



Equine Disease Forum Summary and Next Steps



Disease Outbreaks

- Increasing threats due to movement of horses
- Current disease control measures are no longer adequate
- Future will require new methodologies, enhanced communications, and collaboration



Impacts of Disease

- Loss of use
- Death of affected horses
- Restrictions on equine movement
- Costs associated with treating horses
- Biosecurity and preventative measures
- Trade implications
- Economic impact



Role of USDA in Equine Health

- Support and infrastructure available
 - State coordination
 - Technical expertise
 - Diagnostic assistance
 - Approval of biologics
 - National surveys (NAHMS)
- Response to Equine Disease Outbreaks
- Very limited equine disease regulations
- Facilitate Trade of animals and animal products
 - Import Regulations, Quarantine facility oversight
 - Export Certifications
 - Export negotiations



Challenges of International Movement Regulations

- “Free from clinical evidence of diseases”
 - No additional testing unless medically necessary
- 42-48 hour hold- incubation of diseases
- Limited authority on exposed horses for non-regulatory disease ie strangles
- Differences among states for diseases of concern



Equine Health Roles of State Animal Health Officials

- Control and prevention of regulatory diseases in horses
 - Movement regulations
- Equine regulatory disease surveillance and monitoring
 - Conduct epidemiological investigations
 - Implement appropriate control measures for positive horses
 - Reporting of disease investigation findings
- Collaboration
 - Research/ Academia
 - Industry
- Outreach and education



Specific Challenges of State Animal Health Officials

- Increased number of equine disease outbreaks
- Limited equine expertise on staff
- Limited funding for equine programs
- Limited federal authority for certain equine regulatory diseases of concern
- Limited traceability of equines
- Communications with all of the equine Industry



Private Practitioner Role In Equine Health



- Provide expertise
- Advocate for the horse
- Early detection
- On farm disease control and prevention
 - Vaccination critical role
- Driver in acceptance of biosecurity
- Safeguards Human Health
- Liaison with regulatory officials
 - Reportable diseases, accreditation
- Drivers of research for enhanced diagnostics, treatments and control measures
- Collaboration with industry, regulatory officials, and academia
- Ensure profession is a health care provider not a risk factor for disease spread

Next Steps for Advancing Equine Practitioners Role

- Enhance communications on regulatory issues
- Focus on biosecurity services
 - Proposed AAEP “accreditation” sessions at annual meeting
 - Proposal event veterinarians could get a certificate for their skill set and use as a marketing tool.
 - People respect what they pay for
 - Enhance veterinarian role at the events



Industry Roles in Equine Health

- Be the eyes and ears in the industry
 - Contact State/Federal Officials if you suspect a reportable disease
 - Alert State/Federal of industry concerns
- Get involved and meet your State and Federal Officials
 - Provide expertise and experience
 - Provide industry perspective at the local level
 - Assist in dissemination of information
- Assist in protecting equine health
 - Promote and practice biosecurity
 - Educate fellow industry members on equine health issues
 - Support federal regulations for consistent management of equine diseases
 - Implement industry disease prevention measures
 - Ex. Requiring health certificates for shows or Coggins tests for race tracks



Equine Health Regulatory Concerns

- Limited ability to control disease
 - Untested populations
 - Illegal horse movements
 - Lack of funding for testing and tracing
 - Lack of traceability allowing disease spread
- Inability to provide adequate outreach to the equine industry
 - Segmented industry makes it difficult to reach every horse owner
 - Speed of social media vs speed of governmental agency outreach mechanism



Domestic Diseases General

- Farms/stables/hospitals/show grounds are high risk for outbreaks due to the high concentration of horses, significant movement of horses, variable vaccination protocols and limited biosecurity.
- Daily monitoring of horse health status, practicing good hand hygiene, implementing cleaning and disinfection protocols and utilizing vaccination protocols assist in protecting equine health
- Infectious status of a horse can't be assumed based solely on clinical presentation
- Biosecurity is considered too complicated and results in a lack of compliance.



Domestic Diseases Cont.

- Control and Prevention of diseases is through implementation of Best Management Practices.
- Identification of high risk groups for domestic diseases and understanding of disease transmission mechanisms will assist in development of appropriate disease prevention strategies.
- Increase immunity through vaccination when possible for at risk populations.
- Appropriate use of immunization requires an understanding of core versus at risk vaccines.
- Communicate with regulatory officials if disease warrants.



