



HORSE INDUSTRY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting 22

Thursday 23 April 2020

10.05am to 12.55pm

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Teleconference

Canberra ACT 2601

Participants

Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

Wayne Terpstra (Chair)	Animal and Biological Imports
Robyn Martin	First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Animal
Ainslie Brown	Animal and Biological Imports
Tanya Oliver	Animal and Biological Imports
Emma Ford	Animal and Biological Imports
Amelia Cook	Animal and Biological Imports
Peter Finnin	Post Entry Quarantine Group
Tamara Nolan	Post Entry Quarantine Group
Colin Reynolds	Post Entry Quarantine Group
Marley Matthews-Barnard	Post Entry Quarantine Group
Lauren Grimes	Live Animal Exports
Kristy Tyrie	Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce
Colin McCormack	Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce
Ann McDonald	Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce
Anita Tapper	Finance Division
Daniel Passer	Finance Division
Donna Bennett	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Leah Wells	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Claudia Lin	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Raymond Levey	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Tania Ware	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Sandeep Kaur	Veterinary and Export Meat Group
Beth Cookson	Animal Biosecurity
Kerry Daly	Animal Biosecurity
Allan Sheridan	Animal Biosecurity
Cherry Chung	Animal Biosecurity

External

James Gilkerson	Australian Veterinary Association
Patricia Ellis	Australian Horse Industry Council
Kathleen Mullan	Harness Racing Australia
Tom Reilly	Thoroughbred Breeders Australia
Josh Murphy	New Zealand Bloodstock
Chris Burke	International Racehorse Transport/ First Point Animal Services
Amy Little	International Racehorse Transport
Cameron Croucher	Equine International Airfreight
Jeffrey Wilkinson	Equine Veterinarians Australia
Ross Kendell	Horse Industry Consultant

Myles Foreman
Paul Bloodworth
Grace Forbes

Racing Australia
Racing Victoria/Werribee International Horse Centre
Racing Victoria/Werribee International Horse Centre

Apologies

Andrew Hamilton
Andrew Kelly
Cameron Brown
Sam Nugent
Melanie Latter
Zoe Wells
Andrew Small

Equestrian Australia
Harness Racing Australia
Harness Racing Australia
Equine Veterinarians Australia
Australian Veterinary Association
Racing Victoria/Werribee International Horse Centre
Racing NSW

Meeting commenced at 10:05am.

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chair introduced himself to members, followed by other department staff present in the meeting room. The Chair completed a roll call of internal and external members dialling in.

This HICC meeting was held as a teleconference instead of the usual face-to-face meeting because of restrictions on travel and social distancing due to COVID-19.

2. Minutes from meeting 21 and outstanding action items.

The minutes from the previous HICC meeting (held on 11 November 2019) were finalised and circulated to members on 16/01/2020. The Chair read through completed action items, and the following outstanding items were addressed by the item owner.

Outstanding Action Item 2 (meeting 21): Horse arrangement cost recovery reserve deficit. Animal and Biological Imports Branch (ABIB) to discuss the Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ) horse arrangement cost recovery reserve deficit with Finance Division to see if a projection (of how quickly this is being paid off) is possible and provide an update to members.

Anita Tapper (Cost Recovery Operations; Finance Division) provided an update to members. The Mickleham PEQ arrangement is currently recovering its costs, but the surplus is offset by the cumulative deficit preceding the current Cost Recovery Implementation Scheme (CRIS). The PEQ horse stream has been covering its costs since 2016-17 but the surplus has not yet covered the deficit balance from earlier years. The stream was budgeted to have a \$0.330m surplus this financial year, however, in the current economic climate this is unlikely to be reached.

The department intends to review the cost recovery arrangement, but the timing is uncertain. In reviewing the arrangement, the Finance Division will not set fees and charges to recover prior deficits and will engage with the horse industry as part of its consultative process. Daniel Passer (Cost Recovery Design; Finance Division) discussed the new CRIS for exports in Agenda Item 4.

Action Item 2 (meeting 21) is now closed.

