

Federal Issues and National Initiatives

American Horse Council

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A M E R I C A N
H O R S E C O U N C I L

Please find enclosed an update regarding high priority legislation and regulatory issues monitored by the American Horse Council (AHC).

It's important to note that at any given time there are hundreds of bills that contain language that could potentially affect the horse industry. If interested, we are happy to provide a legislative summary to illustrate the diversity of the issues.

We have also provided progress reports on key industry initiatives championed by AHC.

Don't hesitate to contact AHC should you have questions or need clarification on any of the content provided.

Federal Legislative Initiatives

The American Horse Council tracks, monitors, and advocates on legislation important to the equine community. Below is a synopsis of legislation, policy proposals, and regulations that were of significance to the Council during the 117th Session of Congress.:

Small Business Succession Planning Act H.R. 971 - This bill requires the Small Business Administration (SBA) to establish a program to assist small businesses with developing and implementing business succession plans. The bill also provides a tax credit for a business that establishes a succession plan or successfully carries out such a plan. To conduct the program, the SBA must develop and make publicly available a toolkit to assist small business with succession planning. **(Status: Referred to House Committees on Small Business and Ways and Means)**

- **Expansion of the Office of Advocacy – Small Business Administration (SBA) H.R. 6454** - Another bill will expand the Office of Advocacy within the SBA to include small business in the international world. The Office of Advocacy serves as a watchdog for small business within the U.S. federal government. **(Status: Passed House. Referred to Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship)**
- **National Service Animals Memorial Act H.R. 6353** - This bill authorizes the *National Service Animals Monument Corporation* to establish a commemorative work on federal land in the District of Columbia to commemorate the heroic deeds and sacrifices of service animals and handlers of service animals in the United States. The corporation shall be solely responsible for the acceptance of contributions for, and the payment of the expenses of, the establishment of the commemorative work. Federal funds may not be used to pay any expenses for the establishment of the commemorative work. **(Status: Passed House. Referred to Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources)**
- **Resolution Thanking Service Animals and their Handlers H. Res. 935** - This resolution recognizes and thanks service animals and their handlers who serve the United States in times of war and peace and supports the creation of an annual process to nominate animals for the *Medal of Bravery* and *Distinguished Service Medal*. **(Status: Referred to House Committee on Armed Services)**

Federal Tax Policy

Estate Tax

Repeal of the “Estate Tax” has been a target for family-owned businesses for years. Last year, AHC joined forces with diverse allies ranging from the American Farm Bureau Federation to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce through the Family Business Coalition, to preserve higher exemption rates for the estate tax and breaks for small businesses included in the 2017 tax reform law. Congress attempted to include rolling back tax flexibilities for small and family-owned companies in the infrastructure package, and in the “Build Back Better” legislation. These

provisions included lowering the thresholds on the estate tax and eliminating the Section 199A deduction for small businesses organized as pass-through entities. The “Build Back Better” legislation narrowly passed the House and died in the Senate late in 2021.

Three bills to repeal the estate tax have been introduced in the 117th Congress. In the Senate, S. 617 was introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD) and had thirty-six cosponsors (referred to the Senate Finance Committee). In the House, H.R. 822 was introduced by Congressman Robert Latta (R-OH) with four cosponsors, and H.R. 1712 was introduced by Congressman Jason Smith (R-MO) with 155 cosponsors – both bills were referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. No action was taken.

Equine Tax Fairness Act

In November 2021 (117th Congress), Congressman Andy Barr (KY-06) reintroduced legislation to incentivize investment in Kentucky’s signature equine industry. H.R. 5833, the “Equine Tax Fairness Act” would make the three-year depreciation schedule permanent for racehorses, regardless of their age when put into service. Additionally, this legislation would have reduced the holding period for equine assets to be considered long-term capital gains, putting them on a level playing field with other similar assets. Currently, Congress must reauthorize this provision in the tax law on a temporary, year-to-year, annual basis. H.R. 5833 was referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means. No action was taken.

Congressman Barr’s bill was endorsed by the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA), the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association, the Jockey Club, the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, Keeneland, and the American Horse Council.

Labor Policy and Guest Worker Visas

Immigration policy has been described as the ‘third rail’ of politics. Fraught with complications and controversy, immigration bills quickly extract political costs for both sponsors and their parties. Despite bipartisan efforts in both the House and Senate, reforms to guest worker programs relevant to the equine industry failed in the 117th Congress. The industry relies on two major guest worker programs managed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), specifically the H-2A and H-2B programs. H-2A addresses agricultural workers. H-2B visas are granted to foreign non-agricultural temporary workers.

H-2A Guest Worker Visas – Attempts in 2022 to reform and enhance the temporary guest worker program failed. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) offered a last ditch effort and proposed the “Affordable and Secure Food Act” in mid-December 2022. The legislation would have created a new immigration status for migrant farmworkers. It also would have expanded the H-2A visa program to year-round employment opportunities, changed the application process, mandated electronic verification, and capped some wage increases. Bennet specifically added the equine industry as a beneficiary to attract bi-partisan support.

Bennet’s bill was modeled on a House bill from last year, “The Farm Workforce Modernization Act” that passed the House with Republican support. Senator Bennet’s effort did not garner sufficient support to move forward.

Last year, Senators Lindsay Graham (R-SC) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) introduced S. 2443, a bill to expand eligibility of additional job categories within the H-2A program. AHC worked with the Senate Judiciary Committee (committee of jurisdiction) staff to include a provision to clarify the definition of “agricultural labor” to cover certain equine workers, among other job categories. S. 2443 did not move out of committee.

H-2B Temporary Non-Agricultural Workers: The horse industry and its allies advocated for H-2B flexibility on two tracks: the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 appropriations process to address short-term labor demand; and authorizing legislation to codify flexibility. AHC joined the H-2B Workforce Coalition Steering Committee, a consortium of industry associations throughout the United States that came together to protect American workers by ensuring American small and seasonal employers have access to legal short-term temporary workers during peak business periods. In late December 2022, negotiations among Coalition members stalled over drafting language. Efforts to proceed were halted.

The American Horse Council and its allies also worked with Congressman Henry Cuellar (D-TX) on the “Returning Worker Exception Act of 2021” (H.R. 3897). This bill would have codified inclusion of a “Returning Worker Exemption (RWE)” for the H-2B program. Incorporation of RWE into legislation would use a similar benchmark Congress has deployed in the past to effectively double the number of H-2B visas through annual spending bills. This legislation did not advance.

