

Submission supplied by Ms Susan Kopittke

# **The feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register for all horses**

The feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register for all horses, with particular reference to:

- a. the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;
- b. the benefits of a national register, including for animal welfare, biosecurity safety (including for the prevention and management of Emergency Animal Diseases, such as equine influenza and African Horse Sickness), backyard breeding and the integrity of trade in horses;
- c. overseas models of national tracking systems for horses;
- d. funding, enforcement and penalty implications; and
- e. any related matters.

Start Submission

- a.) the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;

Submission response

Australian Racing

A strong commitment of the registration of horses within Australia was prompted for a number of management practices with the main focus on bio security, and animal welfare, examples are available below.

Australian Racing formed a comprehensive database accessible through the Australian Stud Book portal formatted for horse identification and information for unregistered and registered horses foaled since 1986. However it does not provide any information for horses leaving the Industry or that do not make it all the way through from a range of causes such as death or injury or is embargoed through a disability for instance. Unless the owner makes the industry aware through mare service records and veterinary awareness. There is nothing to stop breeders foaling mares for other purposes away from racing.

The Register moved towards a data based system in 2003 in which all foals born in 2003 onwards were microchipped. At the same time of DNA sampling or parentage

testing, a DNA kit is provided by the Australian Stud Book also containing a package consisting of a microchip applicator that only a ASB vet is authorised to apply.

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## Other Sporting Codes in reference to the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;

The FEI or Federation Equestrian International states clear identification of horses is essential, particularly when competing at an International level, to facilitate the movement across borders and to ensure the relative health requirements are satisfied. From January 2013 all horses that are to be registered with the EFI must be microchipped, with the intention that in time all horses competing in EFI events, this will become compulsory.

FEI requires what is known as an ISO chip short for International Standards Organisation, the chip must be 15 digits long and operate at a certain frequency. As of 2013 FEI or Federation Equestrian International required for all events that microchipping was compulsory.

EA or Equestrian Australia have within their general regulations book compulsory rules that all Horses registered with EA must have a microchip meeting Australian Standard AS 5018/5019 inserted. This does not apply to all sporting breeds within Australia but information supplied by International boards such as FEI would imply if you are competing Internationally then it has become compulsory that your horses are microchipped and with the appropriate standard of microchip.

## Other Breeds in reference to the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;

There are many horse associations in which data is collected for the purpose of registering horses for competition or breeding. Ledger filing systems are used such as forms and are then formatted to electronic records. Some societies have links to blood stock agencies for the purpose of breeder selling. There is no compulsory obligation for any society to track an animal for any purpose other than for the purpose of competition or the application of registration for breeding purposes.

## The Rare Breeds Trust in reference to the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;

The Rare Breeds Trust is another compulsory register which has links to Government established entities such as the Department of primary Industries, PIRSA Primary Industries and Regions South Australia, Business Queensland, National Landcare NSW. For the purpose of exercising state legislation in providing PIC codes or Property Identification Codes to property holders whom have livestock on their properties even if they are agented animals.

## An example of the current systems in place for Livestock on properties in Australia, in reference to the existence and adequacy of state or industry-based registers;

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) introduced in 1999 for livestock is the current National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is a national system, the system provides consistency around the specifications needed for approved devices and the type of devices used for individual species. Nationally, NLIS Limited sets the specifications for NLIS devices and trial protocols. NLIS was constructed to trace cattle during disease and food incidents, it was expanded to also include sheep and goats in 2009. NLIS reflects Australia's commitment to biosecurity and food safety and provides a competitive advantage in a global market.

The system consists of three criteria's, with a performance standard introduced in 2004.

### PIC

A Property Identification Code (PIC) is a unique number identifying your property. It is issued by the State Department. This is the same number as your tail tag number. The PIC is related to an individual property and the number cannot be used on other properties you are associated with unless they are amalgamated under the one PIC.

### Branding

Compulsory of any calf at the age of 8 months of age.

