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**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 21**

**Approved**

**SOURCE:**

**COMMITTEE ON EQUINE**

**SUBJECT MATTER:**

**State and Federal Equine Health Staffing Resources**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Across the country, state and federal agencies are facing staffing challenges including a shortage of veterinarians, recruitment and retention of qualified individuals, limited equine expertise and the expansive workload. The equine industry is impacted by these shortages specifically related to the expertise and resources necessary to facilitate the interstate and international movement of competition horses and to manage equine health issues at equine facilities. The United States (US) needs to address the staffing resource issues related to the very diverse growing equine population and the increasing number of equestrian events occurring here and internationally. For example, developing protocols to allow the utilization of accredited equine veterinarians to oversee disease outbreaks would ensure subject matter experts are addressing the needs of the industry. Additionally, equine subject matter experts on state equine advisory councils or working groups would provide the state animal health officials the opportunity for collaboration and communication on equine health issues challenging the state. Ensuring adequate staffing and subject matter expertise for equine health and movement issues in the US is critical. The economic success of the equine industry relies on the prompt and effective response to infectious disease outbreaks and the ability for US horses to participate in national and international events. State and federal agency collaboration with industry to address the identified staffing shortages and expertise gaps is essential for protecting and promoting the equine industry in the US.

**RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to develop mechanisms and protocols to utilize user fees to hire personnel with equine experience to address needs related to equine international movement. Furthermore, USAHA requests USDA-APHIS-VS to host listening sessions regarding international movement of equids and challenges.

Additionally, USAHA urges state animal health officials to engage equine industry subject matter experts and equine focused private practitioners by convening state level equine advisory groups, equine working groups, discussion groups, or task forces with a mission to protect and promote equine health in the states.



**2023 Resolution**  
127th Annual Meeting  
Oct. 12-18, 2023  
National Harbor, MD

**INTERIM RESPONSE:**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS VS continues to strategically evaluate staffing needs to ensure the availability of subject matter expertise for equine health and movement issues within our budgetary limitations. We look forward to continuing to engage and maximize communication with industry through our existing communication platforms, such as sector meetings and participation on various committees and working groups, such as the Equine Disease Communication Center Advisory Committee. VS is open to feedback about alternative engagement mechanisms to continue supporting and advancing communication and collaboration.