There is better news on the regulatory front as the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Labor issued a temporary final rule that makes available 64,716 temporary nonagricultural worker visas for Fiscal Year 2023. These additional H-2B visas are for U.S. employers seeking to petition for additional workers at certain periods of the fiscal year before September 15, 2023.

Equine Assisted Services (EAS) Programs

Last year, Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY) offered an amendment to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 spending bill for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) that would provide significant funding for equine assisted services (EAS) within the VA’s Adaptive Sports Grant Program. For four consecutive years, Rep. Barr’s EAS provision has passed the House of Representatives, translating into allocation of significant funds for EAS. For FY2019 through FY2021, Congress allocated \$1.5 million to EAS for the Adaptive Sports Program. Congress has done so for FY 2022. Data shows that 21 Veterans take their lives every day in the USA. Only fourteen of those interacted with the VA in the previous two years.

Federal Lands

As was previously reported, in 2020, Congress passed, and President Trump signed the “Great American Outdoors Act.” The law has two major components, fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 billion per year and providing \$9.5 billion over five years (\$1.9 billion annually) to address a maintenance backlog at American national parks. The law is heralded as the “most significant conservation legislation (enacted in nearly a half a century). Along with the Great American Outdoors Act, the American Horse Council continues to advocate for passage of legislation that will increase access to public trails for equine enthusiast.

The Senate Energy and Commerce Committee held hearings late last year on a package of federal land and recreation bills. Only one bill, S. 3266 saw advancement but did not pass out of Senate.

- [S. 1229](#), to modify the procedures for issuing special recreation permits for certain public land units and for other purposes (Simplifying Outdoor Access for Recreation Act).
- [S. 1269](#), to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to complete an interagency report on the effects of special recreation permits on environmental justice communities and for other purposes (Environmental Justice in Recreation Permitting Act).
- [S. 1616](#), to provide exceptions from permitting and fee requirements for content creation, regardless of distribution platform, including digital or analog video and digital or analog audio recording activities, conducted on land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior (Federal Interior Land Media Act).
- [S. 1874](#), to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on Federal land and to increase opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners and for other purposes (Recreation Not Red Tape Act).
- [S. 2258](#), to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Parks, Jobs, and Equity Program to support job creation, economic revitalization, and park development for communities impacted by COVID–19 (Parks, Jobs, and Equity Act).
- [S. 2886](#), to amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the donation and distribution of capes, horns, and antlers from wildlife management activities conducted on National Park System land (Cape and Antler Preservation Enhancement Act).
- [S. 2887](#), to codify the existing Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program of the National Park Service and for other purposes (Outdoors for All Act).
- [S. 3264](#), to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop long-distance bike trails on Federal lands and for other purposes (the Bike Over Long-distance Trails Act).
- [S. 3266](#), to improve recreation opportunities on, and facilitate greater access to, Federal public land, and for other purposes (Outdoor Recreation Act). (Status: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar. No other action.)

Horse Camp Working Group – In 2021, AHC launched a “working group” to address a lack of space for equestrians on campgrounds located on public lands. During the pandemic, many Americans took advantage of outdoor spaces, leading to a surge in demand, especially from motorists, and crowding riders from equestrian-designated sites. The working group includes

representatives from state chapters of Back Country Horsemen of America (BCHA), the Equine Land and Conservation Resource (ELCR), and the American Endurance Ride Conference (AERC), among others. The working group has engaged personnel from the National Forest Service to discuss best practices related to trail use. A USDA white paper has been designed and is now in circulation.

“State Expert” Working Group – Although AHC represents the horse industry before the federal government, which does not stop state level issues from creating challenges for the industry. To better serve members confronting state-specific policies, whether it is a trails issue arising in a state park or animal welfare regulation, AHC has identified leaders from state-level equine groups that include representatives from Indiana, Iowa, Oregon, Washington State, West Virginia, and Texas, among others. To leverage resources, representation in the working group reflects geographical diversity.

PAST Act, Horse Protection Act (HPA) Amendments Move Forward But Not Adopted

Efforts to prevent the continued practice of injuring a horse's limb to produce a higher gait that may cause pain, distress, inflammation, or lameness was passed by the House of Representatives. HR 5441, the PAST Act (Prevent All Soring Tactics), garnered 304 Yeas and 111 Nays. It passed over to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

The Senate version of the PAST Act, S. 2295, has 52 cosponsors and was also assigned to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Neither bill made it to the finish line.

The PAST Act has a history of support in Congress, but not success. In the 116th Congress (2019-2020), the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly in favor of the “U.S. Senator Joseph Tydings Memorial Prevent All Soring Tactics (PAST) Act” by a vote of 333 to 96. This reflects the first time the PAST Act had ever received a vote on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. Unfortunately, the Senate version stalled, and the bill died at the end of the 116th Congress.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is also moving forward to abolish the practice of soring. On September 2, 2022, USDA sent a proposed rule to the White House Office of Management and Budget. Assuming the proposal receives support, it will be published, and the USDA will open a public comment period. Presumably, the new proposed rule reflects findings by a National Academies of Sciences study which identified new and emerging approaches for detecting pain and use of the scar rule in determining compliance with the Horse Protection Act.

Much like the congressional initiatives, the regulatory path to prevent horse soring also experienced a bumpy past. The USDA promulgated regulations in early 2017, only later to be suspended by the Trump Administration.

Saving America's Forgotten Equines Act 2021

In May 2021, Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Congressman Vern Buchanan (R-FL) introduced H.R. 3355, the "Save America's Forgotten Equines" (SAFE) Act of 2021. The legislation would permanently ban the slaughter of horses for human consumption in the United States as well as prohibit the export of live horses to Mexican and Canadian slaughterhouses to be processed and then sold as meat products overseas. The bill had 225 cosponsors but was removed from the hearing docket by the Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee due to a lack of consensus among Committee members. Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers instructed staff to convene a group of stakeholders for further consideration. AHC participated in the stakeholder group as an impartial mediator.

Lawmakers have introduced bills every year in Congress since 2001 to outlaw slaughtering horses; none have passed. Slaughter of horses for human consumption is currently illegal in the United States due to a temporary budgetary action subject to annual congressional review. There is no federal law to prohibit the transport of horses across American borders for slaughter in Canada or Mexico. AHC has no formal position on this legislation as our members are split on the issue. AHC staff will continue to monitor legislation and try to develop strategies to mitigate effects on the industry should the Act be implemented in a future Congress. For example, if SAFE was enacted, additional horses each year would need to be cared for by U.S. rescues and sanctuaries. AHC has been collecting data on U.S. rescues and sanctuaries since 2018 to determine their capacity to take on more horses as well as the best approaches to aftercare.