Outstanding Action Item 3 (meeting 20): Offshore charging guidelines. Once the Finance Division has completed the amalgamated offshore charging guidelines, the secretariat will provide it to the HICC members for their targeted feedback.

Anita Tapper (Finance Division) acknowledged that this item has not been progressed in a timely manner and apologised for the delay. Draft guidelines are being reviewed prior to final internal endorsement. Guidelines should be available to members by the time international travel recommences.

The Chair noted that the department has been using the draft charging guidelines for previous audits while waiting for the charging guidelines to be finalised.

ACTION ITEM 3 (meeting 20): Finance Division to finalise the offshore charging guidelines.

Outstanding Action Item 8 (meeting 20): Industry engagement in the development of NEXDOC. Live Animal Exports (LAE) Operations and Wayne Terpstra to speak with relevant colleagues in Information System Division (ISD) and Exports Division about industry engagement in the development of NEXDOC.

Lauren Grimes (LAE) provided an update to members on NEXDOC progress. Horses will fall within the live animal module, with delivery timeframes for this module currently undergoing review. It will be the last module to be built and there are no plans for further external consultation. LAE proposed to keep this action item open so that an update can be provided to HICC members as NEXDOC progresses.

Chris Burke (International Racehorse Transport; IRT), Josh Murphy (New Zealand Bloodstock; NZB) and James Gilkerson (Australian Veterinary Association; AVA) advised there had been no consultation of horse industry business requirements with members. Members expressed frustration that this had been raised in previous HICC meetings, and that there has still been no industry consultation, nor has there been movement towards consultation.

The Chair and LAE confirmed that they will connect members with department colleagues for a prompt response. Contact details will be circulated by the secretariat.

ACTION ITEM 8 (meeting 20): Live Animal Exports (LAE) program requested that this action item remain open. LAE to provide the secretariat with updates on NEXDOC progress, for circulation to members.

ACTION ITEM 1: LAE program to contact horse exporters to discuss industry concerns and external consultation on NEXDOC.

Outstanding Action Item 11 (meeting 20): New exports legislation. Secretariat to organise a member of the exports division to attend next HICC meeting to provide an update on new exports legislation.

Kristy Tyrie (Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce) presented a paper to summarise progress on the new Export Control Act 2020. The Act will be passed on 28 March 2021, replacing the current Export Control Act 1982. It will incorporate all relevant export legislation for live animals and reproductive material. The Act contains the objectives of the legislation and sets out powers and processes to regulate agricultural exports. The Rules set out detailed requirements for the Act and identifies how and what powers in the Act are to be used for the regulation of exports. The new Export Control Act and the Export Control Rules must be read together as the rules provide operational detail to the Act.

Once the rules have been drafted, consultation will be undertaken with stakeholders including horse industry members. Kristy Tyrie mentioned that members could register their interest on the 'Improving Agricultural Export Legislation' page on the department's website. The website link will be distributed by the secretariat.

Ann McDonald (Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce) advised it is not the intention of the new Export Control Rules to change the way exporters are regulated, as legislative requirements will be the same under the new exports legislation. If exporters notice any changes to how they are regulated please provide details to the taskforce via the LAE program.

Chris Burke (IRT) asked if the new Act will provide more flexibility with innovation (accredited veterinarians, digital certification etc.) as paperwork currently has to be reproduced by the department. He asked if veterinarians will find it easier to adapt to the new legislation. Ann McDonald and Lauren Grimes both agreed that the legislation will allow for more flexibility to do this in NEXDOC. However, paperwork must still go to the department as it must be signed and stamped by the competent authority.

Myles Foreman (Racing Australia) endorsed any opportunity to digitise the studbook. The Chair mentioned that digital records could be linked with NEXDOC certification.

Action Item 11 (meeting 20) is now closed.

ACTION ITEM 2: Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce to provide a website link for HICC members to find additional information and register to receive updates on the new exports legislation. Secretariat to circulate the website link to members.

3. Program financial update

Anita Tapper (Finance Division) presented the December year-to-date (YTD) report paper and a verbal March YTD report for biosecurity cost recovery.

