

## Open Discussion\*

*Moderated by Glenn Slack*

**\* Recorded by audiotape. Some portions inaudible.**

### **Glenn Slack, Livestock Conservation Institute**

A very critical element of this symposium is for us to be sure that we wrap everything up properly, to insure we understand and are in mutual agreement of what all the issues are that need to be considered as we move forward from this point. The planning committee has been very adamant about making sure that we do not walk away from this symposium and maybe in another three or four years get the itch to put on another one about identification. I think because of some of the overriding issues that have been brought out at this symposium by some of the speakers that we have heard from and the discussions we have had this morning, those overriding issues will probably make sure that identification is not going to be a moot point. In fact, it is likely to be in the very forefront of major issues relating to animal agriculture in 1995, and throughout the rest of this decade. We do want to make sure that we are all on the same wave length today as we depart and we are all of the same understanding as to how we should move forward from this point. What we would like to do now is open the floor up for open discussion. We do encourage everyone to please try to be thinking forward as you are presenting your comments. Hopefully we have been able to resolve some of the age old concerns that have existed in relation to this topic. If so, we would prefer to not go through those again today. Obviously if they are pertinent, then they need to be stated.

### **Tom Giles, Boumatic Dairy Equipment Company**

We are dairy equipment manufacturers. Going down what I have seen as far as the meeting goes today, there are a couple of issues that would have made it well productive. Number one is we kicked around, pretty heavily, the need for standards. We have a standards group meeting in Germany right now that is working toward the standards that we were kicking around this morning. It would have been much better to have scheduled this meeting with our key participants in the ISO process here. That would have helped people that aren't up to speed to know where that process is. The starting point for this meeting should have been, there is going to be a standard. You can read about its specifications in the proposed standard. It may not be the exact wording that is now being proposed but it is very close. That is the starting point, folks. We have a standard. Now we should be talking about how are we going to implement this standard. You have manufacturers here today who are in the process of implementing this standard if they haven't already. But the producers need to know how they are going to use the standard. The breed associations and species people need to figure out how they are going to use this standard. The standard is coming down the pike as something that we can all hang our hats on. The thing that is not known is, in what format are we going to use it. Are we going to implant it or are we going to put it on an ear or are we going to do both? Those are good viable discussion topics. We have heard from the FDA some of the roadblocks presently existing for implementing the tag and those need to be talked about as well. Should we go through and work past those hurdles so we can implant the tag

in all cases? If we do that, that will work for many applications. The difficulty is going to be in some of the applications where we would like to read the animal's tag as the animal passes by a particular point because when you implant the tag, you end up having an inherently shorter range. Well, that kind of limits the implant in some applications. That doesn't mean we don't have a tag standard that can't be applied in other ways, on the ear or whatever. I have not attended past meetings but I would say that a lot of what was discussed in 1988 was rehashed again because there were a lot of players here who are new and weren't familiar with that, weren't familiar with where the standard is. I think the questionnaire, asks when the next meeting should be. Well, as soon as you can convince the rest of these people to come back again with the standards group, you need to look forward and decide, alright, how are we going to implement the standard? In what format? For what breed associations? We talked a little about how to handle the standard from the standpoint of database, but more work needs to be done there. I don't think we are going to see a US mandated database. I don't think it is politically correct for the government to come up with one. We all have our own databases now. We are talking about databases like we have never heard of one before and we need to describe one. Every one of the groups here has one or more databases already established. We just have to figure out how we are going to use this standardized tag numbering system in those databases. That is my viewpoint of how it should be.

**Jim Davis, USDA-APHIS**

Yesterday Dr. Luchsinger left a challenge to this group. And that was: what was the identification definition going to be for the 21st century? I think we have talked around it a lot. I would like some comments on what we are looking at and what the group feels like they need.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

There has been a lot of talk, free talk about an identification system, the scope that has been mentioned is that it would be a nationwide system. What are we talking about in terms of a 21st century model identification system that ought to be out here as a target? Excuse me, systems, identification systems.

**Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders**

I have been sitting in the back yesterday and today trying to compile some of the thoughts that came through and listening to our group discussion this morning, I think we struggled a little bit about what is the ideal system we ought to be shooting for on a national level and maybe something that is achievable. We want individual animal ID for animals from birth to the consumer. We will never get that in two years so I guess I would like to preface my comments with that. I would like to outline an ideal system that is maybe something we could shoot for and then follow that up with sort of a minimum system that maybe we could make progress on in the next year and get us a lot further down the road than we are now.