Horse Racing Integrity Act (HISA)

As expected following passage from the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, President Joe Biden on Dec. 29 signed into law a \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill that among its many items contained legal clarifying language related to the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority and the act that authorized it. HISA was created to implement national, uniform rules in Thoroughbred racing. The first of HISA's two programs, the Racetrack Safety Program, had already gone into effect in July of this year. It was HISA's second program, the Anti-Doping and Medication Control Program, that was placed on hold. The ADMC program was originally slated to go into effect Jan. 1, 2023, but its implementation, even with the passage of H.R. 2617, remains delayed.

Two years after first being signed into federal law in 2020 by President Donald Trump, HISA was ruled unconstitutional Nov. 18 by the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. The ruling stated that HISA, a private entity, was not subordinate to the Federal Trade Commission. Soon after the ruling, the FTC issued an order disapproving the proposed Anti-Doping and Medication Control rule submitted by HISA.

With the new HISA-clarifying language added, the entity provides more authority for the Federal Trade Commission to "abrogate, add to, and modify the rules of the Authority."

Legislation to delay implementation of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority until January 1, 2024, was offered by Representative Lance Gooden (R-TX-5). It was referred to the Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce. No further action was taken. There are

legal challenges to HISA which continue to work their way through the courts.

Omnibus Budget Bill

Congress approved a \$1.7 trillion funding bill for Fiscal Year 2023 which was signed into law by President Biden. The bill provides funding for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies and programs including \$35 million for animal welfare activities covered under the Animal Welfare Act and the Horse Protection Act. It also contains language authorizing the Federal Trade Commission to modify its oversight of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act.

Regulatory Efforts

USDA/NASS Equine Census

At AHC's October 28th, 2021 virtual fly-in, AHC staff repeatedly told congressional members, House and Senate Ag Committee representatives, and USDA that the equine industry is consistently underrepresented in the USDA census data (reflecting only about 1M horses, instead of AHC's Economic Impact Study number of 7.2M horses in the US) - making that large gap in numbers critical to address for future changes to the Farm Bill. AHC Staff met with USDA-NASS in March to establish a proposed budget for a new equine population census. The Farm Bill is an important part of the USDA's program funding, and the equine industry is looking to include more provisions for better horse census numbers. AHC would like to see the USDA find a better solution to this problem, and better realize the equine population in the United States.

AHC staff have begun the process to address this legislatively as well, which resulted in recommendation language being included in the 2023 Omnibus language and a commitment from both majority and minority leadership on the House Ag Committee to pursue funding for an equine census in the next budget cycle.

EPA's Fly Spray Ban

The American Horse Council submitted written comments to the Environmental Protection Agency's (Agency) Proposed Interim Decision (PID) involving application methods for the insecticide pyrethrin and two synergists, MGK-64 (MGK) and Piperonyl butoxide (PBO). After decades of use, we know these products to be safe, effective and absolutely essentially to the

management of key insect pests in barns and animal spaces, critical to animal welfare and rider safety while in use, worker exposure is far less than presented in your documentation, and non-worker exposures are almost eliminated due to the biosecurity and safety concerns ever-present at these facilities. The AHC collaborated on comments submitted with several other entities in supporting the continued safe and wise use of these products.

Current Industry Use

Fly control in equine facilities is fundamental to the health, care and use of the animals present. You have received comments from State Animal Health Officials, affiliated livestock groups, entomologists, and the United States Department of Agriculture all speaking to the health concerns you would be making worse by limiting our respective industry's access to the tools in our Implemented Pest Management (IPM) toolbox. Pyrethrins used with the synergists, PBO or MGK-264, (pyrethrin +) is the core foundation of many of the fly control programs in use today at animal agriculture facilities. This is because pyrethrin + is the most effective option available and has decades of use history proving its safety and efficacy.

These are the most effective and safe products for controlling the adult fly populations without the potential for development of resistance. Other products or IPM tools are used in conjunction with pyrethrin + to control insects, but all IPM's in the US equine industry utilize pyrethrin+ products in a method your PID eliminates. In cases of the federally regulated diseases Equine Infectious Anemia, Vesicular Stomatitis, and Equine Piroplasmiasis, USDA protocols require vector mitigation measures including direct application of insecticides labeled for use on horses be implemented as part of the disease response. The American Association of Equine Practitioners' ectoparasite guidelines for veterinarians recommend pyrethrins and/or PBO as the most widely available products for safe and effective control of ectoparasites on horses.

The most common modes of application in the equine industry are through trigger pump sprayers and misting systems. Misting and spraying methods of application are essential due to the nature of equine behavior, human-horse interactions, and methods of housing/care. Trigger pump sprayers are a ubiquitous component of our industry that stands alone in its place as a critical part of IPM. Horses are easily frightened and have to be trained at an early age to accept trigger pump spray bottles and are not as ready to acclimate to other methods of application. Large sprayers, aerosols and wipes are quite triggering for horses, and as such have not found a foothold in our IPM models.

Misting systems are growing in use throughout the animal agriculture due to their lower application costs, reduced labor requirements, and the flexibility and precision they allow in application times, locations and amounts. These systems have been in place within the horse industry for decades. These systems effectively limit human exposure to the pyrethrin + by limiting the amount of hand application. The protections provided by these systems is critical to the usefulness of our industry's infrastructure.

Pyrethrin + works quickly and has been used for decades without indications of resistance development, and it degrades rapidly without leaving any problematic residue to further increase the risks of resistance developing. The alternative products available and labeled for these uses are either far less effective, require several more applications, or would inevitably drive resistance among the adult fly breeding population. The common IPM methods in use today often involve the use or encouragement of beneficial parasitic wasps at facilities; pyrethrin + is used because it provides adult fly control where the product quickly degrades with no surface residue reducing or eliminating risks to the wasp population.

Worker Exposure

We contend that EPA's assumptions for material handled in treating horses is a large over-estimate. In EPA's revised assessment, we also note that 'veterinary/groomer' scenario does not pose any occupational risks of concern. We contend that even though two bottles per day is already a large over-estimate on typical usage, this use pattern is more in line with the typical practices of horse owners than the direct animal treatment assumptions of 30 animals treated per day at a rate of 0.03 lbs. ai/animal for pyrethrin+. This estimate far exceeds any reasonably likely treatment scenarios for horse caretakers due to practical time constriction associated with the work of trainers, caretakers, or other boarding stable employees working with horses. Most caretakers would not have time to treat (and work) more than 5-6 horses per day.

