



TEMPORARY WAIVER OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO TEST CERTAIN EQUINE FOR PIROPLASMOSIS

The Executive Director of the Texas Animal Health Commission (Commission) has temporarily waived compliance of the requirement that thoroughbred horses be tested for Piroplasmosis prior to entering a sanctioned racetrack facility in Texas. The requirement is found in Title 4 of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 49, entitled "Equine," and specifically located in § 49.5(d) entitled "Piroplasmosis: Testing, Identification of Infected Equine."

WHEREAS, the requirement provides that all equine entering a racetrack facility must have a negative Piroplasmosis test (*Theileria equi*) within the past 12 months. A racetrack facility is grounds used to conduct live horse racing events and is not limited to facilities licensed by the Texas Racing Commission.

WHEREAS, equine Piroplasmosis is a tick-borne protozoal infection of horses. At least one species of tick, *Amblyomma cajennense*, has proven capable of transmitting the blood parasite. This species of tick is endemic to South Texas and several other southern states. Also, the disease may be spread between horses by unsafe animal husbandry practices such as sharing needles or equipment that is contaminated with blood. This has brought about the disclosure that there is a distinct group of positive animals which are for the purpose of racing, either through sanctioned events or otherwise. While Piroplasmosis can be a fatal disease, many horses may display vague signs of illness, such as fever, inappetence or jaundice. Several states have imposed interstate movement restrictions on horses from Texas.

WHEREAS, the Commission adopted the requirement on May 24, 2011, because it was determined there is a distinct group of positive horses that are classified in some way as race horses. Based on this, the Commission required all equine participating in racing events at a sanctioned racetrack facility to have a negative Piroplasmosis test in order to participate. The requirement was put in place to ensure that the positive animals are disclosed as well as to protect those animals which participate in such events.

WHEREAS, because there have not been any Piroplasmosis positive thoroughbred horses disclosed wanting to participate in sanctioned racing since 2010, the thoroughbred equine industry in Texas believes that the requirement constitutes a hardship on Texas thoroughbreds. The specific application of the requirement on thoroughbreds has been identified for review and potential amendment of the requirement in regard to that class of equine.

COMMISSIONERS

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Jimmie Ruth Evans
Melanie Johnson, Ed.D.
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Thomas "Tommy" Oates
Joseph G. "Joe" Osterkamp
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Leo D. Vermedahl, Ph.D.



WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 4, Texas Administrative Code, §59.2(c) entitled "General Practices and Procedures," the Executive Director may waive a requirement for extenuating circumstances if it is not in conflict with sound epidemiologic principles.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Executive Director of the Texas Animal Health Commission has temporarily waived compliance with the requirement that thoroughbred horses be tested for Piroplasmosis prior to entering a horse racetrack facility licensed by the Texas Racing Commission.

This waiver will be presented for consideration at the Commission meeting scheduled for July 26, 2022.

This waiver will remain in effect until it is rescinded.

Andy Schwartz, D.V.M.
Executive Director
Texas Animal Health Commission

Effective Date

Date Approved by the Commission

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