

THE ONTARIO TRACEABILITY PILOT PROJECT ...

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The *Ontario Traceability Pilot Project* is being conducted by Equine Canada as a preliminary step in the creation of a national horse identification and traceability program. Equine Canada, the national organization responsible for equestrian sport, recreation, and equine welfare, represents the industry's interests to the federal government.

Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada (AAFC) — through its Canadian Industry Traceability Infrastructure Program — is investing in the development of livestock traceability programs that collect and verify identification of livestock in Canada, and their movement, to accelerate industry's tracking and tracing capacity. The objective of the federal investment is to assist governments and industry in limiting the economic effect of animal health, plant health, food safety and other emergencies and to proactively gain access to markets requiring traceability.

WHERE DO HORSES FIT INTO THE PICTURE?

The maintenance of health treatment records and the ability to trace the movement of livestock have become priority issues for our important trading partners in the United States, Europe and other parts of the world. New and stricter policies are being developed by foreign governments that will affect the ability of the Canadian horse industry to participate in global business transactions.

In addition to market access challenges, the creation of domestic bio-security protocols for horses has been identified as a priority measure to protect our industry's investment in bloodstock and competition horses. Rapid response in the face of an infectious disease outbreak requires mechanisms and structures that are scheduled to be developed as part of the Canadian identification and traceability system.

The participation of industry throughout the planning and development process for a national equine traceability program will ensure that the resulting system reflects the unique needs and practices of the Canadian horse industry.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?

In July 2009, Honourable Gerry Ritz, Minister of Agriculture & Agri-food Canada, announced the commitment of the Government of Canada to the development of a comprehensive national traceability system for livestock and poultry — to be mandatory and implemented by 2011. The July 2009 announcement included a commitment from Federal and Provincial ministers, to:

“... move forward on a comprehensive national traceability system for livestock and poultry, which is critical for managing animal health and food safety issues, as well as expanding market access and driving efficiencies. They agreed that a mandatory comprehensive national system for livestock will be in place by 2011 and that implementation will be supported by national funding and regulatory framework. Ministers committed to engage key industry groups on the timing of implementation for each species. The Growing Forward policy framework and

Agricultural Flexibility Fund will provide support for key elements of the national system.”

For full text of the news release link to:

http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/index_e.php?s1=n&s2=2009&page=n90710a

In January 2010, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issued an Information Bulletin stating their intention to develop a comprehensive food safety and traceability program for the Canadian equine industry — for both domestic and international markets.

This Information Bulletin is published on the CFIA website:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpaffr/newcom/2010/20100129e.shtml>

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Equine Canada, through extensive industry consultation during 2003 through 2006, developed an industry-based strategy for CanEQUID — National Equine Traceability Program. This Strategy is available on the Equine Canada website (www.equinecanada.ca).

Equine Canada has begun testing elements of the strategy. This year the *Ontario Traceability Pilot Project* is being used as a road test for data collection methods and traceability. The information collected will contribute to planning the full-scale implementation of the national equine traceability program. The pilot project is a collaboration among Equine Canada, the Ontario Racing Commission and OnTrace.

WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ONTARIO TRACEABILITY PILOT PROJECT?

Participants are eligible for 5 scheduled payments to offset the costs for participating in the *Ontario Traceability Pilot Project*:

- A payment to offset the travel costs incurred to attend the orientation session
- A payment upon enrolment in the Pilot Project test group. Enrolment in the Pilot Project will require that information is provided for: the Participant; all the horses under the Participant's care, custody and control; and the home-farm or primary location for horses in their care.
- Three payments throughout the May, June, July period, with payments to be provided at the end of each 4-week data collection period (cycle).

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO DO?

In order to participate in the Pilot Project, you will be required to:

- Attend an orientation session during April
- Sign a declaration stating that you are authorized to provide information on the horses for which you have care, custody and control
- Report on horse movement between locations (i.e. farm-to-track, farm-to-farm, etc.) during the 90-day data collection period
- Report on horse health treatments that occur during the 90-day data collection period

- Be available during the 90-day data collection period for de-briefing sessions in order to report on any issues or problems that arise and provide feedback on the data collection methods

HOW WILL I RECORD AND REPORT THIS INFORMATION?

You will be required to record transactions in one of three ways:

- Directly into an Internet database
- Into an Excel spreadsheet
- Into a paper journal

These records will be submitted to Strategic Equine Inc. (project managers for the Pilot Project), on a weekly basis over the 90-day period from May through July 2010.

HOW WILL THE ORC USE THIS INFORMATION?

The Ontario Racing Commission (ORC) will not have access to any data on specific horses in the project. The ORC will have access to the statistical information on the pool of horses in the Pilot Project, movements for the pool of horses, and statistics on treatments given to the pool of horses. The ORC is evaluating the merits of developing a horse health passport for active racehorses.

WHO IS ONTRACE? HOW WILL ONTRACE USE THIS INFORMATION?

OnTrace is the Ontario traceability agency involved in the development of an Ontario provincial traceability program, including the registration of all premises with livestock. OnTrace will use the statistical analysis from the Pilot Project to identify how non-farm properties with horses can be identified in a provincial premises registry program.

HOW WILL EQUINE CANADA USE THIS INFORMATION?

Equine Canada is primarily interested in the collection methodology, the level of detail available and other identified challenges to implementation. It will use this information and the statistical analysis of activities to refine the implementation strategy for CanEQUID — National Equine Traceability Program.