



News Release

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NIAA CEO Conveys U.S. Commitment to Implement Animal Traceability System

MONTREAL, Quebec –Implementation is underway and the United States will have a coordinated, national system for animal identification in place by the end of the decade. That was the message delivered by Glenn Slack, president and CEO of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, to an international audience last week.

Speaking at a conference on traceability during SIAL, the largest international food exhibition dedicated to the North American food distribution industry held every other year in Montreal, Slack said that the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently confirmed that 45 states have premises registration capability in place and approximately 55,000 premises have been registered. “That’s a small percentage of premises, however significant progress is evident when comparing these figures to a year earlier.”

Slack said that confidentiality concerns and funding are still being hammered out, but predicted that such issues would be resolved by an industry that is largely in consensus on the end goal and determined to ensure rapid traceability of farm animals.

Slack added that the desire for traceability by food service and retail companies, such as McDonald’s and Wal-Mart, makes a comprehensive traceability system appear inevitable, thus highlighting the need for on-farm identification programs to continue progress.

Also speaking at the conference, Daniel Chaisemartin, representing OIE – the World Organization for Animal Health, said the push is on across the globe to establish standardized systems for animal traceability. “Identification and traceability are considered key tools in the sphere of animal health, public health and trade.”

Chaisemartin reported on results of a recent survey among OIE’s 167 member countries and said an international working group is being formed this year. He said that OIE will provide member countries with specialized technical assistance to facilitate the design and implementation of animal identification and traceability systems.

Representatives from France and Canada also discussed animal traceability at the conference and industry and government officials from Quebec discussed identity preservation in grains and processed vegetables.

Some 14,000 individuals were expected to attend the exhibition, representing 80 countries. They included processors, manufacturers, producers, wholesalers, distributors, importers, exporters, brokers, hotel and restaurant representatives, caterers, food service representatives, retailers and members of the media.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Please find Attached Photo GNS

Suggested Photo Caption:

NIAA President and CEO Glenn Slack addresses an audience in Montreal, April 14, on traceability and animal identification in the United States. Montreal played host recently to SIAL, the International Food Exhibition.