

September 10, 2005: Anti-Chip Lobby sits down with European Commission

On Wednesday August 31, 2005, a Dutch-Belgian delegation sat down to talk with Mr. Füssel and Mr. Sprenger of the European Committee. (Mr. Füssel is head of the Zoo-Technical Committee and responsible for identifying cattle within the European Union.) We talked about Regulation 2000/68/EC - dated December 22, 1999 - which, after the tenth revision, will soon take effect.

The delegation of the Anti-Chip Lobby expressed their concerns about the EU regulation for identification and registration of equines by means of an injectable transponder (microchip). Mr. Füssel explained the underlying reasons of this regulation, which by the way, is officially put 'on hold', and therefore not applied yet.

The first argument for the use of microchip implants is to determine the number and location of equines within the European Union in case there is a disease outbreak.

The second argument concerns food safety. The EU Commission does not want unlawful medication to enter the human food chain. However, what the Commission seems to forget is that it is extremely unpleasant and dangerous to find a transponder or the remains of a transponder in your food.

The Zoo-Technical Committee, under the leadership of Mr.

Füssel, has looked at the Netherlands as an example for chipping because the transponder has been recently used for identifying equines. In the meantime, horse owners have informed us of adverse reactions experienced by their horses to the transponders. More than one stud book (for example, the American Quarter horse stud book) stopped using injectable transponders and switched to DNA determination because of problems with the injectable transponder. Also, Dutch organizations and authorities decline all responsibility in case of problems that result from the injectable transponder. Breeders and owners have to sign an agreement that states that he or she takes full responsibility for all consequences resulting from injecting a transponder in their horse.

On account of the problems associated with microchip implants, Mr. Füssel gave us the opportunity to illustrate alternatives. We discussed the iris-scan in great detail because we believe it is safe for horses and the human food chain, and is fraud-proof.

The following agreements were made: Mr. Füssel and Mr. Sprenger will attend a demonstration of the iris-scan. They will discuss the matter with the other members of the Zoo-Technical Committee in their next meeting. The iris-scan will be seriously considered as a possibility for a method of identification.

It was a fruitful meeting, after which all parties went home satisfied.