



AHC Changes Position on Federal EIA Rule Proposal

Introduction

In January, 2012, the AHC advised the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that it opposed the USDA's proposing a new federal EIA rule. At the time, the AHC did not consider a change was needed because a very small percentage of horses tested positive for EIA and the disease appeared under control. The AHC felt that the USDA funds, resources and staff time spent on drafting and proposing such a rule could be better spent on other more pressing equine issues.

Recent Developments Regarding EIA

Since June, 2015, a significant number of cases of EIA have been confirmed in California and the southwest, the majority involving horses engaged in illegal racing. This is of significant concern to the AHC, state authorities involved, and the industry. Many of the EIA reactors were also positive for Equine Piroplasmiasis. State authorities, and the AHC, are worried that some of these horses will very likely move into other areas of the U.S. after racing and could be responsible for spreading EIA.

Current Position on Proposal of Federal Rule

In light of these new circumstances, the AHC has advised the Department in a November 7, 2014 letter that it is no longer opposed to the Department's proposing a federal rule on EIA so that the industry, and others, can comment on it. That letter also asked that in the interim, the USDA address the recent problems with EIA in the southwest and how to best address EIA under the change in circumstances. The AHC also supported any effort to form an EIA working group that includes federal, state and industry representatives to address the new issues and asked to be involved.

APHIS VS convened the EIA Discussion Group in the spring of 2015 in an effort to determine the way forward. It was tasked to discuss the goals for addressing EIA in the U.S., examine current EIA strategies and regulations, identify gaps, and propose non-regulatory and regulatory options (or both) to address these gaps.

This discussion group addressed several areas related to management of EIA in the U.S.: Goals & Scope for EIA Control; ID and Documentation; Surveillance Strategies; Testing & Diagnostics; Stakeholder Support; and Alternatives to Regulation.

The findings from these discussions will be publicly available soon.

AHC Position

The AHC no longer opposes the publication of a federal rule on EIA so that comments can be provided by interested parties.