

# Animal Identification & Information Systems Committee Report

2006 NIAA Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 5, 2006



## Welcome

Dr. Robert Fourdraine, Chair  
Dr. John Hunt, Co Chair

Called the meeting to order at 1:42 with welcome, with 132 present.

## USDA Updates

- Neil Hammerschmidt, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, Integration of Private and State Animal Tracking Databases and Implementation of the AIN

Comment on Agenda: Hoping to report on the initial pilot projects but are unable to. Will be posted on USDA website. USDA has received them and there is a lot of information so wants to do a thorough job on reporting results.

- **Dr. David L. Morris, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services, Administration of Official Identification Devices**

## Discussion and Questions:

**Question:** Nancy Robinson - Will Livestock Markets be considered a tag manager or a premises and have to report animals coming on premises.

**Answer:** Dr. Morris – At this point that they would not be an AIN Manager, although they could be if they chose. They could serve two roles – would have to consider those as two distinct possibilities. Hammerschmidt - Tagging sites services will be established. That is another role that would be a little different than tag manager.

**Question:** When is it anticipated that the 15 digit numbers will be read since most will be on visible tag?

**Answer:** Dr. Morris - NAIS is taking technology neutral stance. There is no one best system. Pilot projects will be evaluating that standard. For purposes of minimizing liability, documentation prior to departure would be advised. Species groups generally propose that tags will be read when entering destination at new premises.

**Question:** Nancy Robinson – This is a voluntary program. Do you have authority to make us read those tags.

**Answer:** Hammerschmidt – There are no new regulations. It is a voluntary system. We want to see how much information can we get from this as it is.

**Question:** This is a perfectly good system if we do not have to read tags until there is a medical emergency. But how practical is it to read a 15 digit visual number?

**Answer:** Some of those problems will get worked out. The species working groups are the ones working out when and where numbers will need to be read. The objectives are that this is a voluntary program. We wanted premises ID and animal ID. We can get that with this system. When want more movement data will have to think about automating the system.

**Question:** Should we be using a different system, easier to read, if we are going to have the visual tag system for the next few years?

**Comment:** Jim Clement, DVM – Animal ID Coordinator ND - Supports not being tied to any specific technology. Go to the supplemental ID for other needs.

### **Future Roles of Federal, State and Industry in the Implementation of NAIS**

- Federal Perspective  
Dr. John Wiemers, USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
  
- State Perspective  
Mr. Kevin Kirk, Animal Industry Division, Michigan Department of Agriculture
  
- Industry Perspective  
Dr. Mark Engle, PIC US,  
Terry Detrick, OK Farmers Union

**Some comments on the industry:** It is hard to get consensus. Need to make sure we in the industry get consensus.

The key is premises registration - will go tremendously long way. Swine has had mandatory ID since 1988 so that is not a new deal but there are things needed to enhance it. ID is a cattle issue - we want to make sure there are species-specific solutions that still allow the USDA to achieve the goal.

In Pork industry, tracking is for business purposes. Our debate between recording and reporting continues, but our industry will decide and there will be consensus.

Pork industry has done nice job of educating producers. Check Off encourages premises registration. We are still dealing with a lot of misinformation today.

Industry should be responsibility for funding. Swine far different from cattle in terms of numbers of offspring. Should develop a system that has no further cost to producers than what they are doing today. Cannot put an additional burden on them. To Swine industry this is mainly a food safety issue. Naive to argue that we want USDA to be able to tap into our databases when there is a disease emergency. May want to partner with USDA for help in understanding diseases such as PERS. The NAIS for swine goes further than emergency management only. It takes daily access to see where animals are moving. Confidentiality is an issue. Do not see how we can solve it. Will have to be handled on individual state basis. It needs to be addressed and soon.

Can move forward with premises ID, but tracking will have to wait. Would states be as far along as they are today without cooperative agreements? The answer is no. Need adequate funding for ID to move forward and need it in the state's hands. Cannot lump everyone in one program. Each species needs to develop program that works for them.