Further, the amount of material applied per animal would never approach 0.03 lbs. ai of pyrethrin+ for all animals, much less single animals. An average consumer intended 32 oz spray bottle (of a 0.1% pyrethrin+ product) results in use of about 0.5 fluid ounces of product per horse per day. This estimate corresponds to 0.0003 lbs. pyrethrin+ applied per animal. Even assuming a 5 times stronger product being used (0.5% pyrethrin+) yields an estimate of 0.0015 lbs. ai applied per animal. This means that EPA's estimate of 0.03 lbs. ai/animal for pyrethrin+ is between 20-fold and 100-fold higher than actual application rates used by animal caretakers for direct daily treatments to horses.

No workers in any horse boarding or care facilities would be treating more than 5-6 animals per day, noting that simultaneous treatments of >10 animals per day would instead be done using automated barn misting systems, which will be discussed in more detail later in our comments. Traditional daily care of a horse that includes application of pyrethrin+ would also include the use or exercise of that animal, which would limit the opportunity to interact with and treat more than 5-6 animals per day.

We contend that between EPA's large over-estimates on handling assumptions for workers treating horses (both in the number animals assumed treated per day and pounds ai of pyrethrin+ assumed to be applied per animal) and the very high benefits associated with such products, EPA would be well-supported in retaining the use of trigger pump spray bottle products for use on horses without additional mitigation. However, if still EPA believes that some form of mitigation will be needed, stakeholders noted that a reasonable handling limitation on labels (e.g., "do not apply more than one bottle per day of this product") would be workable and practical for horse caretakers and allow for continued access to these critically important products.

Numerous products registered for residential use sites, including pyrethrins-based total release foggers, contain label statements that protect both users and bystanders. In discussion with retail product manufacturers, several are amiable to similar label statements requiring product use in well-ventilated areas would be practical and workable for use on pyrethrin+ trigger spray bottle products used by horse owners.

More generally, we urge EPA to recognize that horse owners already use a wide variety of FDA-labeled animal care and veterinary products and assume numerous occupational risks in the ownership and care of horses. We suggest that for practical purposes, spray-bottle pesticide applications to horses fall clearly within the realm of occupational exposure and not residential exposure, though we understand the sensitivities and legal uncertainties this space presents to EPA.

Bystander Exposure in Stables

It is widespread practice in all large equine operations to practice strict biosecurity practices. It is extremely rare for any person not working at a facility to be allowed entry into a building, and if it happens it is only under controlled circumstances that involve staff supervision. A critical issue facing our industry's facility management includes the risk to bystanders presented by the animals often erratic behavior. Liability concerns surrounding bystander safety have fundamentally change the relationship horse owners have with the general public, and the extends to allowing bystanders within the immediate area surrounding an animal's reach, which is significant. Any estimates of non-worker exposure to the pyrethrin + products used in the animal houses should take these points into account.

Conclusion

The PID mentions the EPA's conclusion that cancellation of these products would not result in significant loss of efficacy or economic impacts for users. We empathically disagree with this assumption, and we have successfully relayed our concerns. The comments received by the EPA resulted in their decision to delay any decision until 2024. The AHC will continue to work with the industry, the USDA and the larger Livestock industry to prevent this critical product from being taken away from horse owners, riders and caregivers.

Rodenticides

The American Horse Council has been following potential changes by the US EPA to regulations concerning the application of rodenticides. The EPA is intending to complete a registration review of several substances used as commercially applied rodenticides. The registration review of rodenticides is completed on a routine basis every 15 years.

Reviews are intended to assess potential risk to humans or the environment during common use application. Potential impact from reviews are increased label restrictions, changes to product availability, and updates to recommended use. A full table of rodenticides with proposed decisions can be found in the EPA Notice of Availability.

The AHC does not perceive our industry significantly uses professional and commercially applied rodenticides. However, we are working with the Ag coalition, feed association and

retailers like tractor supply. We are going to submit a letter to get a 60-day extension. We think we have till the end of January to submit comments on EPA proposal, but several of the reference documents EPA mentions are missing.

While we may not use a lot of commercial professionally applied rodenticides, the proposal will reclassify anything that is not consumer size (<4lbs) to 'restricted use' - meaning they have to be applied by state certified licensed applicators. Consumers will only be able to purchase small bait single use products.

Perhaps this may have bigger impacts on show grounds/fair grounds, other venues? Also, there might be bigger impacts for working farms that are also growing hay, crops, have other livestock and horses. We have requested comments from AHC members by 12/31/2022.

USDA's Import Rule Changes

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) sought public comments on proposed amendments to its import regulations for horses. These proposed amendments would better align their regulations with international standards and allow both APHIS and the equine industry more flexibility for permitted imports, while continuing to mitigate the risk of bringing equine diseases, such as contagious equine metritis (CEM), into the United States. The proposed regulations also provide APHIS with more regulatory authority to enforce standards for transporting horses. The official announcement and links to comment are found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/29/2021-25613/import-regulations-for-horses>

These amendments, which touch on USDA documentation, CEM, VEE, Screwworm, shipping container transport, castration, and several country-specific import changes include.

- The regulations contain special provisions for the importation of horses that have been temporarily exported to a region where CEM exists. Currently, horses exported from the United States, or another region not known to be CEM-affected are allowed to spend up to 60 days in a CEM-affected region and be re-imported into the United States without having to undergo CEM testing, provided certain conditions are met. They are proposing to amend the regulations to extend the temporary export period to 90 days, while maintaining the same separation and documentation requirements.
- standardize requirements that CEM testing samples from stallions be collected by an accredited veterinarian.
- add clarifying language that the day after the date of breeding should be considered the first day of CEM quarantine protocols.
- amend the regulations to state that test mares used for CEM testing must be marked with the letter "T, or other permanent identification approved by APHIS"