Challenges with Endemic Diseases



- Determination of diseases of importance
 - Social media determination vs diseases of high morbidity and high mortality
- Clinical vs Subclinical which is the higher concern
 - Challenge is most focus on the sick horse
 - Must use preventive practices to address the subclinical infected
- Infected unless proven otherwise
- Infectious does not mean contagious
- Limited data capture from outbreaks
- Lack of outbreak protocols – who to test, when to test
- Non-horse people as owners
 - Educate on abnormal and monitoring health
- Clinical horses and lack of confirmed diagnostics
 - Respiratory Bio surveillance Study only 26% cases had confirmed respiratory pathogen
- Lack of metrics to determine impact of disease
- Lack of ownership during an incident
- Lack of centralized database and disease outbreak research data

Evolution of Biosecurity

- Heightened awareness
- Educational tools
 - Equine Disease Communication Center
 - Biosecurity Calculator : Equine Guelph
 - Alberta Veterinary Medical Association and Alberta Equestrian Federation “The Equine Biosecurity Principles and Best Practices Guide.”
 - California’s Biosecurity Toolkit for Equine Events
 - Colorado’s Business Continuity Plan
 - AAEP’s Biosecurity Guidelines



Biosecurity Themes

- Everyone has a role
- Industry needs to take initiative
 - USEF paving the way with isolation plans
- Need to make biosecurity simpler
 - 10 commandments of biosecurity
 - 3 key points
- Utilize technology- apps and videos and emails
- Educate owner to demand more of event organizers
 - Create expectation in participants
- Event Organizers to market biosecurity plan



Equine Traceability



- Current Lack of Traceability
 - At a point now where we need to take responsibility
 - Health certificates don't really provide traceability as they are written destination
 - Health certificates variations in use and lack of use
 - Minimal checks: If increase compliance monitoring increase use.
- Lack of Individual identification
 - Jockey Club microchipping
 - FEI passports and microchipping
 - Colorado Smart Card
 - Arabian Horse Association Passport
 - Europe has a passport system
- Documentation of movements
 - Newer Technologies Available
- Electronic

Interstate Movement

- Movement requirements are set by the state of destination and vary from state to state.
- During disease outbreaks the movement requirements vary. For example animals from a Vesicular Stomatitis affected state may require an inspection within 72 hours of movement and a veterinary statement that the horse is free of disease.
- Enforcement of interstate movement regulations vary and are significantly dependent upon funding and personnel resources.
- Illegal entry of animals into a state is difficult to track. For example horses entering a show on a weekend are gone before anyone can investigate however, they could introduce disease and not be traced.



Interstate Movement

- Requiring health certificates to any equine commingling point such as equine event grounds, boarding stables, and breeding farms would protect the health of the US equine population.
- Equine passport are available in a select few states to assist in facilitation of horse movement. However, states are concerned with the lack of documentation of horse movements as itineraries are not being submitted in a timely manner (as required by the issuance of passport).



Interstate Movement Issues

- Question the role and value of a health certificate
- Need industry collaboration with compliance
 - i.e. check every 10th horse entering
 - Self certifications online
- Horse industry/owner needs incentive to track horse movement
- Added value to health certificate



International Movement

- The import requirements for the performance horse are not equivalent to other countries where US horses are competing. Risk of importation of a disease inherent in the international movement of horses.
- Nature and frequency of international horse movements influenced by changing trends in the horse industry that are primarily economically based.
- Acceptance of the reality that countries can differ widely with respect to their import requirements for horses imported for *a)* temporary or *b)* permanent residency purposes.
- Experience has shown need for greater awareness and vigilance of risks associated with importation of transboundary/foreign animal diseases.
- Need for greater industry awareness of the possibility of the emergence of a new/previously undiscovered infectious/non-infectious disease.



International Movement

- The importance of monitoring, surveillance and timely reporting of occurrences of certain diseases, endemic or other, cannot be over-emphasised.
- Harmonization of import requirements with respect to performance horses by different countries is a work in progress.
- The reliability of diagnostic tests carried out on horses imported into the USA should be reviewed to confirm they are maximally sensitive and specific for ensuring their freedom from those diseases at time of importation; this applies to horses imported for temporary as well as permanent residency purposes.
- Facilities at post-arrival quarantine premises in the USA should be reviewed from the viewpoint of affording the opportunity to maintain performance fit sports horses adequately exercised while in quarantine.



Equine Infectious Anemia

- Limited regulatory authority leads to inconsistency across states.
- High Risk Populations which need to be addressed are racing Quarter Horses, Illegally imported horses and the untested reservoir population.
- Future options include targeted surveillance, regional state classification, and establishment and enforcement of federal regulations.
- Challenges of identification of horses from the Coggins form. Does the Coggins form have benefits for the industry?



Perceptions of EIA

- Lack of overall awareness
- Grassroots may not buy into risks perceived or real
- Coggins is the cost of owning a horse
- Ancillary benefits may outweigh the changing of the requirements.
 - Allows interaction with horse owner on other health issues
 - Provides for a VCPR
- Minimal grassroots support to expand to larger program but possibly support targeted surveillance



Knowledge Gaps for EIA

- Incubation needle vs insect
- Need data on horse population to adequately assign risk to zones
- Industry seeking more feedback on problem areas/vets and owners
 - They can help drive change in practices via suspensions etc. Put rules in place.



