



## News Release

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### **NIAA Annual Meeting Provides First-Hand Update on Animal Identification: 2009 given as goal for mandatory ID**

ST. PAUL, Minn.—In giving a progress report on development of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS), U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Bill Hawks, reassured the industry that mandatory participation would not be put in place until all confidentiality issues had been resolved, though the administration hopes to make this a reality by 2009.

Hawks addressed the members of the Animal Identification and Information Systems Committee for the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) at their annual meeting last week.

Regarding the confidentiality issue, which has been a concern for some in the industry, the Bush Administration has sent a bill to Congress that would exempt the data collected for NAIS from the Freedom of Information Act.

Hawks urged the industry to actively support this legislation.

He also told the animal agriculture professionals from across the country that the required report on NAIS progress had been sent to Congress earlier this week so that he expected the more than \$33 million NAIS operating funds for the current fiscal year would be released soon.

Neil Hammerschmidt, NAIS coordinator for the USDA, reported on the implementation progress of the program for the year, including various field trials and the fact that 45 states have voluntary premises identification programs in place. More than 50,000 premises have been registered across the country.

In addition, he said that the USDA plans to publish the NAIS Strategic Plan in the *Federal Register* in the near future. He urged the industry to review the plan carefully and make appropriate comments and recommendations.

NIAA will continue to remain engaged in the NAIS development, by continuing to bring industry input to the system, according to president and CEO Glenn Slack. NIAA produced resolutions this year in support

of APHIS' work in implementing NAIS, as well as supporting funding for completing premises registration and data collection capabilities.

More than 400 animal agriculture professionals and officials, from the U.S. and abroad, attended the 2005 NIAA Annual Meeting, a record attendance for the second straight year.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture began operations in January 2000. NIAA's mission is to provide a forum for building consensus and advancing solutions for animal agriculture and to provide continuing education and communication linkages for animal agriculture professionals.

The organization is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of diseases that pose a risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome food supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and well-being.

Members include professionals engaged in animal agriculture including producers, veterinarians, scientists, government representatives and business executives.

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