For the period 1 July 2019 to 30 December 2019, the biosecurity cost recovery arrangement recorded a surplus of \$0.455m. YTD revenue was lower than budget by \$11.596m primarily in the import clearance and seaport streams. YTD expense (including remissions) was \$6.726m under budget due to several factors outlined in the report. The decrease in revenue results in a full year forecasted deficit of \$3.178m.

There was a \$0.459m (4%) decline in revenue against budget for all post entry quarantine (PEQ) commodities. The December YTD revenue from the horse stream (all horse imports) was \$0.234m under budget. In the horse stream there were fewer arrivals and reduced revenue from associated daily husbandry fees (below budget by \$0.21m and \$0.1m respectively).

Revenue for the horse stream as at March YTD was \$0.427m under budget. The forecast revenue to the end of the year has now reduced by \$0.721 under budget as the 65 horse imports predicted the last quarter of this financial year will likely decrease to 35 due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The horse stream is unlikely to generate the forecast revenue this financial year which will contribute to the deficit.

Chris Burke (IRT) questioned why there is still a deficit. He mentioned that horse import numbers have been high for several years and the Mickleham PEQ facility can accommodate 80 horses at a time. Horse import numbers have been increasing, and previously some horses have been pushed back to the next available import shipment due to such high numbers.

Anita Tapper explained that the current COVID-19 situation has meant that there will be a significant drop in revenue for the rest of the year. There would be a surplus this financial year if the forecast number of horses had been imported. For several years revenue in the horse stream has exceeded expenses.

Peter Finnin (Post Entry Quarantine Group; PEQG) noted that the Mickleham horse arrangement is on point with cost recovery, and there are still some horses coming into PEQ in the coming months. The Chair noted that planned consignments for this year will boost revenue. The actual number of horses imported matters more than the forecast. As per the Industry Advice Notice (57-2020) published earlier this month, the department has forecast a downturn in import and export activity.

4. Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS)

Daniel Passer (Finance Division) provided an update to members on the export CRIS. The CRIS has not been released due to the COVID-19 outbreak (it was due to be released for consultation in March 2020). Live animal exports have not met revenue for over five years. He could not advise when this project would progress as the team are currently investigating timing and appropriateness. Timelines will be released when more information is available.

Finance Division is also considering when to undertake a biosecurity CRIS review. Overall, the arrangement has been performing well so the review has

been delayed from 2018-2019 until approximately July 2021, but this may now be delayed further due to COVID-19. Key priorities would include PEQ, import permits, corporate allocations and harmonising fees and charges as much as possible (e.g. all audits undertaken by the same team should cost the same regardless of commodity or arrangement). An update on CRIS will be provided to the HICC secretariat for circulation to members within the next few months.

The Chair noted that COVID-19 impacts have been felt broadly across the economy and government decision making has been impacted significantly. The pandemic has also impacted on the department's activities. However, a significant proportion of the budget is being recovered.

ACTION ITEM 3: Finance Division to update members on the Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) for exports with revised timelines and processes.

5. Post Entry Quarantine Group (PEQG) operations update

Peter Finnin (PEQG) introduced Tamara Nolan (PEQG) as the Assistant Director for cats, dogs and horses, and noted that the Mickleham PEQ compounds for horses are still open for business during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Due to COVID-19, the Mickleham PEQ facility has seen a decrease in numbers in the animal compounds, particularly in cats and dogs. This has presented an opportunity for PEQG to conduct facility maintenance and complete outstanding tasks.

Current maintenance work occurring in the compounds includes the replacement of rubber belting in the yards which is now complete as well as the addition of more sand to each yard. PEQG are looking at additional ways to prevent adventurous horses from tearing off the new rubber belting which has occurred in the past.

The flooring is also being replaced in both horse walkers with a new rubber compound and both horse crushes have also had maintenance work carried out.

Additional site improvements include:

- Closely monitoring the prescription of medications by private veterinarians, for subsequent administration by grooms. All dispensing and prescriptions of medications on site must be completed in line with the Victorian veterinary board guidelines.
- Working on ways to move towards an electronic induction process, including an online induction for grooms with the potential to complete the induction before they reach Australia.