Next Steps for EIA

- Target efforts on the high risk populations
 - Increase communications to industry sectors incl. Racing Commissions
- More consistency in state regulations
- Conduct research to identify targeted surveillance strategies.
- Support development of a federal rule for foundation of EIA control program



Equine Piroplasmosis

- Limited high-risk populations of horses in the U.S.
- Natural tick-borne transmission possible in certain geographic areas.
- EP transmission via iatrogenic means is causing ongoing transmission in the U.S. QH racing industry
- Mitigate iatrogenic risks with surveillance testing and educational outreach in high-risk equine populations
- Treatment continues to be a promising exit strategy.
- Surveillance in high-risk populations (QH racehorses) has been declining in recent years and may not be adequate to find the positive horses before they move on to other parts of the equine industry.



Perception of EP

- Bush track problem but spills over
 - Encourage states to focus on QH racing as a goal to eradicate EP
- Lack of track testing requirements
- Support for targeting testing/ surveillance
- Majority don't know and/or don't care
 - Not been an obstacle to trade or movement
- If EP is not managed and require testing domestically, US can't justify import testing
 - Need to keep up surveillance



Challenges for EP

- Potential for spill over into other disciplines
 - Future careers for racing QH
- Strains resistant to treatment
- Difficulties in identifying and testing high risk populations
- Illegal imports – ie Mexico
- Iatrogenic transmission



Next Steps for EP

- Target outreach and education to high risk
- Encourage track testing requirements
- Encourage industry support for EP control measures in high risk populations



Equine Herpesvirus Myeloencephalopathy



- Frequent and widespread movement of horses in the U.S. is a continued risk factor for significant EHM outbreaks.
- Biosecurity at both the individual horse and individual premises level is the most important method of prevention of disease spread.
- Widespread education and outreach within the equine industry is needed to help individual owners, trainers, event organizers, and equine facility managers understand and implement appropriate biosecurity to prevent spread of EHM.
- During an EHM outbreak, there is need for immediate transparency, notifications, clear guidance, and updated public information on the outbreak to inform decision making at all levels.
- Differences between states on reportability and response measures for EHM have been a challenge to adequate response and prevention of spread.

EHV-1 Perception

- All horses moving and commingling are at risk
- Can't predict what stressors will affect latency
- Lack of reporting
- Not reportable or not actionable—
veterinarians left to deal with it themselves.
 - Consensus EHM should be reportable
- Need to engage grassroots members in the discussions
- Ogden lessons learned needs to go to the lay person.



EHV Knowledge Gaps

- Why does it seem more prevalent in certain populations (ex. outbreaks in barrel horses vs. no outbreaks in breeding centers)?
 - What are the triggers
 - Risk factors to specific populations
- EHM vaccine
 - Do certain vaccine types provide protection from neurologic form or reduce viral shedding in face of an outbreak?
 - Is the vaccine helpful or harmful
- Why increase in cases?



EHV-1 Next Steps

- Increase research
- Discussions at the national level to make EHM reportable
- Enhance outreach and education with the lessons learned from Ogden
 - Get information to the lay persons
- Better engagement of private practitioners in outbreak prevention and response.



Overarching Themes

- Communication Challenges
- Lack of Federal Authority
- Lack of Consistency



Federal Communications

- Industry Feedback Mechanisms
 - USDA business plan
 - USDA EIA Document
 - USDA Stakeholder Meeting
 - Email Equine Lead :
Rory.O.Carolan@aphis.usda.gov
- USDA Output Mechanisms
 - Disease Reports
 - Incident based
 - Monthly
 - Annual



State Communications

- Feedback Mechanism
 - State Veterinarian
 - State level advisory committees/councils
- Output mechanisms
 - Newsletters
 - Social media
 - Disease Reports
 - Presentations



Industry Communications

- Sources of reliable regulatory disease information
 - Equine Disease Communication Center
 - State Animal Health Official
 - Monthly National Equine Conference Calls for State Federal and Industry
 - Hosted by Dr. Kent Fowler email kfowler@cdfa.ca.gov
 - US Animal Health Association
 - National Institute for Animal Agriculture
 - USDA website



Communication Next Steps

- Secure EDCC Funding
- Streamline information flow
- Capitalize on technology
- Better Utilization of Social Media
- Access grassroots industry members



Limited Federal Regulatory Authority= Lack of Consistency



- Disease Handling
 - Example EIA: Testing and investigating; adequate enforcement of documentation violations
 - Uniformity of disease control is a bigger need than eradication.
- Movement Controls
 - Health Certificate vs Passport
 - Coggins or no Coggins
- Confusion on state regulations— would zoning or regionalizing be any better
- Federal Equine Funding Needed

Lack of Federal Authority

Next Steps

- Prioritize Authority Issues
 - Diseases
 - Interstate Movement
 - International Movement
 - HHHP, Mexico, Canada, Temporary/Permanent Equine Import
- Garner industry support for federal regulations
- Recommend federal recommendations
 - USAHA resolution process
 - Industry lobbying process
 - Direct industry request to USDA



Industry Roles

- What are the current roles of the industry for protecting equine health?
- What areas could the industry play in the future?



Moving Forward

- Focus
 - Communication
 - Biosecurity
 - Consistency in Equine Disease Management
- Where do we go from here?



Questions/ Comments?





Protecting Equine Health is a Team Effort

Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so much.

- Helen Keller