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Equine Forum to Explore a Changing World, Technology, and the Horse Industry

Your veterinarian scans your horse's microchip, takes a photo with their phone, and since the horse is already in their electronic health record database, a form is populated automatically. The vet finishes updating it, signs it electronically and emails the necessary health certificate to you.

"That is where the industry is headed," Dr. Tom Lenz, member of the NIAA Equine Planning Committee and past president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners tells Truffle Media Networks' Dave Russell in a recent interview about the upcoming NIAA-hosted Equine Forum to be held January 17-18 in Denver.

The Forum will explore technology available today, and how it can be used to integrate record keeping systems and registries, and how they can be linked to health records.

The main purpose of the forum, according to Lenz, is to get everyone involved in the horse industry in the same room to get a broad perspective on the state of today's technology, its uses, and how it benefits, not only the individual breeder, the discipline associations and equine health officials, but also the individual horse owners and their horses. Presentations will be followed by 'think tank' discussions by the attendees, who can ask questions and express their opinions. Lenz is looking for attendance from a wide audience.

"This Forum attracts people who are in the forefront of the horse industry," says Lenz, including the people who are writing the regulations, leading the organizations, and developing the technology. Lenz would like to see a lot of horse owners there, as well.

The topic for this year's Forum, "**Advancing ID, Technology & Electronic Health Records**", is a timely choice. "Things have changed a lot in the horse industry. It's much more international now than it was in the past," says Lenz. "Permanent identification has become more important, not only for consumer confidence that it's the horse it's supposed to be, but for disease traceability."

There are a lot of misconceptions about microchips, says Lenz. "Ten or fifteen years ago, there was discussion about this same sort of thing, but the technology wasn't ready. There were issues then like the need for a universal microchip reader that have been resolved now." Inside the industry, several sectors are already using or are about to start using microchip systems for identification and tracking. In Europe, where horses have passports, horses are required to be microchipped.

"We are also going to include people from the small animal industry, the dog and cat sector, where they have been using microchip for permanent identification for years. They will tell us how that technology has worked for them, and where they see strengths and weaknesses."

"At the end of the Forum, we hope to come out with a plan as to the needs of the industry, the state of technology and how we want to move forward," concludes Lenz.

Listen to the entire interview [HERE](#). For more information on the agenda, speakers and registration for the NIAA Equine Forum, go to www.animalagriculture.org.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture provides a forum for building consensus and advancing proactive solutions for animal agriculture—the aquaculture, beef, dairy, equine, goats, poultry, sheep and swine industries—and provides continuing education and communication linkages for animal agriculture professionals. NIAA is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of disease that pose risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome food supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and well-being. NIAA members represent all facets of animal agriculture.

