



## **Virtual WHIRDEC Meeting**

**16th November 2023**

### **Minutes of the meeting**

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## **Implementation of Animal Health Law – by E.Goulas**

**Presentation** : Virtual\_WHIRDEC\_2023\_Final.pdf

#### **Slide 3 :**

Legal Framework : Animal health law applicable from the 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021

For identification and registration of equine animals, the main part is the part IV.

#### **Slide 4 : Issuance of identification documents for horses registered in a studbook with cross border activity**

Rules for identification of equine animals, kept in the territory of a Member State to which a breeding program of a breed society located in another Member State has been extended

The horse should be identified with a transponder beginning with the country code of his country of birth.

The unique code (= UELN) is assigned by the breed society which issued the SLID (= Single Lifetime Identification Document) with its country code.

➔ *Regulation 2021/963 article 10, Part 1 of Annex I., article 22 2)*

### **Slide 5, 6, 7 : Studbooks with cross border activity**

3 types of procedures implemented in the different EU countries

In all cases, the first step for the breed society is to get an approved extension of activity in the country.

First procedure as described in article 22 (EU 2021/963) (see slide 5) :

- ➔ The SLID is sent to the central database or a specific delegated body : implemented by Croatia, Italy, Finland, The Netherlands, Denmark, France if no agreement signed, Belgium if XLS file sent (specific agreement needed)

Second procedure implemented by France and Belgium (see slide 6):

- ➔ Specific agreement in France including data exchange with xls file. The SLID can be sent directly by the breed society to the operator (= breeder or person responsible for the animal, usually the keeper )
- ➔ Specific agreement in Belgium including webservice data exchanges. The SLID can be sent directly by the breed society to the operator

Third procedure implemented by Ireland, Latvia, Poland and Romania (see slide 7)

- ➔ The SLID is sent to the operator. In the national legislation of these countries, the operator has to send the SLID to the central database or delegated bodies to register the equine animal in the central database.

### **Questions :**

- 1) **Therese Selle (Norsk Hestesenter / Norwegian Horse Association)** : Who is the operator in this case?

The operator could be the breeder or the owner of the horse. The operator is the person responsible for the animal usually the keeper. In The Netherlands the operator is the person who is responsible for the daily care of the horse, in Belgium and Denmark too.

- 2) What does SLID stand for?

SLID = Single Lifetime Identification Document

- 3) **Lidia Chomentowska(Polish Horse Breeders Association (Gość))** : Do transponders for horses with the correct country code (in Poland with the initial number 616) have to come from the pool of transponders intended only for horses, or can they be also intended for other animals? In Poland, the distributor of transponders for horses should be authorized by the Agency for Restructuring and Modernization of Agriculture. We encounter cases where horses are chipped with veterinary transponders that do not come from an authorized distributor and are originally intended for cats or dogs.

Ewa Camara : The horses, born after the 21st April 2021, have to be identified with a transponder, which is authorized by the competent authority. The 3 first numbers of the transponder must be the

country code.

So in the case where an authorized detects in the field a horse (which by its age should be identified after 21st April 2021) with a transponder which is not compliant with the rules of the competent authorities then this horse should be treated as wrongly identified and a replacement document should be issued. The horse will be excluded from the food chain. Maybe this is a good tool to fight the fraud.

Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise : Same in Germany, only "German horse transponder" from official body" are allowed

Daphné Tamigniaux (SPF Santé Publique - FOD Volksgezondheid) : In Belgium, the country code will be applied in a near future. The Belgian legislation has to be finalized.

- 4) **MARÍA ARANZAZU RODRÍGUEZ SAÍNZ DE LOS TERREROS (ANCCE)** : How can we control if the microchip that is used in a different country is correct or not? Is the vet who makes the identification in that country responsible for the use of the correct microchip?

Ewa Camara : While doing the official controls or performing the tasks for identification, we can detect it and spread the information.

- 5) **Celia Clarke (826 Equine Studbooks Association of Great Britain)** : In the UK chips do not yet begin with the country code (826). I know that GB is no longer an EU member (ie is a technically a Third Country) but how can we make sure that equines chipped in the UK without a country code are acceptable?

