RESOLUTION NUMBER: 5 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON EQUINE

SUBJECT MATTER: Addition of Equine Piroplasmosis Polymerase Chain Reaction Test for Imported Equids

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RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association urges the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, Veterinary Services, National Center for Import and Export to require polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for any imported equid that has a non-negative or suspect result on a competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay test or complement fixation test for equine piroplasmosis. Furthermore, any equid that is PCR positive shall be classified as non-negative and remain under import quarantine protocols.

Background Information:

Equine piroplasmosis (EP) is classified as a foreign animal disease in the United States. Over the years, import testing requirements have been modified to identify acutely infected animals using the complement fixation test (CFT) and chronically infected animals using the competitive enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (cELISA). The testing protocol for domestic equids also incorporates a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. Any horse that tests positive by PCR is considered a case of piroplasmosis and must be managed under quarantine.

Currently, PCR is conducted in the background on some imported horse samples, but the results are not factored into post-import quarantine release requirements. cELISA tests for equine piroplasmosis are considered positive when the percent inhibition is 40.0 or greater. Recently, there has been an increase in the number of imported equids with repeat cELISA results between 35–39%. These non-negative horses have been released from quarantine, having met the negative CFT and cELISA requirements. However, in several cases, PCR tests were positive indicating that these equids are likely infected with the organism.

Because the domestic case definition includes PCR-positive horses, the United States Department of Agriculture has required that these animals be quarantined and managed by the state.