

Swine Identification: Immediate, Short Term, and Long Term Goals

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USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services is committed to participating with pork producers, livestock marketing groups, packing plants and regulatory agencies in developing an effective, efficient, affordable and dependable system of identifying swine. To demonstrate this commitment, a new position of National Swine Identification Coordinator has been established on the Swine Health Staff. A system of producer applied premise identification which can be used on the farm, in the markets, in the slaughterhouse, and conceivably to the final product is being explored at the present time. New technologies, such as bar-coding, which will allow electronic data transfer of premise identification at each critical point in the pork chain, will be an important part of the new system. Pilot projects and feasibility studies are now underway.

IMMEDIATE GOALS (This Year)

USDA, APHIS, VS, Swine Health Staff (SHS) will facilitate the promotion of the wide use of on-farm identification systems in general. In cooperation with producer organizations, extension agencies and educational institutions, SHS will promote the benefits of swine identification as the basis of accurate farm record systems allowing the development of productive decision-making strategies and providing information to improve productivity and profitability.

In cooperation with LCI and NPPC, SHS will coordinate an active Swine Identification Working Group ready, willing and able to devote time, talents and resources in aggressively establishing a swine identification system. The group will be composed of representatives of producers, swine breeding companies, livestock markets, livestock dealers, livestock haulers, slaughterestablishments, state and federal agencies, manufacturers and university swine research.

SHS will continue to vigorously encourage correct application of swine back tags in markets while promoting the importance of quality traceback in all surveillance programs.

SHORT TERM GOALS (1-2 Years)

SHS, in cooperation with other staff officials involved in animal identification, will establish a standard for uniformly acceptable premise identification numbers for all swine production units.

SHS will continue pilot projects to test the feasibility and reliability of various methods of producer-applied premise identification. The projects will evaluate relative merits of different devices in terms of retention rates, longevity/durability, readability, price and labor requirements.

USDA, APHIS, VS will begin implementing the use of bar-coded back tags for slaughter surveillance. SHS will begin utilizing bar-code readers that are currently in place in pseudorabies testing labs to facilitate information gathering and reporting. Additional readers will be installed as they become available. This will improve the reporting of pseudorabies surveillance results.

SHS will continue to be involved in monitoring the latest developments in electronic identification and coordinating activities related to future implementation.

By April 1, 1995, the newly formed Swine Identification Working Group will complete an analysis of the identification requirements and responsibilities of each stakeholder group. The proportion of the total benefit each stakeholder group will enjoy from an integrated swine identification system will also be determined.

By June 1, 1995, a Request for Proposal (RFP) to define an integrated identification system based on the needs analysis of the Working Group will be developed and a contract awarded to develop an integrated swine identification system.

By December 31, 1995, a final report from contractor will be received, distributed and evaluated for comments.

By April 1, 1995, an implementation plan will be submitted to LCI for consideration with the initial phases of the plan incorporated into the FY' 97 budget.

INTERMEDIATE GOALS (3-5 Years)

A National Premise Identification system will be fully implemented. All swine premises will be identified and geographically located. A phased-in implementation of the integrated swine identification system will begin.

LONG TERM GOALS (5+ Years)

Full implementation of the integrated swine identification system will be achieved. We will approach 100% identification traceability with all critical control points equipped to collect animal identification information.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Several projects or noteworthy activities should be mentioned. Missouri is beginning an evaluation of a new self-adhesive back tag for swine. A major sow slaughter facility in Tennessee is now using electronic chips to identify sows in the plant to track carcass yield. The Kentucky testing laboratory for Major Packer Surveillance blood samples is using a bar code reader to enter sample identification data from the bar codes on the new swine back tags. Indiana is conducting a pilot project to evaluate the effectiveness of producer applied back tags. Several states are beginning to use premise tattoos for feeder pig identification.

In conclusion, USDA, APHIS, VS, Swine Health Staff has outlined an aggressive plan with time lines to achieve the goal of quality swine identification. The success of the program will depend on the united and coordinated support of stakeholder groups.