



News Release

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ID•INFO EXPO 2005 Provides Assessment on NAIS, Showcases Technology

Bowling Green, KY – ID•INFO EXPO 2005 concluded last week in Chicago, with more than 500 animal identification stakeholders assembled to hear the latest on a national animal identification system. The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) served as host for the event, as participants came together to share opinions, comments and questions on the direction of animal identification.

“ID•INFO EXPO 2005 was a resounding success,” said planning committee chair Dr. Robert Fourdraine, who serves as CEO of the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium. “From the record attendance to the broad range of topics covered to the trade show, we feel participants were able to take away some tangible information.”

The ID•INFO EXPO Trade Show featured technology from over 30 technology and information service providers.

Participants listened to USDA Deputy Undersecretary Chuck Lambert and Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services John Clifford new expectations for a national system, particularly from the industry. A few weeks ago, Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced that the agency is pursuing a private animal tracking database funded by industry. The USDA officials made it clear during EXPO that it expects industry to bear the cost for this portion of the system, resulting in anxiety among many attendees.

A mid-October meeting is being convened by USDA in Kansas City for the purpose of establishing a legal entity to oversee the private database.

Significant progress was reported in the 50-state premises registration system now underway. More than 120,000 premises have been registered to date, according to USDA’s Clifford, and all 50 states now have premises registration capability in place. Clifford said that the individual identification system will roll out sometime this fall.

Hundreds of questions from the audience were posed to the more than 60 speakers throughout the event, ranging from technology applications to industry responsibilities and costs as the system moves forward.

“Participants were very engaged in this year’s event, asking very tough questions to the presenters,” said Glenn Slack, president and CEO of NIAA.

Other highlights of the meeting include:

- Federal, state and industry assessments of NAIS progress, highlighting outstanding needs as well as progress that has been accomplished.
- Outreach and education efforts, highlighting the importance of communication to the various producer sectors.
- Species working group updates from all key species included in NAIS. The cattle, swine, sheep and equine groups have submitted official recommendations to the NAIS Subcommittee, beginning the process for review by USDA and APHIS, and inclusion into the official standards.
- Private sector proposals for a national system, including presentations from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, National Dairy Herd Improvement Association, National Farm Animal Identification Records (Holstein Association), Digital Angel Corporation and USDA.
- Breakout sessions on 20 pilot projects from around the country, providing insight into practical experiences, technological challenges and levels of producer participation. The pilot projects covered the cattle sector, markets, transporters and processors; the swine industry; the equine industry; and the sheep industry.
- Consideration of implementation challenges from the markets, fairs and expositions, renderers and small packing/processing plants.
- An overview of the traceability system in Quebec, outlining the successes and challenges with the implementation in that Canadian province and a look at the Australian system, including a trip report from the National Animal Identification System Subcommittee’s tour of the cattle sector in that country.
- New technologies available in animal ID, including high frequency RFID, DNA and biometrics.
- Implications for a national animal identification system beyond the production sector, including presentations from McDonalds, Smithfield and the U.S. Meat Export Federation.

Proceedings are currently being compiled, and are expected to be available later this week on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org.

“Last week showed us that progress is being made, but considerable consternation exists among many stakeholders concerning USDA’s recent switch to a privatized database paid for by industry,” said Slack. “The coming months are critical for industry to continue working together with their state and federal officials to ensure an efficacious, economical system is implemented for animal agriculture.”

ID•INFO EXPO 2005 was precluded by events in 2004 and 2002, as well as animal identification symposiums held in 1988, 1994 and 1998 by NIAA’s predecessor, the Livestock Conservation Institute.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture provides a forum for building consensus and advancing solutions for animal agriculture and provides continuing education and communication linkages to animal agriculture professionals. NIAA is dedicated to programs that: work towards the eradication of diseases that pose 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. NIAA members represent all facets of animal agriculture. Visit us on the Internet at www.animalagriculture.org, or call 270-782-9798.