Ross Kendell (Horse Industry Consultant) and Chris Burke (IRT) indicated their interest in electronic inductions for grooms and would like to be kept updated on PEQG's progress with this. Canterbury Park and Werribee Approved Arrangements as well as First Point Animal Services have in-depth

on-site inductions. IRT are currently investigating if grooms can complete inductions for First Point Animal Services before they depart to Australia.

Chris Burke acknowledged recent work completed by the Canberra horse imports team, PEQG and airport staff to assist with shipments during the COVID-19 outbreak.

ACTION ITEM 4: Post Entry Quarantine Group (PEQG) to work with other relevant members to create online inductions for grooms.

6. Nasopharyngeal swabs for equine influenza (EI) testing during post arrival quarantine

Item raised by Ross Kendell, who indicated concern with private veterinarians using guarded uterine swabs to collect nasopharyngeal samples. The guarded uterine swab is rigid and may fracture when used for this purpose, leaving parts of the swab inside the horse's nose which then need to be extracted. A dedicated nasopharyngeal swab (NPS) also has a larger tip to allow for a more accurate sample to be collected.

There has previously been a variety of swabs and swabbing techniques used, based on the preference of the private veterinarian. To ensure correct sampling technique and in discussion with the department, both approved arrangement sites are now mandating Animal Health Trust (AHT) NPS to be used.

One of the laboratories questioned the change from guarded uterine swab to the larger AHT NPS, stating they were better equipped to manage the smaller swab size. James Gilkerson (AVA) strongly advocated for the larger AHT swabs describing their specificity for the required procedure. All horses in PAQ are vaccinated and imported from EI endemic countries meaning they would shed only small amounts of virus if infected. The AHT NPS are flexible and follow the natural curvature of the nasal passage leading to better horse tolerance. As such, the fit-for-purpose AHT swab specifically for NPS should be used. The department will contact the laboratory to discuss.

Private veterinarians at the Mickleham PEQ facility are currently using guarded uterine swabs and there was general agreement that government and approved arrangement sites should be consistent.

The current procedure is for private veterinarians to provide their own swabs for taking EI samples. The Chair queried if NPS could instead be provided by the department to aid in mandating the type of swab used. The department will continue this discussion offline to find and implement an appropriate and consistent procedure. The secretariat will update members on the outcome of these discussions.

Importers indicated they would be happy with either the private veterinarians or the department providing NPS but noted that it would be good to have the NPS available on site at quarantine facilities.

Concerns were raised regarding availability of supply if everyone moved to using NPS, and ease of obtaining these swabs from the Animal Health Trust. Ross Kendell advised that all veterinarians at Werribee and Canterbury Park AA sites have a large stock of the AHT NPS, which they were easily able to purchase from a leading veterinary supply distributor. It was noted that the AHT does not make the NPS but purchases them from a supplier.

Amy Little (IRT) asked if it was worthwhile offering a short training course to private veterinarians for correct nasopharyngeal swabbing technique. There was general agreement to this suggestion.

ACTION ITEM 5: ABIB and PEQG to investigate the department's ability to provide nasopharyngeal swabs in the Mickleham facility for consistency with Approved Arrangement sites.

ACTION ITEM 6: ABIB to have a discussion with relevant laboratories to ensure they will accept the larger AHT nasopharyngeal swabs and provide the relevant collection containers.

7. Impact of COVID-19

The Chair led a discussion on the department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There have been constraints with human and animal movement and flight availability, and general air cargo has reduced by 80%. Lockdowns have also reduced the availability of overseas government competent authority staff for certification. There have been additional concerns with the availability of PPE, biologicals, pharmaceuticals and food security. The Chair mentioned that several Industry Advice Notices were sent by the department regarding alternative and interim arrangements around certification, Mickleham PEQ availability and operational capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in broader impacts on the movement of personnel, human quarantine and virus testing.

Robyn Martin (First Assistant Secretary, Biosecurity Animal) said that the department is receiving daily advice from the national cabinet committee. The department is interested to hear industry's concerns and would like to know how the COVID-19 outbreak is affecting business and if there is anything that the department can assist with.