Emilie Goulas : Great Britain is not longer an EU member, horses from GB are considered as horses from third countries. The articles 36 and 37 of regulation 2021/963 apply. If the identification document complies with the EU regulation, the horse is registered in the central database from the information provided in its passport. If the identification document doesn't comply with the regulation, the identification document should be completed, so that it complies with the requirements laid down in article 17 of regulation 2021/963, or a new identification document is issued based on the information contained in the submitted identification document on which the equine animal has entered the Union.

- 6) **Jolein Roestenburg (AES)** : Even if a horse is chipped with a chip from another country or a 'wrong' chip, what then? A horse can only have 1 chip so we still need to register with that chip right?

Ewa Camara : If the person in charge of identification detects a horse with a « wrong » microchip , he should not implant another one. He just has to read this chip number, which will be registered in the database and printed in the replacement document.

- 7) **Chris Gould (CWHBA - Canada)** : If the non compliant chip is already recorded in the SLID is a replacement document required.

Ewa Camara : By default the duplicate and replacement document will exclude the horse from the food chain. For the duplicate there is also a possibility to suspend the animal for six months from the food chain within the 30 days following the lost.

However, it's in the only one case when the original document was lost and the operator of the animal is able to provide evidence that it was not treated with medicines which exclude the horse from the food chain.

So in fact, the horses wrongly identified (and even for the horses identified too late), it should receive a duplicate and at the same time it should be excluded from the food chain.

- 8) **Kärt Jaarma (Estonia Agriculture and Food Board)** : Could you say which article in regulation 2021/963 is for wrongly implemented microchip and which document to issue?

Ewa Camara : The Article 12 (regulation 2021/963) :

- Paragraph 1 : « *Prior to applying the means of identification to the equine animal , the veterinarian or qualified person shall ensure that measures are taken to detect possible signs or marks indicative of the previous identification... »*
- Paragraph 2, which said what you should do : to issue a duplicate or replacement document depending on the information available.

So the duplicate is possible, but this is the duplicate with the exclusion from the food chain and then the code displayed by transponder or ear tag into is written on the document and recorded into the database.

## Validation mark and license – by E. Goulas

**Presentation** : Virtual\_WHIRDEC\_2023\_Final.pdf

### Slide 8: Validation mark and License

The licence is issued by the FEI or national federation or competent racing authority. The licence is linked to the high health status of the horse (see article 33 EU regulation 2021/963). The licence is entered in the identification document (Section III in the new model of identification document), and is recorded in the central database.

The licence will be delivered in 2024 :

- ➔ In France, by the National Equestrian Federation, France Galop and Le Trot.
- ➔ In Germany, by the National Equestrian Federation

In Denmark, the Danish Riding Association can issue FEI licences. The information will be available in the national database in 2024.

In Poland, Polski Związek Hodowców Koni (Polish Horse Breeders Association) issues licences as defined in the EU regulation 2021/963.

The health certificate of a horse with a licence is valid for 30 days instead of 10 days, for movings to another Member state.

The validation mark is linked to the establishment where the horse is habitually kept (see article 32 EU regulation 2021/963). The validation mark is issued by the competent authority. The validation mark is entered in the identification document (Section III in the new model of identification document), and is recorded in the central database.

The health certificate of a horse with a validation mark is valid for 30 days instead of 10 days, if the horse moves to another country.

The validation mark is implemented in :

- Portugal
- Romania
- Croatia
- ➔ Development are on progress in Denmark

Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise (German Equestrian Federation (FN)): As far as we know, Germany will not implement the Validation Mark in near future.

Ewa Camara : The license and the validation marks appeared in three regulations :

- 2019/2035 about the establishments and animal identification
- 2020/688 about the movement between Member States of equine animals
- 2021/ 963, which is about the identification of equine animals.

The license is the one for the horses, which participate to competition or races and is linked to the FEI rules. The license was implemented in the legislation just to allow to group horses, which have higher health status from the standard horses.

So horses with a license or a validation mark in the passport, are considered as horses with a higher health status, and therefore when their health certificate is issued for the movement within the Union, the certificate is valid for 30 days instead of 10 days .