- States must agree to provide oversight during the test breeding of CEM quarantined stallions.
- They are proposing to add horses transiting through regions APHIS considers to be affected with CEM would be required to apply for an import permit and fulfill all other conditions listed in § 93.304(a) that are currently only required of horses imported directly from these regions.
- They are proposing to add the phrase “or other attestation regarding the health of the animals” to this sentence in order to further clarify the nature of the information that APHIS may require. Such additional attestation may include requiring certain subsets of horses to provide certification that the horses have not been exposed to other pests or diseases beyond the diseases already addressed in the health certificate, if necessary.
- They are also proposing to clarify that the provisions apply to horses intended for quarantine at Federal quarantine facilities as well, in order to reflect current practices more accurately.
- They are proposing to clarify current health certification regulations to increase compliance. This includes requiring that certifications are prepared and issued directly from the national government of the region of origin or annotated by the national government of the region of origin to indicate how the documentation may be verified; requiring that origin and destination addresses are listed on the certificate; and requiring identifying information regarding the horse or horse test specimens, importer, and exporter are listed on the health certificate.
- They are also proposing to require that, if applicable, health certificates confirm that the horse has not been castrated during the 14 days preceding exportation. They would also require that castrated horses be accompanied by a certificate of castration.
- Additionally, they are proposing to require that horses be accompanied by documentation stating that a pre-export examination occurred within 48 hours of the horse's export in order to further ensure that horses imported into the United States are free of pests and diseases of livestock and fit to travel at the time of export.
- Currently, horses from Canada temporarily imported into the United States may enter through any Canada-U.S. land border port that allows entry of animals without an APHIS inspection, whereas horses from Canada permanently imported into the United States must receive an inspection prior to entry. They are proposing to amend the regulations to remove distinctions between temporary and permanent import by removing the requirement that horses presented for permanent importation receive an inspection prior to entry. Requirements that currently apply to both temporarily imported and permanently imported horses would remain the same; horses would be allowed to enter the United States when accompanied by an official, Canadian Food Inspection Agency-endorsed health certificate issued within 30 days of the date of entry into the United States and

when there are negative results of a test for equine infectious anemia taken within 180 days of entry.

- They would also clarify existing policy by adding to § 93.319 that all horses imported from or transiting Central America and the West Indies are required to have obtained an import permit in accordance with § 93.304; this requirement is currently implied by the heading of the section, but not overtly stated in the text.
- They are proposing to amend the regulations to include a paragraph that addresses the requirements for shipping containers, including disinfection requirements, as well as measures to ensure that horses are transported safely. They are proposing to present these requirements as performance standards in the regulations. Guidance on how to meet these requirements would be found in the Live Animal Regulations (LAR), as amended, published by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- They are proposing to require that, for Spanish pure breed horses, the health certificate state that the horses have been in Spain for a minimum of 60 days immediately prior to export. For racing thoroughbreds from France, Germany, Ireland and/or the United Kingdom, the health certificate must state that the horses have been in one or more of these countries for a minimum of 60 days immediately prior to export. They are proposing these changes in response to confusion about what the phrases “from Spain” and “from France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom” mean in the context of horses referred to in this paragraph.
- The regulations currently require the veterinarian issuing health certificates to certify that he or she has examined the records of the horse's activities maintained by a breed association. They are proposing to add the words “and identification” after the word “activities” to better describe the information the veterinarian is required to examine.
- The current regulations require the veterinarian to compare records kept by the breed association to records kept by the horse's trainer. They are proposing to add the words “including the competition or event records” after the words “the records kept by the trainer” to provide veterinarians with more detailed guidance on which records they are required to examine.
- For Spanish pure breed horses from Spain, the veterinarian is currently required to examine the breed association's records to ensure that breeding of the horse has never been attempted since the horse reached 731 days of age. To address current and future breeding technologies and practices, they are proposing to clarify that this prohibition on breeding applies to both live and artificial breeding.
- They are also proposing to make a minor editorial change to this section by adding the word “racing” in front of the words “thoroughbred horses from France, Germany, Ireland, and the United Kingdom” in the introductory text to paragraph (d).

- They would clarify that horses imported from regions where screwworm exists must also obtain an import permit in accordance with § 93.304.
- They are proposing to clarify existing policy by adding that horses imported from regions where VEE exists must obtain an import permit in accordance with § 93.304 in addition to all other requirements listed.
- Section 93.321 outlines the import permit and inspection requirements for horses imported from Mexico. They are proposing to add a sentence stating that horses completing quarantine in the United States must obtain an import permit as described in § 93.304 in order to clarify existing policy.

The proposed rule change includes several issues which have been at the forefront of our industry's outreach for more than 10 years. The U.S. horse industry strongly supports the USDA's efforts in modernizing their regulatory language, particularly where it concerns our continually evolving international equine transportation sector. However, there are several points where we highlighted suggested changes that may create unnecessary burdens or insufficiently address known areas of concern.

Contagious Equine Metritis

The USDA's continued prioritization of policies and practices that have prevented the reintroduction of Contagious Equine Metritis (CEM) are well-recognized and equally appreciated. This successful campaign is not without frustration, as many in our industry feel the lack of technological advances in testing has continued to impose harsh burdens on our competition sector and their opportunities globally. The extension of the 60-day waiver to 90 days is a welcome step in addressing this hurdle. In light of the overwhelming support this change has within the equine industry and the USDA's own statements regarding the minimal threat posed by this rule change, the American Horse Council requests the USDA implement this aspect of the proposed rule change as soon as possible, even preemptively applying this rule to animals traveling during the 2022 competition season.

Business Continuity

Standardization in import testing and documentation are also well needed steps in facilitating hassle-free international transport. Several proposed changes will require additional foreign government support, which may pose threats to business continuity should they be unable or unwilling to comply with new USDA expectations. The American Horse Council requests a thorough investigation into the logistical impacts of these changes before setting definitive implementation dates. While industry partners are willing to help facilitate common sense changes to the importation process, the burden of negotiating these changes with foreign governments and staff should not be solely carried on their shoulders.

Castration

The new documentation requirements for geldings remains unclear in its practical implementation and should be simplified and consolidated with already existing health inspection documents and procedures. The burden of validation is significantly different in attesting that an animal has not been castrated within the last 14 days as opposed to the specific date an animal was castrated, potentially decades before a health certificate was issued. We are confident that the 14-day window preceding importation is what is significant and what should be prioritized.

Animals in Transit

We would like to elevate the concerns of USDA stakeholders regarding new documentation requirements for animals in transit immediately preceding export to the United States. Specifically, these concerns stem from the nebulous terminology introduced in this rule by the USDA and opaque nature of who these new requirements would apply to. We strongly request for the USDA to solicit more stakeholder input addressing logistical concerns surrounding additional inspections before implementing the new 48-hour rule as presented.

Horse-racing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA) concerns Animal Feed Industry Association (AFIA)

AHC staff was approached by the AFIA who shared their concerns over language included in the HISA regulations concerning “normal” feed and unrecognized feed additives. The AFIA is working to have many previously unregulated feed supplements fall under the FDA's authority. AHC staff reached out to HISA and shared AFIA’s concerns. Their specific terminology suggestion is;

“The American Feed Industry Association feels replacing the word “normal” in the list exceptions to substances prohibited on race day with language to specify defined and approved animal food ingredients and animal food additives will bring clarity to the proposed rules. We suggest using the phrase” approved by Food and Drug Administration, the Association of Animal Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) or Generally recognized as Safe (GRAS)” to replace the word “normal.” “

The American Horse Council supports this suggested language as it allows HISA to comply with important regulatory and feed industry standards already in existence.