First, I think that for the ideal system, the criteria that I would outline would include a unique individual animal ID that is attached to the animal from birth to the consumer. I think when I say that this ID is attached to the consumer, I envision something like an eartag or electronic ID that would follow the animal to the slaughter plant and at that point there would be some sort of cross reference with that ID to some sort of biological test, whether that is an antibody profile or a DNA profile. Then that would enable the package at the retail store to reference the animal and allow complete traceback. I think we need a unique premise ID. Ideally I think we would want a centralized database. I think that would simplify things, solve a lot of problems. Whether that can ever be achieved is an excellent question.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

Centralized, operated by whom? An independent agency, private enterprise, government?

**Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders**

Ideally I would say the government because I think this system is in place to benefit the consumers as well as the producers and with a system maintained by the government some of the financial responsibility would be taken over by the consumers. Whether that is a realistic thought or not, that is just my personal view. In this national system, I think it would be ideal to have complete reporting of all transactions to this centralized database. That is all I could come up with. Maybe there are some additional aspects that need to be included in that and we may add to them I guess. It certainly wouldn't hurt my feelings. The minimum I think we need for semblance of a national program is a numbering system to uniquely identify individuals. I think this numbering system should apply across species, it should be usable across countries and there should be some sort of central administration of this numbering system so that there isn't duplication and then there is some body that says, this Allflex unit has this series of numbers to assign and make sure you don't duplicate them. Whether that is LCI or whether that is the government agency or exactly who that is, I haven't thought too much about.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

And is that in fact a numbering system entirely or an alpha numeric system?

**Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders**

Whatever, this is kind of a minimum system that the top part was the... Another part of this minimum system again would be this unique premise ID system and the final part I think, is that for a minimum we establish some sort of standard protocols for exchanging the ID between different databases for segmented databases which is probably the situation we will have to live with. Again, in this minimum system, I think there has been some work on a numbering system that we probably need to follow-up on following this meeting. There has been some work on this standard protocol for exchanging the data between different databases. I am not aware of any work in this unique premise ID system, maybe there has been but I am not aware of any discussions on how you would go about identifying premises. If we could make progress in these three areas or have an effort following this meeting to make progress in these areas, I think we would take a giant step forward toward a national system if we ever decide we

are ready for some sort of national ID system. The only other thing is that we may want to discuss whether this group ought to establish some sort of a voice piece or body that goes out and is available for education purposes to promote the idea and the importance of a national ID system to the different commodity groups, to the dairy industry groups, the cattle, pork industries, etc. Also to discuss with the regulatory and government agencies, the importance of such a system.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

Chuck, thanks. That is exactly the type of input we are looking for, specifics. Obviously there are going to be some differing opinions and that is okay and I hope everybody does respect that as we are in this session today. There are still going to be some differences, but our end objective is to build consensus on as many aspects as we can at this stage and then decide where do we go from this point.

**Lee Curkendall, Rebonag Data**

We are a systems integrator for electronic ID. I want to ask a couple of questions. When this meeting is over, do these proceedings, where do they go? Are they available to the public or people in the industry?

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

You as an attendee obviously will be provided with a copy of the proceedings. They will be used as an influence reference to anyone that may be considering this type of..

**Lee Curkendall, Rebonag Data**

So the people will get the opinions that came out of here and say, well this is what LCI is moving toward? Is that one of the things?

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

Yes.

**Lee Curkendall, Rebonag Data**

In reference to the premise ID, how many people in here think that is the way this ought to go and how many people think it ought to be a license plate? Can I see hands? How many people think we ought to move toward a premise ID, is that a logical thing to ask for?

**Gary Simpson, National Pork Producers**

Define premise ID, what do you mean?

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I think what he means by premise ID, is that the premise, the dairy or the feed lot or the cow-calf operation, would have their own number and that would be part of the ID versus a license plate system.

**Gary Simpson, National Pork Producers**

I don't think it should be part of the ID. My viewpoint is that there should be some number that indicates location that should be separate from the ID but it should be a key piece of information that is maintained in this database along with the unique animal ID, there would be maybe a list of premise numbers.