However, not all horses can qualify for the license, that's why there is also a legislation on the validation mark. This validation mark is applied by the competent authorities and is linked to the establishment in which the horse is habitually kept.

In the previous regulation (before 2021), the registered horses, were by default, those with a higher health status, but this was not correct because there was no link on how the horse was treated from the animal health point of view.

#### Questions:

- 1) **Nidal Korabi (Ministry of Agriculture - Croatia)** : What is the approximate realistic number of rows in SLID for the Licence/validation mark? We are in the process of issuing a new SLID and would like to ensure enough rows for the lifetime of the horse

Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise (German Equestrian Federation (FN)): 4 years validity, therefore you do not need so many rows in a horses life!? 5-7 rows?

Maren Schlender (Hannoveraner Verband e.V.): In the German passports there are 10 rows on two pages : 5 for validation and 5 for licence

Emilie Goulas (post meeting add-on) : In the French passports, there are 4 rows on 1 page in the section III.

Ewa Camara : There is a special section for the validation mark and the license in the SLID. In the case Member States consider that this is not enough, I would appreciate the to be contacted by email and then we could see how to adjust this section.

Some Member States use a sticker in the front of the identification document to quickly identify that it belongs to an equine with a license or validation mark.

If the horse has got a validation mark in one Member State and move one year later to another Member State to an establishment which does not have this validation mark ; then there is an obligation to report the habitual residence, which is over 30 days.

The competent authority of this new establishment knows that there is a new animal and can verify the passport and can cross out this information on the identification document.

- 2) **Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise (German Equestrian Federation (FN))** : I have a question regarding horses traveling with a 10-day-certificate...some MS interpret that the horses in every case need a new attestation for coming home even if the horse turns back to his home within 10 days.....is that correct? Why is the certificate valid for 10 days if it is not valid for 10 days?

Ewa Camara : The health certificate is issued from the point of dispatch to the point of destination. There is a 10 days period for leaving the establishment of origin and arriving to the place of destination. To come back, a new certificate issued for the out of dispatch to the place of destination is needed.

The health certificate of 30 days is the only which allows you to travel around and come back home. Unfortunately, that's why competent authorities should use this provisions to implement validation mark in the national systems because not all horses can get the license from FEI.

- 3) **Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise (German Equestrian Federation (FN))** : What about Mares for insemination, young horses in the training stable? In Germany the operator has no access to the centra database

Ewa Camara : There is an exception in the regulation :

- (i) for equine animals participating in competitions, races, shows, training and hauling for a period not exceeding 90 days;
- (ii) for male equine animals for breeding kept during the breeding season;
- (iii) for female equine animals for breeding kept for a period not exceeding 90 days

## Registration of the place where horses are habitually kept - by M. Vienne

**Presentation :** Virtual\_WHIRDEC\_2023\_Final.pdf

### **Slide 10 : Registration of the place where horses are habitually kept and movements**

This information has to be registered in the central database by the operator. In the regulation there is no definition of « habitually » kept, but we've got this notion of 30 days (Article 64 of CDR 2019/2035).

When a horse arrives in an establishment, the operator registers the horse in his establishment register. If the horse leaves within 30 days, the operator simply registers the departure from the establishment in his establishment register.

If the horse stays at least 30 days, the horse should be attached to this establishment in the central database.

When the horse will leave the establishment, the keeper will have to register the departure of the horse in his register.

### **Slide 11, 12, 13 : Results of the survey on the places where horses are habitually kept**

15 participants

13/ 15 countries record establishments

8/15 countries record the place where horses are habitually kept

Ewa Camara : Recording in the databases the movements is in fact not obligatory based on animal health law. In the central database, you have to have the establishments and then the horses which are present in those establishments for more than 30 days.

All the movements are in the register that is kept by the operator in the establishment.

### **Questions :**

- 1) **Chris Eden - Equiventus** : The last slide showed that all establishment operators should report on arrival of an equine. It then said that the operator had to report if the equine stayed for more than 30 days. How do these 2 registrations differ? Is this 2 different registration processes?

