

EIA Exposure to Rock Creek Wild Horse HMA Incident/June 19, 2001

Deloyd Satterthwaite, manager of Ellison Ranching, is known to have EIA infected horses on his ranch property, specifically the Spanish Ranch. They graze in and around the Rock Creek HMA. At this time they have approximately 500 "domestic" ranch horses.

1) In the early 80's there were approx. 15 domestic horses infected with EIA in the Ellison Ranching operation. When Deloyd's brother in law was leaving the ranch operation (early 80's) it was decided at that point to add the 15 horses to the herd of horses owned by the ranch (remuda, cavy).

Question: Why you would take the chance of infecting your herd is a serious question, why not keep your herd intact and clean rather than introduce known infected horses with the potential of spreading the disease, doesn't make sense.

2) All these years, Deloyd has had a permit from BLM to graze livestock in the Rock Creek HMA, along with the wild horses that reside there. In the course of his operation, he trails domestic ranch horses not only in and out of the HMA, (not in trailers but loose), but also stays camped there throughout their grazing season with those horses in the "cavy". In this instance, Deloyd had brought 50 horses into the HMA.

Fact: Deloyd did not have a permit for any of these years to trail horses in and out of the HMA nor did he have a permit for these horses to graze in that area. This is trespass grazing as well as trespass trailing. How many unauthorized AUM's of use that went unpaid over all the years. Elko BLM knew he was bringing in these horses and turned their backs to the situation. How many other situations similar to this are occurring in not only the Elko District but others.

3) The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. has requested that Deloyd do EIA testing of his whole herd. His response is that it would "bankrupt him to have to test the herd".

Fact: The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. does not have the authority to violate their own State laws and allow a person to NOT test.

4) The State of Nevada Agriculture Dept. had offered to Deloyd that the State at State expense would test the his herd. He refused.

Question: If the State would bear the expense of testing your herd and you could once and for all clean out your herd, disease free.....why not? Also, where does the State have the authority to do the testing of approx. 500 horses at State expense? Along with the fact that, again, they do not have the authority give somebody the leeway to NOT test.

5) Deloyd has a "hold order" for all the horses at his ranch stating that before a "any horses leaving the Spanish Ranch except as directly for slaughter must have a coggins test". This was done by Dr. Armstrong, State Vet from many years ago. Currently the State Vet Branscomb interprets that to mean that Deloyd can travel all over his ranches, on and off public lands, without a coggins test. That he must only test when he leaves his ranch land. We believe that

order means that the horses must remain on the "ranch proper" and not leave the ranch without testing. That would insure that horses that are EIA positive could never be exposed to other domestic or wild horses especially since Deloyd trails, works, and camps in an HMA. Deloyd takes his horses all over public lands with the blessing of the Dept. of Agriculture.

Question: Even horses that are going for slaughter need to have a coggins test and any horses that are known to be EIA positive are treated much differently going to slaughter. EIA horses must be marked as such, a sealer trailer with Dept of Ag seal, and not opened until at slaughter yard. This is to prevent the disease from spreading to other animals. Apparently the order doesn't even require him to test animals if the intent is to send to slaughter. Not allowed.

6) Deloyd has a permit to graze a "minimal" amount of domestic horses at Willow Creek which is reported to be outside the HMA and that there is a fence separating those horses from wild horses.

Fact: Deloyd is paying to graze a minimal amount of horses but is getting free trespass grazing by taking 50 horses into the Rock Creek HMA every year with his sheep permit. How many AUMs and for how long, how many months annually and for how many years and for how many other allotments?

7) Deloyd's ranch hands trailed 50 horses in trespass into the Rock Creek HMA sometime around June 19, 2001. All of those 50 horses got loose and mingled with wild horses in the HMA. The ranch hands "knew they had a big wreck on their hands" and decided immediately to go out themselves to round up the ranch horses. They had mixed with wild horses therefore when they were "roping" and "rounding up" the horses they had to be chasing wild horses as well. They did this and caught 34 of the 50 horses prior to notifying BLM.

Fact: It is illegal to go roping and chasing domestic horses mingled with wild horses unless approved by BLM or conducted by BLM.

8) June 19, 2001, Deloyd Satterthwaite called BLM Elko Dist Office to ask permission to fly the area to gather horses he had lost while trailing into the area. If he called on the 19th, we wonder when the incident actually occurred. He reported that the 50 had gotten loose, 34 recaptured, and that 9 horses had wandered back in to camp all by themselves 2 days later. This left 5 horses still unaccounted for that were with wild horse herds.

Fact: All 50 horses had never been tested for EIA. The 34 re-captured horses were NOT tested for EIA. Under pressure from BLM and Dept of Ag, the 9 horses were tested for EIA and were negative.

9) Upon the first phone call, BLM, Elko, had immediately asked Deloyd if the 50 horses had been tested for EIA? Deloyd replied "this will bury you and me both. You don't even want to go there, people lose their jobs over this type of thing.....again, this will bury you and me both." BLM asked again, do they even have health records? Deloyd replied "lets just keep this between us."

BLM and Deloyd flew approx. 20 hours looking for his 5 horses to no avail. At this point the BLM personnel involved felt they had better inform their supervisor about the situation. Helen Hankins, the District Manager was informed. She strongly instructed the personnel to work within the District regarding this situation.

BLM personnel felt uneasy not knowing and not being able to get answers on the ramifications or potential of the spread of this disease from the domestic horses to the wild horses. BLM personnel called the Dept of Ag State Vet Branscomb in Elko for advise. Dr. Branscomb was disrespectful, not willing to answer questions, and in general (they felt) covering for Deloyd.

From not getting answers to very serious questions, BLM personnel called the USDA vet, Katie Blunk. Ms. Blunk happened to get the call while at the Facilities conference in Colorado where Tom Pogacnik, Rich Sanford, DVM, and Sharon Kipping from the National Program Office of the BLM, Terry Woosley from the Nevada State Program, and Robin Lohnes from American Horse Protection Assn (AHPA) all happened to be present. Many conversations took place immediately with above personnel from that one phone call to Katie Blunk.

Tom Pogacnik, Chief, of the National Wild Horse Program, felt that enough people were aware of the situation that it was his responsibility to call Henry Bisson (spelling), in Washington to inform him of the situation. When Helen Hankins found out he did that she immediately was furious sending e-mails to Tom chastising him for his actions.

Fact: Not only many BLM personnel knew of this situation but the USDA Vet Katie Blunk knew and shamefully, Robin Lohnes from AHPA has known and not notified wild horse groups either private or State that oversee wild horses in Nevada. This poses an ethical issue regarding AHPA as well as the above named people.

Much dysfunctionality between National Program in Washington and State Program Nevada. Don't believe that BLM National knows all the facts, misinformation from State Office.