**Lee Curkendall, Rebonag Data**

Then are you saying it would be similar to National DHI where every herd has a herdcodes? It is not necessarily on the tag, is that what. The only other thing I have to say about the database and I made this point in our group this morning. I asked the question, What is it? A couple of people kept saying that if we just would work on what the producers want, we are going to be in trouble if we don't. Well, I can assure you that all of the marketers and manufacturers have that in mind keenly. They are not only right, but that is what we make a living doing. But, what we were here to talk about, one of the things, was regulation and what was going on on the other side of those things. When you are sitting in a room with your competitors, you don't always want to raise your hand and list the benefits to the producer. But, we do like to know about the database. On central database, the question I asked, what has to be on that? The only thing that I could come up with, and I got a lot of head shaking from the regulatory side, was where that animal has been. What premise. That was the only thing, because I didn't want my neighbor to look up and see how my cows were doing or what sires were doing better because we look at it as competition and getting an edge on the competition. It would be nice if this group could come out with some simple thing. Now maybe it would be nice, it may not be my idea, but whatever that thing is, at least a database ought to have this and that ought to be enough. If anyone was going to keep a database, no matter where it was, here is one thing that has to be on it. It doesn't have to have. We already have wonderful databases out there and there may be more in private industry, but from a regulatory standpoint.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I think that is right. I know there is an element, one of the sub-issues of this is the concern over confidentiality and things of that nature. I think one of the things that was discussed in Group II this morning was that there would be several layers of filters, if you will, so that depending on who you are and what your needs are, you have access to certain elements of information. That may be one design of how that would work. You are right, there is a certain foundation, I guess. Especially if you want to look at it from a regulatory standpoint of what we are talking about.

**Peter Troesch, AVID**

My list would start with uniqueness. It has to be permanent, unalterable, automatic and safe. That reflects attributes of the technology layer. Then there is an application layer that is on top of that. There is a technology layer, an application layer. I think it is important to keep those distinct because the consequences of making adjustments is very different depending on where you are making that adjustment. The technology layer involves high capital costs. Adding a data element to the existing

database in order to accommodate a new requirement is a lot less expensive and easier to do if the attributes of the technology there are robust enough to work the requirements. On the application layer, integrity of the data is very important and that requires a system's design that includes feedback and validation. One other side comment in regards to some of the references to ISO standard is that we understood that their criteria included a requirement that the technology evaluated and proposed allow for transcutaneous identification. So that puts certain restraints on what can be considered in that context. Self imposed. I believe it was imposed because of the requirement for permanency.

#### **David Nolan, Cargill Swine Products**

I work primarily in swine production. I get a little bit concerned when we start talking about unique animal ID. I guess from my perspective one single 500 sow operation, operated by a husband and wife team being the only labor involved on the farm, can produce up to 13,000 pigs per year to be shipped off that farm. I am not sure that I am willing to say to this farmer, that we need to have 13,000 unique ID's for each animal leaving that farm when they are basically handled in a lot system. I guess I am willing to accept that which we currently do, which is a premise ID which then becomes a tattoo and therefore a unique ID for that group. I have heard a lot of talk about EID. I think that does have a lot of potential especially in our breeding. We are currently experimenting with some of the EID in our breeding herds, they are in the ear tags currently. The only problem with that is the cost of the transponder; we are retrieving those electronic chips prior to going to slaughter. I guess with our current program and the current cost of the technology we are unwilling to send those chips on to the slaughter plant, so that is one thing to consider. I am sure that as we get further into this technology the cost will start coming down, which may allow us to then let that identification go to slaughter. I guess the other thing that I see is the increased reporting of intrastate movement I think will go a long way towards controlling the ability to traceback animals. I think in some states where we are currently doing business, in order to move pigs from one site to another site, there needs to be a paper trail and I think very similar to certificate of veterinary inspection. I think that depends on the state we are talking about. Not necessarily additional testing but at least we have a record of that movement. It is whether you retain ownership or actually sell that pig.

#### **Glenn Slack, LCI**

Mr. Simpson, you have a little bit different perspective on the first item that he was talking about, do you want to share that with the audience?

#### **Gary Simpson, National Pork Producers**

Well, I agree with the unique. It doesn't really matter to the producer, it is not a tough chore to make it unique, it is not like it would be a lot easier to give the tags that weren't unique. There is no real shortage of numbers, the way I understand it. It may be a little bit cheaper if every tag was the same but you would remove that because you move that lot, manufacturing for that producer. Thirteen thousand is probably a large number for a producer but it is not a large number for manufacturing. It is an inventory problem when you have all those sitting there waiting for that particular producer..it is not a problem for the manufacturer of the tags.

**David Nolan, Cargill Swine Products**

Well we certainly don't use tags and there are several problems with tags in a two or three day old pig. I guess you are creating a wound which allows the potential for infection and there is a lot of argument over that. But we choose to tattoo our pigs which seems to be very effective, however we can only get a maximum of 6 digits on an ear, so I hear where you are coming from with your tags but I am not sure that the tags are the answer.