Chris Burke (IRT) noted that key issues for the movement of horses are related to human quarantine and movement restrictions rather than the horses. These issues include:

- Border force and state border restriction of staff movement between states, (i.e. when a groom flies into Melbourne with the horses but lives in a different state). Grooms are being quarantined for 14 days after moving between countries and crossing state borders.
- Difficulty trying to find a relevant contact from the Commonwealth Department of Health regarding travelling grooms. There have been some negotiations with border force to classify grooms as flight crew.
- Countries such as the United Kingdom and United States are currently not safe to visit. IRT are trying to determine the safest way for their staff

to travel (for example, getting grooms to stay on the aircraft for a round trip).

- Price gouging for necessary items such as PPE and cleaning services.

Jeffrey Wilkinson (Equine Veterinarians Australia) agreed that they were also having issues sourcing items from veterinary suppliers. They have been unable to buy masks and other vital PPE for veterinary work.

The Chair acknowledged that these are significant challenges and asked if the issues with talking to state government staff were just with the Victorian state health department or other departments as well. Chris Burke said that the Victorian state health department has been the most cooperative and the biggest problem is trying to find the correct department person to have a conversation about this issue, including accessing higher level advice. Josh Murphy (NZB) agreed that they were also having difficulty with groom movement.

Robyn Martin mentioned that the department has an industry contact person who may be able to assist. The Chair mentioned that he would contact the appropriate department branch after the HICC meeting.

Industry members agreed that the logistics of moving grooms around (not horses) was the stopping point. Chris Burke said that a significant problem to horse movement was that no foreign nationals are allowed to enter some countries (Hong Kong, Singapore, Germany, UAE etc.).

The Chair then noted communication around temporary cessation of routine veterinary work by the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) and European Union veterinarians and how that may affect export certification. Amy Little (IRT) advised that UK veterinarians were trying to limit their work to just emergency and essential work. With regards to preparation for consignments later this year, she is having some success in her local area (Newmarket) with getting vaccinations and pre-testing completed. UK laboratories are still processing samples as normal.

There were no comments regarding the Tokyo Olympics (postponed to 2021).

Peter Finnin (PEQG) provided an update regarding Australian Centre for Disease Preparedness (ACDP; formerly the Australian Animal Health Laboratory) that despite pressure with COVID-19 testing, they are able to complete regular testing to meet post-arrival quarantine requirements, noting that some reagents are also used for COVID-19 testing (polymerase chain reaction test).

Paul Bloodworth (Racing Victoria) mentioned that they are currently discussing whether Werribee will open for the Spring Racing Carnival. Due to COVID-19 there are a range of issues to overcome and there is a significant cost in opening Werribee. Additionally, it will be difficult for international grooms to enter the country. Racing Victoria will make a decision on opening Werribee by 1 August 2020.

ACTION ITEM 7: Secretariat to provide a department contact to industry for discussions regarding travelling grooms during the COVID-19 outbreak.

8. Impact of the glanders review

The following items were raised by Patricia Ellis (Australian Horse Industry Council; AHIC):

- a.** Impact of the glanders review on importation of equine urine samples for forensic analysis
- b.** Impact of the glanders review on importation of horses from South Africa via Mauritius
- c.** The OIE status of glanders

Regarding item a. Patricia Ellis noted she had received multiple enquires from other countries asking if Australia could continue to import urine samples. Equine urine samples were previously imported from India, however conditions have recently changed and now it isn't possible.

Kerry Daly (Animal Biosecurity Branch; ABB) confirmed that ABB will be undertaking a review into the glanders status of different countries to underpin a consistent advice framework for importers. The review is for live horses only, not equine samples. The question regarding equine urine samples will be forwarded to the biologicals team of ABB, who can then advise the secretariat on any changes to the policy.

Regarding item c. concern was raised over several rumours that glanders may be delisted by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). ABB has not heard rumours related to the delisting of glanders, although this would not affect our import conditions because Australia's conditions are based on Australia's risk assessment rather than the OIE minimum guidelines. ABB noted the OIE had proposed classifying glanders with melioidosis because they are both infectious diseases caused by the same bacterial genus (*Burkholderia*), which would be a concern for ABB.

