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American Horse Council - *Your Unified Voice in Washington*

AHCnews



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The AHC News is published monthly and provided to you as an AHC member benefit. Through AHC's network of organizational, small business and individual members, our news reaches 1M horse enthusiasts - please pass it along!

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Want to know how you can help the horse community in Ukraine but not sure where to start?

The Foundation for the Horse, the charitable arm of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), is now accepting donations that will make their way to those providing emergency relief and support, including veterinary organizations and the horses and animals

they care for. To make a donation now, visit:

<https://www.foundationforthehorse.org/impact/disaster-relief/>

The Foundation for the Horse has made enquiries with the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE) to see whether coordinated efforts are being planned to provide veterinary support for animals that are being brought across the Ukrainian border into neighboring EU countries and will publish further details if and when available. In the meantime, the Foundation for the Horse is accepting gifts as well as offering up information on other international groups providing aid. These organizations, including the [Vets for Ukraine](#) and the [International Fund for Animal Welfare](#), have published helpful information for people fleeing Ukraine with their animals and lists of organizations that are raising funds to support those both in and around Ukraine who are working to protect animals caught up in the conflict. Please note these organizations are not “Foundation-endorsed.” However, many are generally viewed as credible organizations by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe (FVE), that are poised to provide immediate help.

US Equestrian will be joining the FEI in their recently announced efforts to provide support to the equestrian community of Ukraine by establishing the USEF Ukraine Relief Fund. One-hundred percent of funds collected will go to the FEI solidarity relief fund and directly to those in need of support. The FEI is liaising closely with the Ukrainian Equestrian Federation (UEF) and neighboring countries to facilitate support. The USEF Board of Directors has committed to allocating additional relief funding. To make a tax deductible donation please visit the USEF Ukraine Relief Fund Donation and help horses page [here](#) or send a check to USEF Memo: USEF Ukraine Relief Fund.

2022 Horse Industry Directory Available

Each year AHC publishes the Horse Industry Directory which contains thousands of listings including equine publications, federal and state sources of information, breed registries and associations, show and sport organizations, racing and gaming organizations, and service providers. The HID also includes handy facts and figures about the industry, including breed registration numbers and trends, a guide to interstate health requirements, industry meetings and conference dates/locations and a synopsis of important legislative and regulatory happenings.

This may be found on AHC website in flipbook format or our searchable database. You may also email us at info@horsecouncil.org to a PDF version.

Horse Industry Directory



Regulatory Updates

AHC Meets with USDA-APHIS Leadership

American Horse Council members and staff met with the United States Department of Agriculture's Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Jenny Lester Moffitt, USDA-APHIS Administrator Kevin Shea, Deputy Administrator and Chief Veterinary Officer Dr. Rosemary Sifford and more last week to discuss the state of the equine industry and how USDA-APHIS is engaging with it. The issues that were introduced by the industry this year fell into four topics, USDA's staffing shortages, equine import process concerns, unsanctioned racing, and several items that are "on the horizon".

There were several issues that the industry attendees were appreciative of following the 2020 meeting, including increased collaboration with state animal health officials, monthly import/export stakeholder meetings, development of the 2021 Foreign Animal Disease Diagnosticians Drill for African Horse Sickness, the recent publication of the comprehensive equine import rule change including the AHC's request for CEM testing waiver extension for competition horses, and the cooperative agreement from USDA-APHIS National Animal Disease Preparedness and Response Program for \$176,960 with the Equine Disease Communication Center.

Staffing Shortfalls within USDA

Industry representatives shared their concerns with the USDA leadership regarding the perceived staffing shortages at VS, NIES, Animal Care, and the frustrations felt by stakeholders with the lack of equine experience present in new staff hired to facilitate equine issues. While recognizing the lack of available candidates with equine experience, several suggestions were made to address our concerns. Ideally, the USDA would reach out to industry regarding the solicitation of potential new hires so that we can make equine focused vacancies more widely known. Several suggestions, including contract employees, State partnerships, and/or deferring Veterinary Services responsibilities to vet techs with vet supervision (document support, animal caregiving, etc.) to expand services.

The concerns presented by understaffed import offices are that it creates animal release delays for animals in federal quarantine and delayed communications with needed stakeholders. In addition, the VS traceability system is stressed due to a continued sun-setting of positions within that program. We continue to highlight the lack of USDA presence at horse shows and sales under their regulatory responsibility to enforce the Horse Protection Act (HPA). The program received an increase to their budget that will hopefully be used to address these missed opportunities. USDA staff indicated that new technology will be an important component to assisting with better utilization of existing staff. Looking forward, there are industry efforts to introduce much need protocol changes regarding the handling of sick horses protocols that are needed, but can't be done with current staff availability.