AHC Position on Hemp Byproducts in Horse Feed

The American Horse Council has joined a letter to seek support for greater education and research on a topic that impacts many aspects of equine regulation and production, as well as the safety and well-being of horse owners and caregivers. Following discussions within the AHC concerning CBD usage in the equine feed sector, the industry made their concerns regarding the current interest in using hemp, including its derivatives and by-products (herein collectively referred to as “hemp”), in animal feed. It is our position that sufficient scientific research to support the safety and utility of hemp in animal feed must be completed prior to any Federal or state approval. We understand the importance of supporting the hemp industry, and yet we also believe it is simply too soon to know whether hemp is safe and effective for horses as marketed. Our goal is for more research to ensure the safety and well-being of the public, our animals and our industry. Scientific research is needed.

Interest in the use of hemp in commercial animal feed has accelerated since the passage of the 2018 Agricultural Improvement Act (“Farm Bill”). While the Farm Bill expanded the legal production of hemp in the United States, the use of hemp in animal feed remains under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and state regulatory programs for commercial animal feed. However, many state leaders and lawmakers are being asked to circumvent Federal and state oversight by considering legislation that will allow the use of hemp in animal feed in their respective states before the completion of the critical scientific research to affirm the safety of hemp -- and before the necessary review by the FDA. Safety mechanisms and procedures are critical. Every day, Americans purchase food for their horses with the reasonable expectation that it is safe, and that the nutritional benefits claimed on the label are supported. While consumers have this expectation, most are unaware of the scientific research and regulatory reviews that are in place to affirm the safety of animal feed ingredients.

Currently, no hemp ingredients have been approved through the established animal feed ingredient review pathways. It would be imprudent to bypass these established procedures needed to protect both human and animal health and unilaterally legislate approval of animal feed ingredients at the state level. Concerns should be addressed. We are concerned that state leaders and the general public may not be fully aware that any new ingredient intended for animal feed must go through a scientific and legal review process to ensure safety and utility. Therefore, we wish to highlight three specific concerns regarding the inclusion of hemp in animal feed prior to the necessary research and regulatory review.

First, we have concerns about the health and safety of our horses. Although research is underway, it is limited and not conclusive. Some parts of the hemp plant have the potential to serve as sources of nutrition in many animal diets. However, it is not yet clear whether animals fed hemp-based diets will perform similarly to animals fed traditional diets that farmers and ranchers depend on today. Even hemp that is compliant with existing regulations for production contains Δ^9 -THC (<0.3%) and other cannabinoids. There is not a conclusive understanding of the long-term impacts of these compounds on the health of animals and results of existing research raise safety concerns. To achieve approval for use in animal feed, scientific evidence supporting long-term safety and utility is needed before commercial use.

Additionally, there are concerns about legal implications for horse owners and feed manufacturers. Even if a state legalizes hemp for use in animal feed, the use of the ingredient is not yet approved at the Federal level. Animal feed containing hemp that crosses state lines is subject to Federal regulation and could be considered adulterated under the law. The pursuit of review through established processes will effectively address all state and Federal regulatory requirements, granting access to local, national, and global markets. Without Federal review, the access for producers and manufacturers to interstate and global markets can be negatively impacted.

Recommended actions are doable and achievable. Instead of initiating statutory or administrative approval of hemp in animal feed at the state level, we recommend that state leaders and proponents of hemp in feed work through the defined regulatory pathways used for every animal feed ingredient. We urge state leaders to support research through universities or private labs so that the safety and utility of hemp can be fully understood before it is allowed for commercial purposes.

E-bikes Declassification

In 2019 and early 2020 electric bicycles were granted access to non-motorized trails within the national parks system. This re-designation was issued through the authority of the Secretary of the Department of Interior. The horse industry and the American Horse Council did not have an opportunity to provide input regarding this decision due to the circumnavigation of traditional rulemaking and public comment periods. While we have made our concerns known through industry-wide letter writing efforts, we have also embarked on communication efforts with industry leadership within the bicycle community. The priority for these efforts is to educate new trail users on how to facilitate safe and enjoyable shared trail experiences. These communications are ongoing and have branched out to include Federal fact-finding efforts on the behalf of the Department of Interior. We continue to warn stakeholders within the public land space of the dangers posed by silent, high-speed, motorized vehicles and will share those concerns with the incoming Administration. The American Horse Council encourages equestrian trail users to reach out with any first-hand accounts of equine and bicycle entanglements or interactions.

Environmental Regulations and Large-Scale Equine Facilities

Over the last several years the American Horse Council has been monitoring situations involving long-term/permanent equine holding facilities and the pressures placed on them due to environmental regulations in their state. California, in particular, has placed undue pressure on equine facilities bordering waterways, to the degree that several facilities may close down. Water Management and Environmental Protection laws in these cases are the product of state regulatory action. The singular Federal language of note used in the enforcement of these regulations concerns the definition of a concentrated animal feeding operation, or CAFO. CAFO's are described as small, medium, or large, with large facilities being designated as permanently housing 500 animals or more throughout the year.

As state regulations change the environmental needs of communities in rural areas, oftentimes large CAFOs are expected to meet waste management, water runoff, and large-scale infrastructure requirements that are uncommon and often unnecessary to meet the needs of equine operations. Unfortunately, the designation of large CAFOs is unlikely to be changed at the federal level. As such, the horse industry needs to take active action at the state level to prevent burdensome regulatory action or pursue equine specific exemptions in States with existing environmental regulations.

AHC staff have taken steps to prioritize the development of strategies and actions that can be taken on behalf of the industry at large. This includes educational materials for horse owners and peer organization outreach to raise awareness of the hostile actions being taken by environmental groups towards agricultural interests.

The American Horse Council will continue to monitor the situation and facilitate what actions can be taken in Washington DC.

USDA African Horse Sickness Diagnostic Drill Development

The USDA has asked the American Horse Council to participate in the development of a diagnostic drill for state and federal animal health officials to use in the identification of African Horse Sickness (AHS) cases in the United States. The US has not had a case of African Horse Sickness outside of laboratory cases and if the US did suffer from an outbreak, it would have disastrous consequences. More than 90% of equids exposed to the disease would die, and international travel would be shut down for no less than 2 years.

