

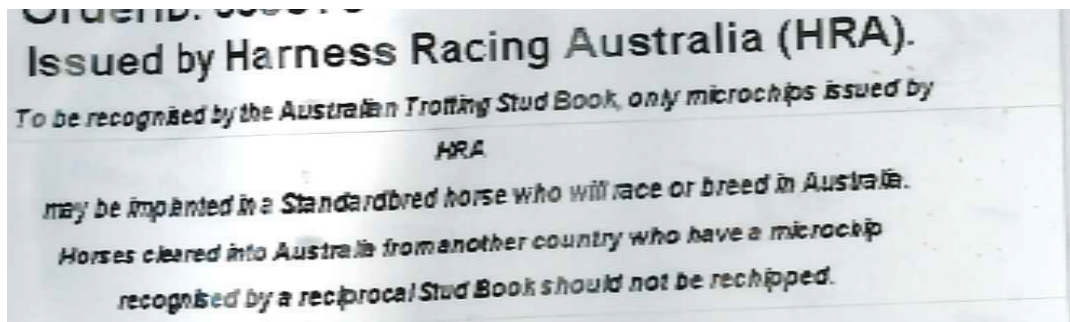


## MICROCHIPPING REGULATIONS

### Microchips

The HRA approved microchip is the LifeChip®, which is manufactured by Destron Fearing™ and distributed in Australia by Digivet.

With the exception of horses already microchipped or horses imported from overseas, only microchips exclusively manufactured, purchased, specifically labelled (as below) and distributed by Harness Racing Australia (HRA) may be used for the microchipping of registered Standardbred horses born in Australia.



These approved microchips comply with:

- ISO 11784 - which describes the structure and form of the identification code (the 15-digit code)
- ISO 11785 - which defines the technical aspects of communication between a microchip and a scanner
- ISO 11135-1 - which deals with all the necessary requirements for the sterilisation of health care products.

Imported horses who were not microchipped prior to leaving their country of origin (or have been microchipped not in accordance with these regulations) may be microchipped by a registered veterinarian with a non-HRA microchip providing it meets the above ISO standards.

The RFID microchip offers a unique and unalterable means of identification for horses of all ages. It is a passive transponder that remains inactive except when scanned. The transponder's circuitry is energised by a low-power radio signal sent by a compatible scanner. The transponder then sends a unique 15-digit code back to the scanner where it is displayed.

No two microchip numbers are the same, having been pre-assigned and coded during manufacturing in accordance with ISO and ICAR protocols. Once implanted it is a lifetime identifier for the horse.

Removal of the microchip is not permitted.

## **Implantation site**

Microchips are to be implanted using an aseptic technique in a uniform site (both in Australia and internationally) which is located in the nuchal ligament, midway between the poll and withers on the left side of the neck, 2.5 to 3.5 cm below the crest.

*The nuchal ligament was chosen because of concerns about the microchip adulterating the meat of horses that were slaughtered; and, interference of the microchip with subsequent injections and vaccinations (Stein et al 2003; Gerber et al 2012). In addition to this, the nuchal ligament is considered a superior site due to its lack of blood supply and therefore reduced levels of inflammation, swelling and pain associated with microchip implantation. A study by Gerber et al 2012 found that the inflammatory response following the implantation of a microchip into a horse at the nuchal ligament site was localised and typically resolved within three days.*

*There have been few formal studies that have examined the possible migration of microchips in horses. Of the two studies readily identified, both found that there was no major migration of microchips implanted correctly at the nuchal ligament site (Stein et al 2003; Gerber et al 2012).*

## **Implantation procedures**

A 2012 Primary Industries Standing Committee (Federal Government) Taskforce on National Uniform Standards for the Voluntary Microchipping of Horses provided a number of recommendations for national standardisation when microchipping of horses – which have been adopted by HRA.

The recommendations included implantation procedures, and it was determined implantation follow an approved protocol, including the following steps as a minimum:

- appropriate restraint of the horse;
- checks to determine whether the horse is already microchipped, by use of an approved scanner (and that to be approved, scanners must be compliant with the relevant requirements of AS5018 and AS5019 and be capable of reading earlier-technology microchips that were previously used in Australia as well);

- checks to ensure that the microchip to be used is functioning properly prior to implantation, using an approved scanner;
- implantation by approved personnel;
- implantation at an approved site (as detailed above), using approved technique; and
- checks post-implantation to determine whether the microchip is appropriately located and still functional, using an approved scanner (as detailed above).

## **Administration**

A signed declaration is required which states that the implantation was completed in accordance with the HRA Regulations as well as capturing all relevant details including:

- Horse identification details (name, or sire and dam names);
- Name of authorised planter
- Planter ID Number
- Date of implantation; and
- Microchip number.

This information is to be loaded into the HaRVey database system as soon as practicable by State Controlling Bodies.

The [declaration for Imported horses](#) being microchipped by a private practice, non-regulatory vet can be found here, it must be completed and returned to the Registrar of the relevant State Controlling Body.