For item b. South Africa and Mauritius will be included in the glanders review as a pathway of interest for importing horses to Australia via approved European countries. Any known information about the equine health status in these countries will be considered. The aim of the review is to provide consistent requirement advice for importers. A draft will be uploaded to the department website for comment.

James Gilkerson (AVA) noted that Mauritius is not free from African horse sickness. Kerry Daly advised the Australian import conditions include measures for African horse sickness which manage the biosecurity risk. She also noted that Mauritius has not applied to be an approved country for direct export to Australia.

James Gilkerson noted that glanders is an uncommonly reported disease and a presentation was scheduled for the 11th International Equine Infectious Diseases Conference regarding improved testing for the disease. The conference has been postponed to 2021.

ACTION ITEM 8: Animal Biosecurity Branch (ABB) to notify members when the glanders review draft is available for comment. Secretariat to circulate the website link to industry members when it becomes available.

ACTION ITEM 9: ABIB to follow up questions relating to changes in importation of equine urine samples and provide update to members.

9. African horse sickness outbreak in Thailand

Item raised by Patricia Ellis (AHIC), who noted that the African horse sickness (AHS) outbreak in Thailand posed a serious risk to the Australian horse industry and questioned the status of the AHS AUSVETPLAN (published in 1996). Robyn Martin advised that the department is updating the AHS AUSVETPLAN as a priority. ABB has a system to pick up on news of animal disease outbreaks such as the AHS outbreak in Thailand, as part of their routine disease surveillance work. ABB is in communication with the department's agricultural counsellor in Thailand for local updates on the situation. There is conflicting advice on the cause of the outbreak as some attribute it to an imported horse and others to imported zebras.

Allan Sheridan (ABB) noted that while the main known vector for AHS has not been found in Australia, related species are found in the northern areas of Australia. The disease appears to have spread in Thailand and there is a proposal to create a regional working group through the OIE Regional Commission to facilitate a regional approach.

Beth Cookson (ABB) mentioned that the Northern Australian Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) is well placed to monitor the midge vector for AHS in northern Australia.

It was noted that Malaysia has stated that it does not currently have any cases. Allan Sheridan mentioned that both monovalent and polyvalent vaccines have been ordered by Thailand, but it is unclear when vaccinations will begin.

10. National horse traceability register update and the Independent Working Group for horse welfare

Tom Reilly (Thoroughbred Breeders Association; TBA) said that a national horse traceability working group of state agriculture departments had been created following the Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN) meeting in Launceston in February 2020. The terms of reference for this working group are currently being drafted. The working group will include looking at the implementation of a traceability register as well as the processing standards for abattoirs/knackereries and the transportation of horses. Industry members for the working group have not yet been appointed, however the group will be led by state agricultural ministers.

TBA and other stakeholders have created an Independent Working Group (IWG) which will be chaired by Dr. Denis Napthine. Other panellists include

Dr. Bidida Jones (RSPCA Australia), Dr. Ken Jacobs (AVA), and Jack Lake (former government senior agricultural advisor). The IWG will work to make recommendations to improve welfare for horses exiting the breeding and racing industries.

Patricia Ellis (AHIC) asked if there had been any progress following industry consultation on the legislative reforms to Property Identification Codes mentioned at a previous HICC meeting. The department will follow up on any progress and distribute appropriate contact details to members.

ACTION ITEM 10: ABIB to provide contact details for industry to enquire about legislative reforms to Property Identification Codes for live animals.

11. New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (NZ MPI) microchip requirements

Ainslie Brown (ABIB) updated members on the proposed horse identification certification changes by NZ MPI. Australia cannot hold NZ horses at the border and the department cannot release horses without identification. NZ MPI recently communicated that it intends to go ahead with its proposed microchip-only certification without additional forms of identification and that it has an updated system that allows the microchip reader to scan a horse's microchip with automatic population of the number onto the health certificate.