Emilie Goulas : Yes it is 2 different registration processes. The operator has to maintain a register for all the entrance and the exits on his establishment. This could be done on a paper version, in an xls file or in a specific application.

The information that the horse stays in this establishment for more than 30 days must be registered in the central database.

## Demonstration of the registration of horse's location in Switerland - by Y. Schleppi

**Presentation :** Registration\_Location\_Switzerland.pdf

The system was established in 2011. The local authorities are responsible for registering farms where horses are kept and the specificity, that we have, is that it's always the owner of the animal that has to make the notification about the movements and other information about the horse.

**Questions :**

1. **Chris Eden - Equiventus :** Could I ask how Switzerland penalises those operators who do not register with the database?

Yves Schleppi : We don't have a real possibility to give some penalties.

It's because usually we don't know exactly where the source of the wrong information is.

We would like to encourage the keeper to notify their movements in the database. So we don't want to couple penalties on registrations.

2. **Chris Eden - Equiventus:** If all you need to check the location of the equine, along with the name of owner, is the UELN, are there any safety checks to stop data phishing by simply incrementing the UELN by 1?

Yves Schleppi : No, we suppose that anybody who has the UELN has a certain contact with the animal or with its passports.

## Demonstration of the registration of establishments in Belgium by J. Vanavermaete

**Presentation :** Establishment Belgium.pdf

The registration of establishments in Belgium was introduced on the 9th of February 2022. The Belgian Confederation of the Horse manages the national database of the equines, called HorseID.

The system does a check on double registrations because an establishment can only have one number for one address.

**Questions :**

1. **Joan van Gorkum (HorseManager):** How do you handle a property who rents to 4 keepers who have horses on same adress?

Daphné Tamigniaux (SPF Santé Publique - FOD Volksgezondheid) : there is only one operator for the establishment who is in charge of creating the establishment in de database and to link the horses but each keeper can manage his own register. The number of the establishment is linked to a place and not to keepers.

2. **Joan van Gorkum (HorseManager):** Has HorseID API's available for third party management systems for example Horsemanager ?

Jeroen Vanaevermaete : We have some API, they are used by studbooks to have access to our system. They are not available to third parties because of privacy policy.

## The Netherlands presentation of registering operators, locations and equines - by J. Zand Van't

**Presentation** : WHIRDEC- The Netherlands presentation of registering operators, locations and equines.pdf

There are two ways to register in the central database :

- directly into the central database through the Dutch enterprise Agency.  
In Dutch, we call it RVO
- also possible to register in the central database through a management system that has been connected to the central database, like horse manager.

### Questions :

1. **Kirsi Vehkakoski (Finnish Food Authority)** : Is it possible to have multiple establishments for a single horse?

Janalize van't Zand : Yes, it is possible to have multiple establishments, but the operator has to register both location under his name.

But the operator has to record when the horse moves from one to the another location.

2. **Lagershausen, Dr. Henrike Luise (German Equestrian Federation (FN))** :Did I get it right that every movement needs to be registered? even if below 30 days?

Janalize van't Zand : No.

When the horse is habitually kept for more than 30 days, then we want to know where the horse is and all the other movements the operator has to register it in his own establishment register, but not in the central database

## Data exchanges – by E.Goulas

**Presentation :** Virtual\_WHIRDEC\_2023\_Final.pdf

**Slide 13 and 14 :** Presentation of the main data which should be exchanged between Member States, or between central database and delegated body / breed society to comply with the EU regulation

## Equis Horselink – by B. de Mik

**Presentation :** Equis\_Horselink\_Whirdec2023.pdf

Horselink is a tool developed by Deltahorse to allow connected organisations to exchange data.

2 types of connection :

- Using Equis Solution
- Development of API to connect to the platform

**Questions :**

1. **Yves Schleppi (Swiss federal office for agriculture):** why is the permission only valid for a limited period of time?

Emilie Goulas : you can in Horselink define if you grant access for a limited period of time or if it's a lifetime access to the data.

2. **Bo van Gorkum (HorseManager) :** Does Horse link has read APIs to retrieve available data based on the chip number?