The drill has been developed and a test drill was run in October of 2021 and was released for Federal and State Animal Health Official use in early 2022.

AHC Health & Regulatory Committee projects

Consumer Alert

At the June 2021 AHC H&R committee meeting, the group was asked about development of a possible caution statement to address recent “ransom” or “bail out” schemes circulating in social media. Still under development and in draft form, the message would encourage horse owners, horse rescues and equine enthusiasts to be extremely cautious before engaging with organizations and individuals promoting time sensitive rescue offers (often referred to as “bail” or “ransom”). Numerous regulatory agencies, as well as breed and discipline groups across the country have reported fraudulent business practices. A working group was formed to discuss further and has issued the following statement:

Numerous American Horse Council members have expressed concern regarding the practice of “Ransom” or “Bail-Out” sales marketed online. These complaints echo concerning media reports on fraudulent practices that take advantage of the empathetic nature of the equine

enthusiast community. In an attempt to alert uninformed, yet sympathetic, individuals to the risks involved in sourcing animals from these operations, the American Horse Council is releasing the following statement.

Instead of contributing to a problematic practice, we strongly encourage interested parties who are willing and able to re-home a horse to utilize the numerous programs listed through the United Horse Coalition's Equine Resource Database at <https://unitedhorsecoalition.org/>

Match Racing

Also, at the June 2021 AHC H&R committee meeting, the group heard reports from USDA staff regarding concerns of Equine Infections Anemia (EIA) and Equine Piroplasmiasis (EP) transmission at "match races" or unsanctioned racing events. The USDA is focused on the EIA and EP transmissions within the match racing community due to the cross contamination of blood products originating in animals infected with EIA and/or EP who have illegally come across the US-Mexico border where both diseases are more common. Mexico has an unknown EIA prevalence, but is expected to be high, live animals do cross illegally, as do blood products. There are no investigations without a positive EP or EIA case first, and usually are not investigating issues outside of infections. There are multiple reports of match events occurring in Texas, California, Georgia, Florida, Chicago, Arizona, and Colorado. A working group was formed to discuss further.

United Horse Coalition

UHC Equine Resource Database

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing resources and bridging the gap between horse owners in need of safety net programs or rehoming assistance, and the equine organizations working to support them, we have recently upgraded our customer relation management software to an association management software called Memberclicks. Included in this software is a new and improved version of the UHC's Equine Resource Database (UHCERD) to help us better serve those seeking assistance, as well as our own members working to support them.

Part of this new software includes a "Members Only Portal" where UHC Members can now have an easier way to update their contact information, as well as the safety net services offered in the UHC Equine Resource Database (with the added benefit of only having to enter it in once, unless your information changes). This is critical to ensuring that horse owners have the most up-to-date, and correct information when searching for safety net programs, assistance programs, and rescues to help them in their time of need.

We are currently working through our first audit of the database for 2023 and will be sending out another request for new submissions as well as researching new resources, not previously identified or added.

For those not aware, the UHC Equine Resource Database includes assistance, support, and safety net programs such as hay and feed assistance, castration assistance, veterinary assistance, microchipping, euthanasia and disposal assistance, behavior and training, transportation, direct placement options, Law Enforcement assistance, disaster assistance, large animal technical rescue, grant funding opportunities, and other vital programs available to assist at-risk horses and their owners. This database also includes a list of over 900 Rescues and Sanctuaries operating nationwide.

Our biggest impact in creating change for at-risk horses starts at the source, and that's through teaching horse owners how to be responsible for the horses in their care. UHC strives to give owners the resources and tools they need to make responsible decisions on behalf of their horse(s).

The UHC Equine Resource Database can be found here: <https://unitedhorsecoalition.weblinkconnect.com/search>

Does your organization offer any type of assistance or safety net programs, please fill out the Database Questionnaire to be added to the UHC Equine Resource Database today.

<https://unitedhorsecoalition.weblinkconnect.com/atlas/forms/prospect/3>

UHC RESPONSIBLE HORSE OWNERSHIP RECORDING

Promoting responsible horse ownership is one of the United Horse Coalitions' primary missions. During this incredibly informative presentation directed at horse owners, UHC speaks about the importance of always thinking about ***“what happens to your horse, if something happens to you?”*** Included in this recording are topics like the importance of meeting basic training levels, veterinary needs, setting up an estate plan to include your horse, and options available to owners in their time of need, as well as the data behind why these topics matter and the top reasons horses end up at risk.

Please share this important and lifesaving information with your own organization's member base.

This presentation is also available as a live recording here: <https://unitedhorsecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UHC-Responsible-Ownership.mp4>

Learn more about Estate Planning and the different responsible options that are available to help horse owners increase the likelihood that their horse will be able to transition safely into a new home.

Share this important (and free) information as well as other educational resources to help horses at-risk within your own community.

<https://unitedhorsecoalition.org/uhc-materials/>

Translating the UHC Website and Educational Materials

If you've utilized the UHC website recently, you may have noticed a button in the upper left-hand corner where you can now translate the website into different languages. The UHC is working to make our resources and educational materials accessible to everyone. Throughout the year, we will be working to translate our documents and materials into different languages as well.

UHC Upcoming Events:

The UHC will be hosting an educational booth at Equine Affaire in OH, April 13th-16th 2023 in an effort to promote **responsible ownership** and options available for owners of at-risk horses. Staff from UHC and EWDC also be attended the ASPCA Right Horse Summit September 21st-23rd in Denver CO and Equine Affaire in Springfield MA in November of 2022.

UHC, a program of the AHC Foundation, along with its partner, A Home For Every Horse received a \$50,000 grant from the Anheuser-Busch Foundation. This grant money will go a long way in helping the United Horse Coalition develop and put in place a plan to help inform the equine industry and horse owners in need about the many resources available in the UHC's Equine Resource Database.

We are very proud of what we offer our member organizations and horse owners nationwide, and now our focus going into 2023 will be to push to really get the word out there to the industry about the amazing resources we offer so that we can get even more help to those who need it most.

Equine Welfare Data Collective

About

The Equine Welfare Data Collective (EWDC) was launched August 2018. The EWDC was created to provide vital insight to the equine community about at-risk equines and those in transition. Over the next 5 years the EWDC hopes to be able to provide the equine community with data reporting that will increase annual adoptions throughout the United States and improve the lives of equines everywhere. This is reliant upon accurate collection and analysis that can help all organizations that assist at-risk equines to identify community program gaps, organization needs, trends within the population, and encourage innovation and collaboration within the community.

