

Preliminary Study of the Respiratory Disease Status of Wild Horses and Burros and the Genetic Analysis of Wild Horse and Burro Blood Samples

Further Details of BLM Project Responsibilities

The following responsibilities apply equally to all BLM gather activities and all BLM owned and contracted holding facilities despite location or funding base.

1. Gather Research Coordinator (GRC) Responsibilities: Prior to each gather, a BLM employee will be identified as the Gather Research Coordinator. The Application for Authorization to Gather form already in use by the BLM can be modified to include identification of this individual. The responsibility for identification of the GRC lies with the field office manager responsible for conducting the gather.

The GRC will be responsible for making sure that all activities associated with the CSU-CVEADSS/BLM research project for their individual gather are accomplished. This individual will work closely with the BLM WH&B National Research Coordinator, Linda Coates-Markle (406-896-5223) and Dr. Liz Mumford (970-491-1850) at CSU-CVEADSS to accomplish these tasks. A list of specific duties and responsibilities will be made available to the GRC once they are identified by the BLM for each gather.

The GRC will also be responsible for identifying potential problem areas in the implementation of the research at the specific gather. Therefore, this individual should be very familiar with the Herd Management Area (HMA) to be gathered, the initial gathering facility, and the gathering protocol. For example, this individual will need to be able to predict the challenges that might be associated with collecting, storing, and shipping biological samples from that specific remote gather site.

If the GRC believes that additional help will be needed at their gather, additional assistance may be made available through USDA:APHIS:VS. As soon as additional assistance is determined necessary, the GRC will contact WO260 who will coordinate with Dr.Lisa Hatcher at APHIS.

2. Data Sampling Responsibilities:

Sample Collection Kits: Sample collection kits will be sent to all BLM holding facilities. Immediately after a gather is approved, sample collection kits also will be shipped to the responsible field office. The kits will then be forwarded from the field offices to the GRC for each gather. Each kit will contain 2 cooling/shipping boxes, gel cooler packs, 20 Copan sample collection units (nasal swabs), data collection forms and instructions, FedEx shipping labels, and sample collection and shipping instructions. Additional Copan units and forms will be shipped to field offices and facilities as needed. Note that there are defined time frames for return of samples and record forms to CSU. Return of this information, in a timely manner, is the responsibility of the GRC.

Identifying Infected Animals: At each gather and at each holding facility, BLM employees will be responsible for identifying animals showing clinical signs of *S. equi* and/or *S. zoo* infection. Specific signs include cloudy nasal discharge from one or both nostrils, and/or swellings or abscesses in the region of the jaw. A specific set of guidelines will be issued with each sample collection kit detailing sample collection protocols, including selection criteria and number of animals to be sampled per disease outbreak. Information is to be recorded on provided Gather Data Sheets, and Individual Animal Respiratory Disease Records (see attachments). Details for recording data are outlined in instructions provided with each sample kit. Note that animals exhibiting other signs of IURD (eye discharge, clear nasal discharge, cough, depression) will not be considered as suspect *S. equi*/*S. zoo* infected cases and should not be sampled.

Collecting Nasal Swabs from Wild Animals: During routine restraint of clinically ill animals, (such as for aging), a swab will be used to collect a sample of the nasal discharge or of the material draining from the abscess. These swabs are included in “Copan” units, which are bacterial sample collection units. Each unit includes a swab and a tube containing a bacterial transport media. After sample collection the swab will be placed in the individual tube of media, and the tube will be labeled with the animal’s identification number and stored in a cooled location. All tubes will be shipped under cooled conditions via overnight air to the CSU Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for culture. Each shipment will be accompanied by the appropriate laboratory submission forms.

Collecting Blood Samples from Wild Animals: Blood samples will be collected for genetic analysis, and future disease assessment, on each distinct wild horse and burro population. Procedures and protocol for sampling and recording data are outlined in Attachment 2 of the Gather Policy & Selective Removal Criteria for Wild Horses IM No.2002-095 dated 02/14/2002. Briefly, two 10-ml tubes of blood (one yellow-top tube containing the anticoagulant and one red-top tube for the separation of serum) will be collected for horses and one yellow-top tube for burros using the Vacutainer blood collection system. Approximately 25% of AML for each herd, or a minimum of 25 animals and not more than 100 animals, should be sampled per gather. The blood samples will be chilled at the gather site and shipped by overnight air to the CSU-CVEADSS Laboratory.

Collecting Samples from Domestic Animals: Within 48 hours before or after the first day of each gather, serum and nasal swab samples from all saddle horses and Judas horses used for that gather, should be collected by either competent field personnel, an APHIS veterinarian or the contract veterinarian working at the gather. A swab should be collected from each contact animal at each gather, regardless of how recently they have been previously sampled. Blood samples should be routinely drawn from all domestic horses present at gather sites and holding facilities. Participation by the Gather Contractor, for sampling Contractor-owned animals, is voluntary but should be highly encouraged by the GRC. Domestic animals, consistently present at holding facilities, need to be sampled at least 3 times per year. Appropriate data should be

recorded on the Contact Horse History Record form. Details for proper recording are outlined in instructions provided with each sample kit (see attachments). The swabs will be cultured for *S. equi* and *S. zoo* to determine if any of the contact horses are shedding infective bacteria at the time of the gather.

3. BLM WH&B National Research Coordinator Responsibilities: The WH&B National Research Coordinator, Linda Coates-Markle, Billings Field Office, has been appointed as the Project Inspector (PI) for this agreement. This individual is responsible for providing on-site inspection of the work and for providing CSU with special instructions, guidance, or training necessary to complete or perform the work. This individual is also available to assist the BLM GRC, in interpreting instructions and sampling protocol identified in the project sample kits, and can be reached at (406-896-5223).