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SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE D'ENREGISTREMENT DES ANIMAUX



## C.L.R.C. WORKSHOP REPORT - 2004

The Annual Workshop presented by CLRC was held on April 2, 2004 at the Executive Royal Inn in Calgary, Alberta. Approximately 20 representatives of various breed associations, as well as CLRC Board members and staff were on hand for this very informative day.

Following is a summary of the presentations:

### **1. USING WEBSITES FOR EFFECTIVE PROMOTION:**

- Jory Lamb, Canadian Rural Computer Services Inc. (CRCS Inc.), Calgary

Jory stated that the Internet can serve two main purposes for any business; namely, Operations and Marketing. His talk was mainly about the Marketing purpose. He emphasized that, in designing a web page, you want to be concerned with search engine optimization. You want as many engines as possible to find your website and put it near the top of the search list; otherwise your site will just get lost. To achieve this optimization, he said that key words are very important. He advised that you research what the key word are that the websites of your competitors are found by, and then use as many of those as you can on your site.

He then emphasized that you should take a needs based approach to designing a website. What will the end users want to find out? What will they want to see? What layout will assist them to find the information quickly and conveniently? You must always think of what the user will think, not necessarily what you want it to look like. This applies to both format and content. He said that marketing is about establishing a brand, and about the experience of the end-user. He noted that the prettiest or fanciest website is not always the most successful, if it doesn't convey the needed information easily. He explained that the Internet provides information and communication. Primarily websites are about information, and e-mail is about communication. Since most people check their e-mail at least daily, but only visit websites when they want information, time sensitive information is best sent by e-mail.

Finally, Jory stated that it is important to monitor the statistics about your website and evaluate the results. This doesn't just involve the number of hits, but must also include analysis of where the traffic is coming from, and feedback that visitors give you. After measuring and monitoring the traffic to your site, you must revisit it and revise it as necessary.

Since Jory's firm developed the CLRC Marketplace, Jory walked the participants through the process of posting a webcard on the Marketplace. This is an easy affordable way to give your farm a first, or additional, presence on the Internet.

## **2. NATIONAL EQUINE IDENTIFICATION:**

- Vel Evans, Equine Canada

Vel has been working on behalf of Equine Canada to gather information and facilitate discussion throughout the equine community in Canada on the subject of a national identification program for horses. Following the implementation of an identification program for the entire cattle industry, other species are also in the process of developing suitable programs. The federal government has set a target of 2008 for programs to be in place for all species, but has mandated each species group to develop its own program that will meet its needs as well as those of government agencies, with regard to animal health and food safety issues, and the ability to trace animals back to where they have been. To this end Equine Canada struck a task force that met on three occasions and made recommendations to Equine Canada, as well as identifying the areas that need further study.

Vel started her presentation with a profile of the horse industry in Canada. There are approximately 950,000 horses in Canada, involved in many different uses, including sport and competition, racing, pleasure riding, breeding, meat production, work, and cattle herding. Horses are very mobile and very active, and it is this activity that creates the major part of the economic value of horses. As a result, it is critical that the ability to move horses be maintained, even if there is a disease outbreak.

Vel continued by presenting the recommendations that the Task Force had made. The system will involve a Unique Equine Lifetime Number (UELN) being assigned to each horse. This will be done by approved organizations, such as breed registries and sport governing bodies. Non-pedigreed and non-competition horses will be recorded and assigned their UELN by a grade horse record. The system will most likely be phased in over several years, beginning with horses in the existing breed registries. At the outset, it is recommended that the current means of identification accepted by the breed registries be accepted; whether that be descriptions of colour and markings, sketches, photographs, microchips, tattoos, etc. In the meantime, a study will be done to determine the best physical device to be used in the future. Devices that have been suggested include microchips, transponders, and optical scans. The national identification database will include the UELN, ownership information and the horse's identification.

The tracking or traceability component will provide information on where an animal has been and what other animals it has been in contact with. It is quite possible that this component will utilize the national premise identification program that is also being developed. Tracking would be done at key times in the activity cycle of the horse, including birth, pedigree registration, training, shows and competitions, veterinary care, sales, and death. In certain sectors of the horse industry, there is potential for the identification document to be expanded so that it includes health information, etc., and for this document to replace all other documents currently required, such as transport manifests.

The third element of the program is trace-back, which will provide government agencies with the information they will require in case of a health emergency.

Input will be sought from the various sectors of the horse industry over a period of time, and Equine Canada plans to launch an education program.

Considerable lively discussion followed Vel's presentation, with many relevant questions being posed.

For those wishing more information, the full presentation is available at [www.equestrian.ca/EC/EC\\_equine\\_identification\\_task\\_force.shtml](http://www.equestrian.ca/EC/EC_equine_identification_task_force.shtml). The slide presentation made to the Equine Canada Convention is very similar to that which Vel used during the Workshop.

### **3. BSE and RELATED ISSUES:**

- Erik Butters, Alberta Beef Producers

In his presentation, Erik brought together a number of interesting and significant facts about the beef industry in Canada, and the effect that BSE has had on it. There are approximately 15 million beef cattle in Canada. Prior to the BSE occurrence and the closure of the United States border, the Canadian beef industry exported 70% of its production, either as meat or as live cattle. Of this amount, 70% was exported to the United States, 15% to Mexico, and 15% to other countries. About 1/3 of the beef consumed in Canada is imported; mainly cheaper cuts, while we export premium cuts of higher value.

Erik pointed out that even though 70,000 cattle per week are slaughtered in Canada, there are insufficient packing facilities in Canada to process all our cattle and export the meat, as we have traditionally exported many live slaughter cattle to the U.S. It would take several years and a huge capital investment to build enough facilities in Canada to process our entire production. It is known that several plants in the U.S. are nearly idle because they depended on Canadian cattle. He noted that Canadian feedlots are currently being filled in anticipation of the borders reopening by June. All of the scientific reports indicate that appropriate measures have been taken in both countries to minimize the risks to both animal and human health. These measures centre in particular on the removal of additional Specific Risk Materials.

In closing, Erik reminded the attendees that, while there are many opinions in this issue, the export business is extremely important to our beef industry, and that the United States is far and away our biggest customer, so the question becomes one of how angry do we want to make the Americans.

Again a lively discussion followed Erik's presentation.

prepared by Ron Black, General Manager  
April 27, 2004