



News Release

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Contact: Ben Richey
270-782-9798
brichey@animalagriculture.org

NIAA's ID/INFO EXPO Provides Direction for Animal Identification

CHICAGO, Illinois – Plans for the National Animal Identification System received a boost from the ID/INFO EXPO 2004 this week, facilitated by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA). The three-day conference involved approximately 500 industry and government stakeholders interested in the development of a national identification system for animal agriculture.

“This is really a culmination of two years’ work on a national system,” said Rick Sibbel, chairman of the board for NIAA. “The evolution of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan [USAIP] is clearly moving forward, with the involvement of multiple species in a system that will help safeguard the health of animal agriculture.”

Included in this week’s presentations were a series of highly anticipated reports from species and issues working groups, which have been gathering information from their industries to give input for standards in the system. Working groups making presentations included beef, dairy, bison, equine, sheep, goat and swine, as well as the markets/processors issues sector.

“The Agriculture Secretary’s announcement clearly puts animal ID on the forefront of issues for animal agriculture,” said Sibbel, speaking of an April 27 announcement that USDA is moving forward with a framework for a national system. “This meeting has been a valuable forum as we look to provide a system that will work for U.S. animal owners.”

Although the framework and standards are designed for many species, some issues still remain unresolved. Confidentiality of data and the need for additional funding were among the topics discussed.

“The input coming from participants at the meetings is invaluable to the further development of the NAIS,” said Scott Stuart, president and CEO of the National Livestock Producers Association and member of the National ID Development Team Steering Committee. “Making sure that the integrity of producer records is maintained is an issue that must be fully resolved.”

Another key component of animal ID is making sure that animal owners fully understand how the national system will work and what they can be doing on their operations. NIAA looks to play an important role in facilitating that. “Communicating this program to our industry will be a priority,” said Stuart.

USDA has said it will implement a premises identification system beginning this summer, with other phases of a national system to follow. The agency also has indicated that it will rely on industry to help shape the development of the remaining components of a national system.

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