



## News Release

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### **NIAA Statement Regarding USDA's Consideration of New Animal ID Approach**

**Glenn N. Slack, President and Chief Executive Officer**

We commend Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns for considering a new approach for a national animal identification system that would allow the agency to link to a network of private and state-operated animal tracking databases.

While consideration of this approach by USDA may be new, the concept isn't. The U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) Information Technology subcommittee developed a comparative analysis of a centralized database versus a distributed, or de-centralized, database design in 2004. That analysis suggests that both systems have advantages as well as shortcomings.

The new approach presents a new set of questions and some of the existing concerns – such as the cost to producers and exemption from Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – remain. We look forward to working with USDA and industry stakeholders to find solutions to these questions and concerns in the coming months.

This could prove to be a viable alternative to the privatization of the animal tracking database introduced by the Secretary last August. Perhaps it will allow all stakeholders to move beyond the impasse we have found ourselves in the past several months and come together in a collaborative effort once again so that further progress can be attained.