Not the same industry / government partnerships in beef industry as in other species groups. Lots of progress has been made these past years that will not get to the country due to attitudes. Need to get it to work for the cattle industry. The NAIS is a comprehensive plan but it needs unity and cooperation, a spirit of unselfishness and a spirit of trust. "We are here to build bridges but may need to tear down fences to get there." Producers have gone from the fear of unknown to confusion to distrust. The program has failed due to politics and profiteering and will continue to do so. Need leadership that educates and guides – that will take people from where they do not want to go but need to go. We must educate and guide the membership in order to establish the right policy. The Cattle Working Group sought practical solutions rather than the political ones. Offered a simple place to start along with the ability to expand into more sophisticated solutions. Presented simple national plan. Johanns' announcement in August paved the way for zero progress – private database, industry pays, all costs to producer, voluntary, tech neutral. How can we solve the problem? Must build alliances to go to congress to get money, to get FOIA confidentiality, and to coordinate educational programs. Must trust USDA APHIS. Cheaper to the government means more expensive to producer. Voluntary neuters the whole program. "We must, can and will get an ID system together but hope it is not when we are without a plan and all fault finding fingers point back to us. We have dilly dallied long enough; we need to build alliances, go to congress and do it now and do it right."

**Comment:** Rick Stott - Concerned with the picture painted regarding NCBA's position. USAIO is a non-profit organization formed in January of this year, and has been joined by other organizations. "The very thing you are supporting is being done. A consensus is being brought to table." Producers were concerned with the direction it was headed. Canada and Australia both have industry driven and relatively low cost programs compared to places where it is government driven. The cost will be less than 30 cents per head for life of animal and free to USDA. The value is a small price to pay for an efficient, effective system. NCBA will follow the guidelines set forth by the CWG. USAIO has been able to complete beta testing and will have few million transactions by summer. Progress being made rapidly because there is strong industry support by a big portion of cattle industry, not 100 percent.

**Comment:** Mr. Detrick – CWG has already worked out issues that you are dealing with. You are making progress and you are one of the groups we need to work with. We need to get away from any one organization thinking they are going to be god to the industry.

**Comment:** NCBA only has 3 seats on USAIO. We want to discuss the issues and have everyone represented.

**Question:** Nancy Robinson - A lot of organizations are in favor of the program remaining voluntary. Markets have questions/problems with scanners, not tags, but scanners. Is keeping voluntary for now such a bad thing until we get results of pilot projects and identify the holes?

**Answer:** Kirk – in Michigan we have TB and are trying to eradicate it. We need strong partnerships and everyone has to step to plate. When MI went to mandatory animal ID, it did create a lot of discussion but 95% of feedback is that it is the right thing because it is coming anyway. In MI industry recognizes that it opens up markets and there are things you have to do to open up markets. Better technology is coming and when there is a date and time (mandatory) technology developers will see there is a real market out there.

**Question:** How is the infrastructure in MI paid for?

**Answer:** Kirk. Government grants from USDA and general fund dollars from state of MI – a partnership. Initial seed money was provided by USDA through the TB eradication program.

**Question:** In MI is animal ID mandatory for all livestock, or mandatory for cattle and cervid?

**Answer:** Kirk - Premises registration is mandatory for all livestock species. For movement, it is strictly cattle, goats, sheep and farmed cervids.

### **Rick Thiemert, Fleishman Hillard Inc., Building an Effective Outreach Program**

**Question:** Is outreach more effective with one organization or should we work through our own species?

**Answer:** Use your existing channels. National voice important about alignment between all species but producers respect those communication channels tied to own species.

Brian Down, SUN Microsystems, Aspects to Consider in Implementing a Distributed Database System

### **NAIS – Where do we go from here?**

What parts of NAIS can we all agree to?

Goal 1) Outreach and education

Goal 2) Premises registration

Goal 3) Animal ID

Goal 4) Animal Tracking

What components need to be revisited?

Costs

Confidentiality of data

Integration with existing state programs

Oversight

Timelines

We can make progress

**Comment:** If want to take a way a lot of angst, one way would be to announce taking away tracking aspect – would take away a lot of fear.

**Comment:** John Adams – Dairy's goal is to get all premises registered. Other goal is to get everyone to support NAIS. All support development of national system but have not explained why. Also important, legislative process. Election coming this year – need to communicate importance of this issue.

**Glenn Slack, National Institute for Animal Agriculture, ID/INFO Expo 2006**

ID Info Expo 2006 to be held in Kansas City, August 22-24<sup>th</sup>

**J. Amelita Facchiano, Chair, Update from Equine ID Subcommittee**

Resolution from Equine ID Subcommittee – “Support of AVMA Objectives and Key Elements for RFID” - Passed unanimously

Supporting AVMA is good for practitioners. Need AAEP to supply same type position statement. Pros / Cons of stand alone position on previously RFIDed horses related to transponders and scanners.

**New: Position statement in support of AVMA Objectives and Key Elements**

**Main comments included:**

Visible tags vs RFID

Mandatory vs voluntary

Cost - industry/government partnership

Education and outreach

Consensus among producers