

First Microchip Approved for Equine Use in National Animal Identification System

LifeChip receives USDA approval.

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The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced the approval of Digital Angel Corporation's (formerly Destron Fearing) Life-Chip equine radio frequency identification (RFID) injectable transponder for use in horses. The industry expects that in the future additional companies will apply for USDA approval of equine microchips to be developed and sold in the U.S.

Microchips are a valuable tool to the equine industry to identify horses, whether as proof of ownership if lost or stolen, or to identify horses in breeding or boarding operations, competitions or domestic and international travel. The LifeChip is not only compliant with all U.S. animal safety standards, but also with the International Organization of Standardization (ISO). This microchip fits the standards used across the globe. It contains a passive transponder programmed with a unique 15-digit number that can be read by any ISO-compliant reader. As long as the reader is ISO-compliant, it does not matter what brand it is, the microchip can be read.

Digital Angel's new LifeChip can also be used for participation in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), a voluntary program developed by USDA to enhance animal disease traceability through standardizing the identification of premises, livestock and animal movements. It is the first microchip to be approved for use in the NAIS.

One of the recommendations the Equine Species Working Group made to the USDA when reviewing how the equine industry might fit into the NAIS suggests that the ISO/ANSI compatible RFID chip (11784/85, 134.2 kHz) be the recommended standard of electronic equine identification to control disease and for uniformity and compatibility necessary to achieve the goals of NAIS. The LifeChip satisfies this standard.

The LifeChip microchip also has a BioThermo temperature-sensing technology feature. This feature allows the horse's temperature to be read at the site of the microchip's implantation, an easy and safe way for owners, breeders, veterinarians, et cetera, to perform this common task. The recommended site for implantation is in the nuchal ligament on the left side, in the middle third of the neck, halfway between the ears and the withers.

Additionally, each microchip is capped with a patented, biocompatible material called BioBond which prevents migration from the site of implantation, an item that was necessary to gain USDA approval.