

ID tagging program

Why is there this interest in a federal tagging program to identify Canadian horses?

On January 9, 2004, the Equine Canada Task Force on National Equine Identification met in Red Deer, Alberta, to discuss a federal "tagging" program for all horses. The subsequent task force report lauds the initiative as "a pro-active approach...from the horse owners' perspective". But why the interest in developing such a complex tracing tool at this point in time? The following are excerpts from an online report:

"Horse owners have a responsibility to the community in which we live to work towards ensuring food safety...."

"Canada is a major exporter of horse meat primarily to Europe & Japan, and has an obligation to comply with international food safety requirements."

Source: equestrian.ca

On the heels of the BSE (mad cow) crisis, the wheels are already in motion to ensure not only that humans consuming horsemeat are protected from disease, but that the Canadian horse slaughter industry itself is allowed to thrive without threat of financial ruin. It is interesting to note that a similar identification process for equines is being developed currently in the United States.

Food for thought:

1. If not for the BSE crisis that devastated the cattle industry, would a federal identification program for horses even have been considered?
2. At the expense of the Canadian taxpayer, is it justifiable to develop an intricate and costly tracing program for horses? Or should horses simply be removed from the food chain? Indeed, the Equine Canada Task Force on National Equine Identification itself admits: "...a horse, 'in use', is worth more on the market than the meat price for the same animal..."

Further reading:

[Equine Identification Task Force, Feb. 2004](#)