



# American Horse Council Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **American Horse Council's National Issues Fall Forum Tackles Major Industry Concerns**

**WASHINGTON, DC** November 6, 2007 – The American Horse Council's (AHC) recent National Issues Fall Forum was a resounding success. Over 100 industry professionals and horse enthusiasts from every sector of the equine world gathered at Keeneland Racetrack on November 2<sup>nd</sup> for important updates on some of the horse world's hottest topics and primary concerns. Complete details, including several presentation downloads, are now available on the AHC's web site: [www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org)

The fall forum topics covered included:

**Preserving Our Land and Use--Conservation Easements**, by attorney Margaret M. Graves, a board member of Bluegrass Conservancy, and attorney Shannon Bishop Arvin, of Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC. Attendees were given an overview of how land is protected, and the various prices, fees, taxes, and concerns that are involved. Various easement and conservation programs were highlighted, with special consideration given to programs initiated by the state of Kentucky. Graves stressed that most conservation programs are geared toward, "... staying true to the heritage of growing in a compact, contiguous way." Graves also stressed that the states and Federal government are beginning to notice the monetary impact of farm conservation, "Farmland contributes more to government coffers," she said.

**Own Responsibly--Spread the Word, Latest from the Unwanted Horse Coalition (UHC)** with Katy Carter of the UHC, Kristin Hix of The Jockey Club, and Sally Baker of the American Association of Equine Practitioners. Katy Carter stated that no one currently knows how many horses go unwanted each year in the United States. Carter indicated that the UHC's primary goal is to educate owners to "own responsibly." In order to "spread the word about unwanted horses" the UHC has created a number of new public education tools, pamphlets and materials. Everyone is encouraged to visit the UHC's web site for details and downloads: [www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org](http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org). New to the Web site is a listing of facilities that can take unwanted horses. The group has also created advertisements to promote responsible horse ownership. These publications that can be used in reprint. The UHC presentation is available on the AHC's web site: [www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org)

**Federal Legislation and Regulations Affecting the Industry** by AHC President Jay Hickey. In his discussion of several changes to federal laws and regulations, Mr. Hickey focused on efforts that are currently being made to offer the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits and Security Act of 2007, better known as AgJOBS, as an amendment to the Farm Bill or any other legislation to be considered by the Senate. AgJOBS (S.340) is a comprehensive solution to many of the horse industry's immigration problems with respect to H-2A workers at horse breeding farms and ranches. Mr. Hickey also discussed the provisions in the Senate farm bill that would make horses eligible for federal emergency assistance; the "Preserving our Equine Heritage on Public Land Act," legislation just introduced by Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID) that would require federal land managers to consider the historic and traditional use of horses on public lands in any exclusionary effort; and the Equine Equity Act, which includes several favorable tax changes for horses.

**Keeping the IRS at Bay--Federal Tax Laws for Horse Owners**, by attorney Doug Romaine of Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC. Mr. Romaine focused on the differences between so-called “hobby” equine activities versus “business” activities in relation to the various ways in which the Internal Revenue Service distinguishes between the two. By focusing on a strong business model and, “carrying out your horse activities in a business-like manner” those involved in the horse industry can be better prepared should the IRS audit their activities. Among the best advice given, Mr. Romaine also suggested that horse owners and breeders keep separate books and ledgers for their horse business, perhaps even, “by horse” in order to distinguish profits (or losses) on a horse-by-horse basis.

**The Ins and Outs of Movement--Import/Export Issues for Horse Owners**, by Andrea Morgan, DVM, Associate Deputy Administrator for Regional Operations, USDA. Dr. Morgan’s entire presentation is available on the AHC’s web site ([www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org)). Dr. Morgan explained the import-export laws for horses in and out of the United States. She further touched upon the recent discussions regarding public versus private quarantine facilities, a major issue that has surfaced in relation to the upcoming World Equestrian Games to be held in Kentucky in 2010. Dr. Morgan stressed that, as an industry, “... we have the shared responsibility of getting horses in and out of this country in a dedicated and responsible way.”

**The Sleeping Giant--Update on Equine Piroplasmiasis (EP)**, by Kent Fowler, DVM, Chief Animal Health Branch, California Department of Food and Agriculture. Currently, EP is classified as a “foreign-animal disease.” Dr. Fowler’s presentation highlighted all the essential safeguards that the equine industry can take to make sure that EP remains foreign and isolated. Dr. Fowler explained how EP is transmitted by ticks and has been shown to have a twenty-percent fatality rate among equines. Fowler reviewed the various red-blood cell affecting symptoms associated with the disease, which he warned, “often go undiagnosed.” Fowler also remarked on the various measures the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and others are taking to make sure EP does not become endemic to the United States.

**Do You Have A Match?--Immigration Issues Facing the Horse Industry**, by attorney Charles R. Baesler Jr. of Stoll Keenon Ogden, PLLC. As a compliment to some of the broader immigration issues discussed earlier in the day by the AHC, Mr. Baesler went into a more in-depth analysis of H-2A and H-2B alien workers, as the current rules apply to the horse industry. Baesler noted that getting such workers admitted is quite often, “complicated and time-consuming.” He explained the so-called “no-match” letters in relation to the governments pursuit of workers with questionable or falsified documentation. Baesler emphasized the importance of clarity and consistency when dealing with alien workers and federal agencies.

This is only the second time the AHC has held a major National Issues Forum outside of Washington, DC. In summarizing the event, AHC President Jay Hickey said, “This event was a good review of some of the issues currently affecting the American horse industry. This fall forum is the perfect opportunity for the horse world to be well-prepared for the year ahead.” The AHC will hold its annual DC-based National Issues Forum in June of 2008. Details regarding this event will be available online in early January 2008.

The AHC’s National Issues Fall Forum was sponsored by event host Keeneland Association; The Kentucky Thoroughbred Association and Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders; Equestrian Services, LLC; Spring Mountain Vineyard’s “Chateau Chevalier” wine-label, and Blood-Horse Publications.

For more information about the American Horse Council, please visit: [www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org) or call 202-296-4031.

*As the national association representing all segments of the horse industry in Washington, D.C., the American Horse Council works daily to represent equine interests and opportunities. Organized in 1969, the AHC promotes and protects the industry by communicating with Congress, federal agencies, the media and the industry on behalf of all horse related interests each and every day.*

*The AHC is member supported by individuals and organizations representing virtually every facet of the horse world from owners, breeders, veterinarians, farriers, breed registries and horsemen's associations to horse shows, race tracks, rodeos, commercial suppliers and state horse councils. Visit the AHC online: [www.horsecouncil.org](http://www.horsecouncil.org)*