Ongoing Equine Import Concerns

The AHC is continuing our efforts to improve international transport opportunities while protecting the health of our national horse herd. There continues to be concerns over the evaluation of animals who present a non-negative test result upon arrival into the United States. This issue has been greatly improved by the USDA's implementation of their 28 day testing protocol, however we encouraged the USDA to bring in external (to USDA) experts immediately at discovery of non-negative import

horse to advise on steps forward for each unique situation. These few situations arise because the Glanders and Dourine tests used are not utilizing the most recent technology available. While new testing is hard for the USDA to approve, they continue to hobble themselves by refusing to create and maintain a non-negative sample bank for development of new testing protocols and discovery of disease trends.

These issues are often halted because of the lack of funding available for investigatory efforts within the equine space. This is frustrating for stakeholders who are frequently told that their user fees are solely responsible for the support available to them. We requested an evaluation of the user fee system within equine surveillance and how equine health funds are/can be spent on import services as well as within the broader Veterinary Services program. While user fees have not been increased for many years, USDA costs have risen dramatically as the agency has increased what services are now billed for.

The American Horse Council continues to be concerned about the open trade relationship with Saudi Arabia as rumors have persisted that the country continues to experience cases of African Horse Sickness (AHS), a disease that would be devastating if introduced into the United States. Recently a Saudi Arabian report of AHS was published in an in-country journal. We encouraged the USDA to revisit their open trade status until our concerns can be addressed.

Unsanctioned Racing

Unsanctioned horse racing has been responsible for, or attributed to, every recent case of Equine Piroplasmiasis (EP) and the majority of Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) in the United States. Illegal movement of horses from Mexico allows animals infected with these diseases threaten the international freedom status we enjoy from EP and the hopeful eradication of EIA. We asked about what new steps are available to shore up this threat, and also what is the potential USDA response to the general threat posed by unsanctioned racing. The USDA is investigating the scope of the unsanctioned racing situation, but has not detailed any strategies in resolving this concern.

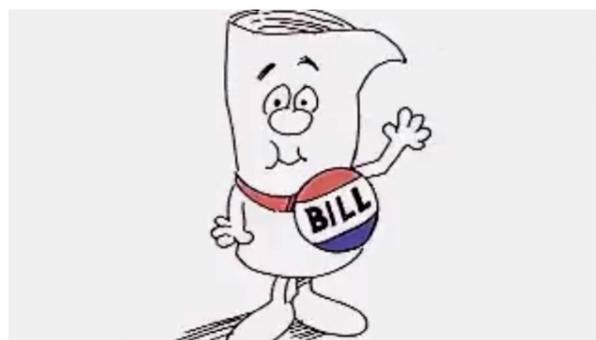
Looking Forward

Industry Representatives asked several questions of the USDA leaders present at the end of our meeting including;

- What is the status of the USDA's new Horse Protection Act rule change?
- Can we expect an upcoming NAHMS Equine Study, as we missed the expected 2020 release?
- How does the USDA plan to replace the "Five Year Business Plan" outreach?
- What plans does USDA have to prevent the spread of Japanese Encephalitis out of Australia?
- Is the High Health High/Performance Horse quarantine framework still in development?
- What is the status of planning efforts regarding the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles?

The AHC is grateful for the opportunity to share our concerns with APHIS leadership in this forum each year and continue to appreciate the collaborative relationship with the USDA.

If you have questions or comments regarding this or any of the AHC's regulatory efforts, please contact Cliff Williamson at cwilliamson@horsecouncil.org.



COURTESY APHIS' HORSEHOUSE BLOG

Legislative Updates

American Horse Council Coalition Activity (of which AHC is an active member)

H-2B Coalition – in a recent meeting of the H-2B Coalition, members discussed a letter from Members of Congress to US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and US Department of Labor Secretary Martin Walsh, urging them to provide urgent H-2B cap relief in order to address the critical shortages of seasonal labor. Specifically, the letter requests the Department of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Department of Labor, commit to utilizing the authority provided by Congress to release the total allowable number of additional H-2B visas for Fiscal Year 2022.

Outdoor Recreation Roundtable – recently the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable sent a letter to Senators Thomas Carper (D-Delaware) and Shelly Moore Capito (R-West Virginia) - Chairperson and Ranking Member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee respectively, thanking them for advancing legislation that would reauthorize the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The letter also requested that the recently introduced “*Rural Outdoor Investment Act*” be included in the reauthorization. The legislation would provide \$50 million a year in recreation and economic development funding to rural communities across the country with a focus on outdoor recreation infrastructure, planning for communities that want to create outdoor experiences, and business assistance.