Ainslie Brown asked for feedback from members that the department could relay to NZ MPI and asked exporters how NZ accepts horses exported from Australia. Josh Murphy (NZB) said horses exported from Australia are certified to both brands and microchips. Importers agreed that microchip-only certification from New Zealand could lead to clearance delays and difficulties (including workplace health and safety and animal welfare risks) that are less of an issue where a back-up form of identification is available and supported holding the line that both brands and microchips must be certified for horses imported to Australia.

The question was raised whether horses without brands would need to be certified by microchips and silhouettes instead. Chris Burke (IRT) asked why digital photos are not being used as per previous discussions. The majority of problems during clearance are related to an incorrect microchip or poor-quality silhouette. Three photographs (nearside, offside and headshot) would be more reliable than a hand drawn silhouette.

Amy Little (IRT) mentioned that she previously attended a NZ horse industry consultative committee meeting where MPI confirmed that its border officers would delay the export of a horse if the microchip was incorrect. NZ MPI have already changed its legislation to mandate microchip-only certification and is pursuing implementation of this approach despite broadly expressed concerns.

Ainslie Brown suggested the department make it an official requirement in the import conditions for at least two forms of identification.

ACTION ITEM 11: ABIB to update members on the outcome of discussions with the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries (NZ MPI) regarding proposed microchip requirements.

12. First Point of Entry standards

Tanya Oliver (ABIB) updated members on requirements for clearing horses at seaports, referring to the new Notice to Industry 16 that was circulated to members. The First Points of Entry requirements for low frequency/low risk imports of horses by sea are broad and may be interpreted differently by each clearance region. The department's new Notice to Industry (NTI) 16 outlines the minimum requirements for clearing horses at seaports taking animal welfare and workplace safety issues into consideration.

Due to the low volume of imports from New Zealand and New Caledonia by sea, NTI 16 includes requirements for a corral to contain horses in the consignment with temporary fencing to be provided by importers. The department understands that this is an additional expense to importers but will be enforced for all horses imported by sea. Patricia Ellis (AHIC) endorsed the paper and agreed with the requirements outlined in NTI 16.

Cameron Croucher (Equine International Airfreight; EIAF) commented that EIAF had problems with a recent consignment that was to be brought into Sydney. The terminal operator and fence rental companies were difficult to deal with when organising temporary fencing for a corral. EIAF worked with the terminal operator to create a corral with empty shipping containers, but this was rejected by biosecurity officers assigned to the clearance. The shipment had to be cancelled.

The Chair and Tanya Oliver thanked members for their feedback and noted that the aim of NTI 16 was to standardise seaport clearance rules across the regions. Importers must submit a proposal for managing the clearance process which must include a set-up where clearance officers could escape a dangerous situation with a fractious horse. Temporary corrals made of shipping containers have not been ruled out but must be approved prior to the shipment arrival and provide adequate safety for all personnel.

13. Other business

No additional items were raised by members.

14. Close meeting and next meeting

The Chair thanked all attendees and mentioned that an interim teleconference was held last year to provide an update on the progress of action items. It was agreed that this was useful and a teleconference for updates on action items will be scheduled for November 2020.

Meeting finished at 12:55pm

Summary of Action Items

Action Item 3 (meeting 20): Finance Division to finalise the offshore charging guidelines.

Action Item 8 (meeting 20): Live Animal Exports (LAE) program requested that this action item remain open. LAE to provide the secretariat with updates on NEXDOC progress, for circulation to members.

Action Item 1: LAE program to contact horse exporters to discuss industry concerns and external consultation on NEXDOC.

Action Item 2: Export Legislation and Traceability Taskforce to provide a website link for HICC members to find additional information and register to receive updates on the new exports legislation. Secretariat to circulate the website link to members.

Action Item 3: Finance Division to update members on the Cost Recovery Implementation Statement (CRIS) for exports with revised timelines and processes.

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Action Item 5: ABIB and PEQG to investigate the department's ability to provide nasopharyngeal swabs in the Mickleham facility for consistency with Approved Arrangement sites.

Action Item 6: ABIB to have a discussion with relevant laboratories to ensure they will accept the larger AHT nasopharyngeal swabs and provide the relevant collection containers.

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