Max Becherer (DeltaHorse): Yes

3. **Marta Belley (Federation of Hungarian Horse Breeders) :** Does Horselink store all shared data or only "on-the-fly" reaches the different databases to which it is connected?

Max Becherer (DeltaHorse) : there is no storage of the data. Horselink is a kind of "Google"

4. **Chris Gould (CWHBA):** How can you search for a horse without a UELN

Max Becherer (DeltaHorse) : You can search by microchip.

## SNPS for DNA testing – by M. Vienne

**Presentation :** Virtual\_WHIRDEC\_2023\_Final.pdf

### **Slide 15 to 21 : Presentation of the results of the survey on the use of SNP's for DNA testing and parentage verification**

32 participants

6 participants are already using SNP's for genotyping

4 participants are working on the transition from STR to SNP's

#### **Questions :**

- 1) **MARÍA ARANZAZU RODRÍGUEZ SAÍNZ DE LOS TERREROS (ANCCE)** :When do you think that the panel of SNPs would be available for associations and labs? Is the SNP to STR conversion is working well? What is the reliability for that conversion?

Simon Cooper [Weatherbys] clarifies that a lot of work was done in the last two years. There is already an SNP panel approved for the cattle. A panel for horses has been approved last July. With the rank 1 system, the panel has to be tested through ISAG for compliance. This compliance is done every 2 years, so the next compliance final test will be 2024 – 2025. At the end of 2025 we hope to have an ISAG list of rank 1 studbooks for thoroughbreds. The difficulty is that the results of this comparison test in 2024-2025 will be official or non-official, as it was for the last 2 years, maybe because it is a new panel, and maybe because it also depends on the approval of the Thoroughbred for these tests . This is something that is debated at the moment.

- 2) **Caroline Teyssier (Ifce )** : Has ISAG approved the panel? There is no information on the ISAG website nor anywhere else.

Simon Cooper says that the only reason he was aware of the approval is because he knows the previous chairman of the committee, Romy Morrin [Weatherbys scientific] and because P. Flynn [Weatherbys scientific] is a member of the group too. Simon is not sure where it has been published, but for sure, a panel is approved. The work on the panel was quite slow but it speeded up the last 18 months. Originally, they were looking for getting an approval at the 2021 conference, but it didn't happened, which was a little bit disappointing, so they pushed to have an approval for the 2023 conference, and that worked out. Rebecca Bellone is in charge of that group.

- 3) **Fabien Gregoire (ARSIA – Belgium)**: As a manager of a laboratory providing STR profiles, I can say that the transition to SNP has cost for the clients and the laboratory, and will have an impact on the service (reactivity for urgent requests for example). The STR method is cheap, robust and relatively fast. I don't see a lot of advantages of passing to SNP profiles in horses except giving extras genes of interets.

Simon Cooper replied there is a working group working on the cost matter. Indeed, there is a cost link to the transition to the SNP technology, as all horses has to be re-profiled. Yet, in some countries, the STR technology is already starting to come to the end of life, especially regarding the IT support. It might take 5 or 10 years, but it will change. When we moved from blood typing to microsatellites it took 15 years, so Simon is expecting that the period to move from MS to SNP will be shorter. Yet, even if there is a cost to change, the advantages are enormous. MS can only give the information for parentage verification, whereas SNP, combined with the parentage verification gives the complete genotype of the horse, it's an enormous amount of information that you can get from one test.

- 4) Celia Clarke (826 Equine Studbooks Association of Great Britain) : This presentation seems to be limited to WBFSH member studbooks only?

Indeed, we have more contacts information to the WBFSH members than the others, so the main recipients of the survey were WBFSH members.

### **Conclusion :**

We would like to warmly thank E. Camara for participating and giving us all these useful explanation. We also would like to thank Y. Schleppi, J. Vanavermaete, J. Van't Zand for their demos on the registration of horse location, and also B. de Mik for the presentation of the Horselink project. This year, the meeting was particularly rich in exchange, sharing feedbacks, thank you all for your participation and questions. Do not hesitate to suggest subjects for next meeting.