### NDIS

#### Tagging

The term 'tag' as used in the NLIS database refers to an NLIS approved beast identification device, being either an electronic ear tag or rumen bolus/visual ear tag combination.

NLIS was not introduced into the Northern Territory until July 1, 2007 through legislative powers for identifying and tracing livestock for food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

- b.) the benefits of a national register, including for animal welfare, biosecurity safety (including for the prevention and management of Emergency Animal Diseases, such as equine influenza and African Horse Sickness), backyard breeding and the integrity of trade in horses;

#### Submission Response

A set of criteria to identify the benefits of a national register would be a simple way of describing the benefits and enabling a secure way of identifying at risk animals. Staged and based around the lifetime of the animal. Criteria already taken into account through age ranges is in place in examples already given, for example when a foal is recommended to be branded and microchipped. Each time a horse receives or is subject to a procedure a references can be cross checked across data fields to show inconsistencies guided through the recommendation process. For the purpose of prompting investigation and a show of cause by owners.

For the better management of Animals and tracking of available treatment of animals with issues arising from neglect, unsafe practices or environmental causes. Allowing a collection of data that can be used in response for such issues. Other criteria tables could be implemented into legislation to track the beginning of a horses breeding for what participation status it holds such as if it is placed on an embargo list for a disability or injury but is still able to be used in breeding. If and when a horse is retired, what criteria is the horse classed under. And a finalisation criteria regarding horse euthanized or that are terminated through a meat processing facility.

A criteria which tracks every movement of an animal for the purpose of better management and welfare, a data base link connecting each time a horse is treated by a veterinarian that will show a record and date of that transaction. Consistent with owners submitting data regarding vaccines for biosecurity purposes to gain statistics such as effectiveness of vaccines. The possibilities are endless with a national

system for example a lot of horse that are no longer working suffer from a myriad of conditions when they drop out of the system. With a continuum until finalisation recorded this can become avoidable.

For example the management of a horses hooves can be life threatening if not maintained, in the case of a criteria based system data collected will ensure that finalisation records show a veterinarian inspection at this time and insure action is taken which will educate owners about the expectation of owner ship, this kind of information will also contribute to better management through data collection.

Veterinarians can benefit through shared data a collection of data will enable them to adopt better practices and enhance more efficient treatments of diseases that are challenging to treat such as sarcoidosis in horses or horn fly for example. Many issues that go unreported will be engaged and a true allocation of Animal health will be gauged for management of future practices.

- Born
- Participant
- Embargoed
- Breeder
- Retired
- Finalisation

### C.) overseas models of national tracking systems for horses;

Many countries have a system similar to Australian Blood stock when involved in the Racing Codes. It is also prevalent in the IEF codes that current legislative powers are shared between countries such as the UK USA and Europe. China has links to data collection through Racing codes and IEF codes also.

The same rules really seem to be shared with breeds and registers depending on legislative influence around the world. Australia could become more like the UK as it appears to be the leader as far as good practice regarding current registers regarding disease through data collection.

### d.) funding, enforcement and penalty implications;

There are already legislative terms in place through Government collection and action agencies regarding infringements with examples such as the NLIS adapted legislation. This example would be a good guideline for future development. This is encouraging for the consideration of such a scheme as a lot of the work has already been implemented. Finding through registration fees is a good model and will discourage back yard breeders.

e.) any related matters.

A strong consideration taken into consideration with existing legislative guidelines such as governance of the register by departments such as the department of Primary Industries. Implementation of the register would conceivably remove the need for local councils or non for profit organisations such as the RSPCA to manage the reporting of breaches of Animal Welfare and reduce the occurrence of Animal neglect and provide a working future towards good outcomes.

Data collected should provide the ability for Government Departments such as Land Management Agencies and the Department of Primary Industries to developed staff infrastructure to manage any breaches. These Departments will benefit from the collection of data, this knowledge should lead to savings centred around time management and inevitably lead to an increase in expenditure within the sector to manage future growth.

Thank you Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

For the opportunity to a lodge submission into the feasibility of a National Horse Traceability Register for all horses