine infectious disease outbreaks and the responsibilities and roles of the USDA-APHIS-VS, State Animal Health Officials, practicing veterinarians and individual horse owners. An important part of NEHP is the comprehensive national Equine Disease Communication Center (EDCC) in order to provide accurate, real-time information on equine infectious diseases to regulatory officials and all segments of the industry. The goal is to control disease, ensure business continuity and optimize equine health. The American Association of Equine Practitioners in conjunction with the AHC devised a plan and initiated creation of the infrastructure for an EDCC, which is a pivotal part of a NEHP. For the NEHP EDCC to be effective, identification and coordination of communication roles of USDA-APHIS-VS, SAHOs and the horse industry are essential. Thus far a location for the EDCC website and call center has been identified. The AAEP has agreed to house the EDCC office and staff and the AAEP foundation is working to establish a mechanism to accept donations to specifically to fund the necessary staff and equipment purchase for the implementation of the EDCC. The AAEP has also agreed to provide subject expertise as needed to communicate about disease events. The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) passed a resolution in 2013 urging the United States Department of Agriculture, American Horse Council, American Association of Equine Practitioners, other equine industry representatives and the

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National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials to collaborate in the establishment of the Equine Disease Communication Center. Ongoing activities related to the EDCC include drafting of definition and roles for EDCC staff, drafting of disease and venue specific scenarios illustrating how the EDCC will be integrated into equine disease communication streams, determination of the content for the EDCC website, drafting of and development of a list of disease information to be included on the EDCC website.

For more information on the EDCC contact the AAEP office at 859-233-1968 or email [aaepoffice@aaep.org](mailto:aaepoffice@aaep.org).

**Ms. Malissa Fritz – Vice President of Weber Shandwick Farm & Food Advocacy Team**, presented “Social Media Crisis Response Training” Malissa Fritz gave a very well accepted interactive discussion on the use of social media in a crisis response. The intricacies of social media were discussed. Groups of state regulators, organization individuals, veterinarians and owners were given a scenario to develop a plan of how to use social media and the EDCC. The take home message of the presentation was: 1. The importance of building a “community of support” to ensure success with the EDCC, and how to go about accomplishing this task. 2. Create a better understanding of how to engage in social media before, during and after a crisis. 3. Practice the newly gained social media skills.

**Old Business: None discussed**

**General Discussion:** General discussion revolved around the need for the development of a National Equine Health Plan and the implementation of the EDCC. Animal identification and the need for a national data base for horses was discussed and agreed upon unanimously. The members felt that there should be a data base to house the microchip numbers of horses. An individual from USDA said that there was some discussion for VSPS to develop the data base. This was very well received. In addition, the data base would include import horses, horse with specific diseases such as Piroplasmiasis etc. There was also discussion to have the horses that were tested for EIA in the data base with permanent individual identification.

Committee session adjourned at 1:00 PM.