EWDC currently surveys approx. 1000 organizations (501C3) that take custody of at-risk horses or reporting non-custodial safety net services. FY 2020 results were made available in February 2022. In July 2022 the EWDC ran the July Data Drive with multiple raffle prizes for EWDC participants. This data drive was very successful in helping to increase participation and available data for the FY 2021 report. The EWDC is currently working to publish the next full report detailing data analysis for January-December 2021, the final review is scheduled for December 2022 with publication in January 2023. This report follows the publication of the Data Snapshot in August 2022. The Data Snapshot reviewed key points of all data collected since inception of the EWDC. Along with this, in conjunction with the UHC, the EWDC has been migrating to a new CRM software to help improve participation recruitment, improve the participant experience, and provide some new automation. Continuing outreach and education initiatives, the EWDC attended Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA from November 9-November 13 and joined the podcast Humane Roundup on November 27.

Finally, the EWDC is excited to announce upcoming staffing changes. Current Program Manager Emily Stearns will be transitioning to the American Horse Council as the new Health, Welfare, and Regulatory Affairs Liaison in January 2023.

We're enthusiastically welcoming the new EWDC Program Administrator Kelsey Buckley in January 2023. Along with Kelsey, Bailey McCallum will be coming on board seasonally May-August 2023 and December 2024-January 2024 as the Data and Reporting Consultant.

AHC Marketing Alliance

The American Horse Council Marketing Alliance (MA) program was introduced as a pilot in 2019 whose purpose was to create lifelong knowledgeable horse owners, while also helping children learn the numerous life lessons that horses teach. That program was focused on introducing kids to horses through a series of lessons at approved Time To Ride Program Facilities.

With a new strategic plan objective in 2021 to create lifelong engagement with the equine industry, the Marketing Alliance introduced Here For Horses and its website [HereforHorses.org](https://www.hereforhorses.org), a website with an introductory video designed to foster interest in horses. Most importantly, the Here For Horses website shares pathways for visitors to make a connection with a horse, either as a spectator or as a hands-on participant within the horse industry. Potential and current horse enthusiasts can now find information on events, education, volunteer opportunities, and places to learn to ride or drive a horse.

HereforHorses.org went public at the same time as the 2022 National Day of the Horse, which occurred on December 13. The National Day of the Horse encourages people within the United States to think about the contribution of horses to the economy, history, and character of the United States. Throughout history, the horse contributed significantly to the advancement of civilization of various cultures in North America, and around the world, and served as a vital means of transportation, and it still serves an important role in modern American culture today.

Members of the AHC Marketing Alliance include: the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), American Paint Horse Association (APHA), American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA), Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA), Equine Network, National Reining Horse Association (NRHA), Purina, Spalding Laboratories, United States Equestrian Federation (USEF), United States Pony Clubs (USPC or Pony Club), Purina and Zoetis.

Research Initiatives

Economic Impact Study

In the spring of 2018, AHC and AHC Foundation announced the results of the Equine Industry Economic Impact Study. Innovation group, an independent consultant, conducted a series of surveys, and supplemented their findings by collection of proprietary operating data from racetrack operators and public reporting from state racing commission's reports, IRS 990 form, and other horse association data.

The economic activity involved in caring for the nation's estimated 7.2M horses along with spending by horse enthusiasts in their pursuit of horse events and recreation directly contributes over \$50B to America's Gross Domestic Product. From those direct effects, the industry's contributions ripple out into other sectors of the economy. Adding these effects in an estimate of the total contributions of \$122B. Total Employment Impact 1,744,747 jobs and Total Wages, Salaries and Benefits of \$79B.

After consulting with AHC members, industry stakeholders and leadership, the American Horse Council (AHC) Foundation made the difficult decision to postpone the 2022 Economic Impact Study until 2023. AHC Staff has mailed fund raising letters to industry stakeholders and started holding brainstorming session to identify new questions or data points for 2023 study.

The study is set to commence in Spring 2023 with results available in the fall.

Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force

Formed in January 2021, the DEI Task Force charter is " to provide input and feedback to help the equine industry develop and implement programs that will increase diversity and strive to ensure inclusiveness and equality. Task Force members will share their respective initiatives and efforts with one another, identify successes that can be replicated, share lessons learned, identify possible gaps that need attention, and brainstorm ideas that may be used by individual organizations or the industry collectively."

Composed of anyone in the industry interested in working on this initiative (the task force meets monthly and currently has about 20 members), the group has shared their various efforts and is presently drafting a DEI Business Case and metrics to share with the equine industry which was distributed to AHC members in a Special Bulletin in January 2022.

This Task Force meets bi-monthly and includes AAEP, Morris Animal Foundation, Purina, IEA, NRHA, CHA, PATH Intl. USHJA, USEF, APHA, TJC, AYHC and others periodically.

Youth Engagement (YE) Task Force

Formed in January 2021, the YE Task Force charter is “leverage collective knowledge and experience with youth engagement to develop an action plan to attract youth to equine industry as participants, future employees and fans.”

Composed of anyone in the industry interested in working on this initiative (the task force meets monthly and currently has about 20 members), the group has shared their various efforts, heard from a variety of speakers on the subject, conducted two surveys(one to collect all internship, scholarship and mentorship opportunities throughout the equine industry and second to ask youth and young adults about engagement levels in the industry), developed a youth resource page with internships, scholarships, etc. on the AHC website, and built a landing page on the National Homeschooling Association website.

This Task Force meets bi-monthly and includes IEA, NRHA, CHA, PATH Intl., APHA, TJC, AYHC, HHYF, USTA, AQHA, USPC, AMHA and others periodically.

Coalitions/Partnerships

It's often said, "It takes a village" and that's very much the case with advocacy work where coalitions and partnership play key roles in mobilizing change. This is one of the most important functions of advocacy simply because one person's opinion may not count for much when a representative hears from hundreds daily, but if a large group is mobilized to action and they are presenting a united message to the public and to policymakers, it is a much better indication that this may be a broader public opinion. Mobilization works by expanding the base of support beyond those who may be directly impacted by convincing others that the issue affects them as well.

AHC Has forged relationships with many groups in DC including, but limited to:

- American Youth Horse Council
- Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
- Coalition for Recreational Trails
- UBIT Coalition
- Professional Certification Coalition
- Economic Business Coalition
- Tax Aggies Coalition
- Animal Agriculture Coalition
- Sports Coalition
- Physical Activity Council
- H2A/H2B Coalitions
- Seasonal Ag Employee Coalition
- Home For Every Horse
- National Association of Animal Control
- GFAS – Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries
- American Society of Association Executives
- US Chamber of Commerce

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A M E R I C A N
H O R S E C O U N C I L