Implanting Microchips in Horses

**INTRODUCTION**
It is critical that horses are implanted with microchips appropriately and in accordance with any relevant Codes of Practice minimum standards and also in accordance with any relevant legislation or regulations. For example, in Victoria under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, there is no obligation to microchip a horse but, if a horse is microchipped in Victoria, as of 1st September 2009, it must be done in accordance with the legislation. Only authorised veterinary practitioners can legally implant microchips into horses in Victoria. When a horse is microchipped, it is the responsibility of the implanter to lodge the owner, horse and microchip details with a licensed animal registry. If the horse is to be registered with an industry registry, two forms will need to be completed.

**IMPLANT SITE**
Left or near side of the neck into the nuchal ligament 2-5cms below crest of the mane midway between the poll and the withers. The microchip should be implanted deeply into the nuchal ligament NOT subcutaneously.

**METHOD**
1. Scan the horse with a microchip reader capable of detecting all types of microchips (both FDXA and ISO FDXB) over the full area and on both sides of the neck.
2. Scan the microchip (in needle) with the needle pointing toward the scanner face.
3. Remove the loaded needle out of the blister pack & attach to the implanter with a clockwise twist. Pull off the outer plastic sheath. The sterile microchip is inside the needle and ready to implant.
4. Use your favoured or appropriate method of preparing the skin prior to injection. Some vets prefer to inject a “bleb” of local anaesthetic at the implant site but this is personal preference.
5. Holding the implanter with the needle attached in the appropriate hand but without exerting any pressure on the plunger of the implanter, insert needle directly into the nuchal ligament at right angles to the neck surface to the full depth of the needle.
6. Implant the microchip using the plunger of the implanter.
7. On rare occasions there may be some haemorrhage and, if this does occur, apply digital pressure as required.
8. Remove the needle from the implanter and discard needle after use into an appropriate sharps container.
9. Scan horse over the implant area to confirm the implanted microchip is functional and displaying the number.
   - Attach the barcoded printed microchip number sticker from the microchip pack to the subscription form.
   - Check all owner & animal details are correct & owner has signed
   - Complete the authorised implanter details and signature
11. Forward completed subscription form to Central Animal Records (address/fax details are on the subscription form)

NOTE:
The syringe-style implanter is re-usable and, because the stylet in the implanter pushes a rod within the needle that in turn contacts and implants the transponder, there is no direct contact of any part of the implanter with the horse or horse’s blood or tissue fluids. Thus the reusable implanter should carry little to no risk in transmitting infectious disease provided it is kept clean and free of blood, tissue fluid, saliva etc....no more risk than something like a stethoscope. If the syringe implanter does become contaminated it can be sprayed externally with appropriate disinfectant and wiped clean. It should not be soaked in disinfectant/antiseptic solution as the metal spring inside the syringe will eventually become damaged.

For further information contact: