



Dear Member,

The **Canadian Horse Identification Program (CHIP)**, administered by Equestrian Canada, is more than a national initiative — it's a powerful tool that helps protect and grow the equine industry in every province, including right here in Saskatchewan.

The CHIP initiative is a voluntary national traceability program for all equines in Canada, regardless of breed, sport, use and age. It is open to all equines born and/or domiciled in Canada. One of the goals of the CHIP is to establish a **unified method of identification for all equines** in Canada, not just for sport and competition horses, using the exclusive Canada 124-000 microchips.

Microchipping is not so much about competitions as it is the health, welfare, safety and verifiable identification and ownership throughout the lifetime of the equine. Our vision for the CHIP initiative is '**Every Horse Counts**' and it is in that belief that we inspire owners and the industry to do better for the greater good of the Canadian herd.

In this four-part series, we will cover why the CHIP matters to Saskatchewan's equine industry, veterinarians, breeders and owners.

Part 1: Protecting Equines, Strengthening Industry: The Value of National Traceability

Maintaining a vibrant and sustainable equine industry—both nationally and within each province—requires more than passion. It demands collaboration, resilience, and a shared commitment to safeguarding the industry from emerging threats and ongoing challenges. The [Canadian Horse Identification Program \(CHIP\)](#) envisions a healthy, thriving, and prosperous future for the equine industry working collectively with SHF, provinces, veterinarians, breed associations and many other stakeholders.

Through the participation and support of the CHIP initiative, Saskatchewan's industry can benefit in many ways:

Secures Livestock Status

- The CHIP initiative aims to maintain equines' status as 'livestock' in Canada by promoting use of the exclusive **124-000 series equine microchips**.
- Recognizing equines as livestock reflects their true roles:
 - Consumers of agricultural feed and resources
 - Occupants of rural and agricultural land
 - Serving diverse functions: companions, athletes, ranch workers, therapy animals, etc.
- The Canadian equine industry contributes **\$8.7 billion** to the economy (2021) — a figure aligned with livestock-level impact.
- 'Pet' status misrepresents many equines, which are not household pets but livestock animals.
- Maintaining **livestock status** ensures access to:
 - Government programs, funding, and services
 - Continued recognition within the broader agricultural sector
- Use of **124-000 series microchips** helps secure this status. The use of microchips for identification is a critical step for traceability and industry legitimacy.
- These 124-000 microchips are **only available** through:
 - Licensed veterinarians
 - Breed associations
 - Distributed by EIDAP, the authorized Canadian supplier

The *Actual* Number of Equines in Canada Matters

- The CHIP initiative supports the creation of a centralized equine registry, eventually replacing years of population estimates based on surveys.
- A verified national and provincial horse count will:
 - Provide a **true picture** of the equine population
 - Support **better decision-making** by industry and government
- Accurate population data is essential for:
 - Designing programs and services
 - Emergency response to disease outbreaks and extreme weather

- Vaccine production and planning
 - Tracking breeding trends and sector employment
 - Advocating for the equine sector's needs and value
 - Predicting growth or decline in the industry
 - This information is urgently needed to address current challenges, protect and shape the future of Canada's equine industry.
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Safeguards Horse Health Across Saskatchewan

Disease doesn't stop at stable doors — or provincial borders. Traceability makes it possible to:

- Alert owners to outbreaks like strangles or West Nile early
- Track and contain threats before they spread
- Protect equines at home, on the road, or at events

Whether you manage a breeding facility, ride for recreation, or operate a boarding barn — your horses benefit from a stronger disease response network.

Boosts Emergency Preparedness

From wildfires to floods, climate risks are increasing. With national traceability, [Province] can:

- Quickly identify and contact affected equine owners
- Coordinate safe evacuation and sheltering of animals
- Provide targeted support where it's needed most

A connected system means **faster action, fewer losses, and better outcomes.**

Supports a Thriving Equine Economy

Equestrian sport, breeding, tourism, and agriculture all depend on a healthy, trusted system. This program helps:

- Keep horse movement safe and compliant
- Enhance biosecurity at shows and sales
- Reinforce public confidence in our industry

The value of equines to Saskatchewan and SHF — both economically and culturally — is worth protecting.

Informs Smarter Local Decisions

Better data = better outcomes. Over time, the national traceability platform will provide:

- Accurate equine population data
- Risk mapping by region
- Insights for policy, funding, and infrastructure planning

This empowers **SHF to invest in the right places**, at the right time.

A True National-Provincial Partnership

Equestrian Canada provides the framework — but provinces shape the impact. SHF can:

- Integrate local Premises ID and emergency systems
 - Customize communications for their members
 - Build a safer, more connected future for all equines and humans alike
 - **United in Purpose – Proudly Canadian:** through shared values and visions, the equine industry can achieve growth and strength through a unified voice.
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Let's lead the way. Together, we can protect what matters — our equines, our people, and the future of the equine industry in Saskatchewan.

For more information on the CHIP, contact CHIP@equestrian.ca.