Sound Horse Summit - in a recent Sound Horse Summit meeting – members received a brief report on the status of the Horse Protection Act (HPA) rule, and when the expected proposed rule may be released. The Coalition also discussed current efforts to advance the Prevent All Soring Tactics Act (PAST Act) – currently the House version has 252 co-sponsors and the Senate version (identical to the House) has 52 co-sponsors.

Sports Coalition – in a recent meeting of the Sports Coalition, activity and discussion gravitated around US sports relations with the countries of Ukraine and Russia, and sports tokens.

Horseracing Integrity Safety Act Update

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has approved the [Racetrack Safety rule](#) proposed by the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority after [a public comment period](#).

The Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act, includes a requirement that its rules (and any future modifications to those rules) must be submitted for approval to the FTC. The Act requires that the FTC approve submitted rules if it finds that they are “consistent with” the Act and the FTC’s procedural rules governing the submission process.

The [FTC’s procedural rule](#) provides that the FTC will publish the Authority’s proposed rules in the *Federal Register* for public comment if the submissions meet certain criteria. Under the Act, the FTC has 60 days from the date of publication to approve or disapprove the proposed rule.

The Equine Industry has Friends in Congress...

The American Horse Council published its Congressional Scorecard in January 2022, which is a snapshot of those lawmakers (House and Senate) who have displayed support for the equine industry by sponsoring legislation, cosponsoring legislation, working with the American Horse Council, and/or attending American Horse Council events. As a reminder...this is a list of those on Capitol Hill who have shown strong support for the industry...

Senate

Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyoming)
Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-West Virginia)
Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine)
Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho)
Senator Steve Daines (R-Montana)
Senator Kevin Kramer (R-North Dakota)
Senator Jerry Moran (R-Kansas)
Senator James Risch (R-Idaho)
Senator Mike Rounds (R-South Dakota)
Senator Kyrsten Sinema (D-Arizona)
Senator John Thune (R-South Dakota)
Senator Roger Wicker (R-Mississippi)
Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon)

House

Representative Jodey Arrington (R-Texas)
Representative Andy Barr (R-Kentucky)
Representative Sanford Bishop (D-Georgia)
Representative Ted Budd (R-North Carolina)
Representative James Comer (R-Kentucky)
Representative Henry Cuellar (D-Texas)
Representative Andrew Garbarino (R-New York)
Representative Michael Guest (R-Mississippi)
Representative Ashley Hinson (R-Iowa)
Representative David Kustoff (R-Tennessee)
Representative Debbie Lesko (R-Arizona)
Representative Billy Long (R-Missouri)
Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-Missouri)
Representative Ralph Norman (R-South Carolina)
Representative Scott Perry (R-Pennsylvania)
Representative Adrian Smith (R-Nebraska)
Representative Van Taylor (R-Texas)
Representative Glenn Thompson (R-Pennsylvania)

Gambling on Horse Racing in Georgia

A state Senate panel has passed legislation that would ask voters whether Georgia should expand gambling to allow horse racing in the state. Supporters say an expansion of the gambling industry could bring thousands of jobs and generate hundreds of millions of dollars to fund things such as education, health care or rural broadband. Conservative groups and religious organizations oppose expanding any form of gambling because they find it immoral and an addictive habit that breeds crime.

The Senate Regulated Industries Committee passed [Senate Resolution 131](#) recently to ask voters whether they support allowing horse racing, followed by the passage of [Senate Bill 212](#), which would establish a Georgia Horse Racing Commission tasked with licensing and regulating up to five racetracks in the state.

“I have a huge passion for horse racing,” said state [Sen. Billy Hickman, a Statesboro Republican](#) who breeds and races horses in other states. “At the same time as I got a huge passion, I’ve got to remember I’m a (certified public accountant) and things got to make economic sense to me for me to go forward.”

A recent study by Georgia Southern University, done at Hickman's request, said building three horse racing tracks in the state would create a \$1.28 billion industry with more than 8,500 jobs. A previous proposal called for the state to allow up to three tracks.

Proponents of expanded gambling have spent more than seven years trying to pass legislation that would allow Georgia voters to decide whether gaming should be expanded beyond the lottery, which was approved in 1992. Adding horse racing to the types of gambling available in the state would require Georgians to approve a constitutional amendment allowing the expansion. Constitutional amendments need two-thirds of each chamber to clear the General Assembly and then a majority vote in an election.

If voters approve the gambling expansion, SB 212 would require racetracks to pay the state a 3.75% tax on the total money wagered at their facilities. That money would be used for gambling addiction services, education, health care and addressing rural development needs. Bettors could wager on live races happening at one of the Georgia tracks or another track being simulcast at the Georgia facility. No other form of gambling, such as slot machines, would be allowed.

Contact Mark Riso at mriso@horsecouncil.org for more information

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