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Powerful, Myth-Busting Speakers on Tap for Opening General Session, ID INFO EXPO 2009

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO—With the air thick with myths, speculations and facts regarding a U.S. national animal identification program, the time is right for in-depth discussions that will set the record straight—and ID INFO EXPO 2009, Aug. 25-27, Kansas City, Mo., provides the ideal platform for those discussions. Sponsored by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, the ID INFO EXPO will kick off with an opening general session featuring eight candid speakers from federal and state governments, agriculture and the food industry, followed by three highly targeted sessions devoted to obstacles, opportunities and next steps. And interactive discussion sessions will allow EXPO participants to get their burning questions answered.

“The EXPO, now in its eighth year, provides a unique national forum where all livestock stakeholders can convene to discuss the issues surrounding the implementation of a U.S. national animal identification system,” states Glenn Fischer, chairman of the ID INFO EXPO Planning Committee. “The conference’s opening general session integrates a mix of highly respected, knowledgeable individuals who will deliver their perspectives regarding the current state of animal identification in the U.S., animal ID needs in Homeland Security, the state’s role and the need for food traceability at home and in foreign markets.”

The eight speakers confirmed for the opening general session of the ID INFO EXPO include Dr. John Clifford, Chief Veterinary Medical Officer, USDA; Dr. Douglas Meckes, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Dr. Tom McGinn, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Gene Hogoson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Dr. William Hartmann, Minnesota Board of Animal Health; Dr. David Acheson, Leavitt Partners; Paul Clayton, U.S. Meat Export Federation; and Rob Cannell, McDonald’s Corporation.

“We’re getting some very high-profile individuals in one room at the same time, and it will be interesting to hear their points of view about a topic that is astir in animal agriculture,” Fischer adds.

Victor Velez, vice chair of the ID INFO EXPO Planning Committee, says the conference’s Wednesday sessions and Thursday morning session will be equally enlightening.

Wednesday's speakers will delve into the issues of cost to producers, technology challenges and producer concerns with confidentiality of information as well as the economics and market access opportunities associated with ID. Additional Wednesday topics include how incentives can be a part of participation in animal ID programs, using premises ID in animal health management and producer challenges and opportunities.

Producer and consumer benefits related to a functional identification system will be the focus of Thursday's session. Five speakers will address producer and consumer benefits from a functional identification system that will meet the needs of animal health officials and traceability requirements of management and marketing systems. Speakers include in-the-middle-of-it-all individuals such as Guy Blissett with IBM Corporation; Ryan Meyer, Creekstone Farms Premium Beef; and Kevin Bost, Procurement Strategies Inc.

"At the conclusion of the conference, our goal is to have listened and learned so we in animal agriculture can identify solutions that will help advance a system that is animal health driven, moves toward 48-hour traceability and helps preserve the profitability of our animal agriculture industry," Fischer states.

ID INFO EXPO kicks off Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 25, at 1 p.m. and concludes Thursday afternoon, Aug. 27, at 12 p.m. at the Westin Crown Center, Kansas City, Mo. A trade show will feature companies with the latest identification and information systems technology and provide an opportunity to learn and network.

Conference registration is \$425, with NIAA members receiving a \$50 discount. Complete conference information and online registration is available at www.animalagriculture.org or individuals can call NIAA at 719.538.8843.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture provides a forum for building consensus and advancing proactive solutions for animal agriculture—the beef, dairy, swine, sheep, goat, equine and poultry industries—and provides continuing education and communication linkages for animal agriculture professionals. NIAA is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of disease 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.

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