**Gary Simpson, National Pork Producers**

I am a pork producer also and I do favor unique animal ID. I would like to be able to have the capacity to put a number on a hog that was not copied or was not the same as any other animal in the world. It is just a matter of digits, if you want to use the last 6 digits, use the last 6 digits, you don't need to use all 15 of them. But I would like to know that the number that I was issued is not issued to somebody else, maybe even cross species or whatever.

**Darrell Myer, Nebraska, independent veterinary consultant**

Our industry is diverse enough that we are probably going to be behind most of the rest of you in implementing this. But we are talking about where we want to be in the 21st century and I think we need to concentrate, at least in our industry anyway, on what we can get done between now and the start of the 21st century. So we get this all implemented. What you are talking about in the early part of the century and not in the second half of the century, to be honest with you. From our standpoint, being a cattle person, I think one of the worst things you could do is make this mandatory because you will bring cattle people kicking and screaming and dragging you to the other end of the century. It has to be economic driven. I think the other thing as we see more and more alliances, strategic alliances in the beef cattle industry, it will give enough producers reason to use this system. Where, in the swine industry there is enough vertical integration already, you know it makes it real obvious why it is needed. But in the cattle industry, we have so many different segments. I think a lot of us have thought for years, how can we get the cow/calf guy to start implementing these things, how can we get him to use electronic ID so we can get to this and we are starting at the wrong end. We need to start at the other end which is the packer, the retailer, the consumer, that end of it. They will give the feed lots and the producers reason enough monetarily to implement this type of thing and a lot of that is not just carcass value base, we are going to red meat base value on the carcasses on these cattle when we sell them and that is going to come about real quick. That along with the strategic alliances will make that get started in the beef cattle industry. I think between now and the end of the century there will be a lot of beef cattle that are in this kind of program. But I think if we jump to this and start to cram it down everybody's throat we are going to cost ourselves years and years. For comparison just to think where the beef cattle industry went with the preconditioning program. Ten to fifteen years ago we were trying real hard to convince producers the value of doing that just like we are trying to convince them now the value of this. They didn't see it because they didn't get any economic return back for going through that program and it just kind of fell apart. There are a lot of us that still continue to do it and it continued on for years, it just wasn't labeled that. But now, here it is in the early 90's they are finally starting to get

paid for that so they are doing it. Now it is an automatic thing. I think that in all of this, once they can see the value of it, and we get it in the strategic alliances, then you can move down into the small cow/calf producers in the southeast and all over the country. We can get unique animal identification but we have got to start from a few numbers and work out to the masses instead of thinking we are going to start with the masses and work the other way.

**Glenn Cherry, Holstein Canada**

Going back to Chuck's thoughts if I may. I think he mentioned also, standards of protocol, I don't believe that was added to the list. I would like to see that added if I may. Those are very important if we are going to have standardization. Just a couple of comments about the centralized database. I believe perhaps it will be more centralized among breeds as opposed to even species or one overall centralized database. As long as those databases are linked, then you will essentially have your framework. The information from a breed perspective that would go into the centralized database would be sire proofs and things that, along those lines that are common to milk recording, AI, and the breeds. Ownership is optional I suppose, but it is already available in a lot of databases now. The problem being is that it is coded differently and we need to establish some linkages there or cross references, so that we know we are talking about the same herd or holding. When we talk about unique animal ID, oftentimes we use the term individual animal ID and hopefully that, in turn, is unique. We are supporting the basis for individuality and that is both with the animal, the herd owner or the premise along with standards and protocol which will allow us to exchange data and recognize people quite readily.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I just want to bring out that Group II did spend some time this morning on the structure of this. There were some consensus points that we were able to determine by the end of the session. In contrast to what Chuck laid out in his reference earlier, the group did, in fact, say that the information would be linked and there would be decentralized databases to the extent as would be determined at some other point in time. But between those databases, there would be linkage; they would be able to talk to each other. I think that unless there is some overwhelming thought that the entire body would like to bring up now, that this would be the consensus for direction that we need to be formulating our thoughts toward.

**Ken Olson, American Farm Bureau**

I guess it seems like the struggle that we are having is that we are trying to do two things that kind of blend together. On one hand, we are talking about identification for management systems that I think is easy to justify. It is hard to sell but it is easy to justify. On the other hand we are talking about regulatory aspects. They sometimes get interwoven. We get confused as far as what we are talking about I think. It seems like the objective needs to be to identify a basic identification system that can be used in management systems but is compatible with what is needed for the traceback mechanism. That can't be the driving factor but it has to be something if it is going to be useful, that is at least compatible with what needs to get done to facilitate traceback. So, I think what Chuck put up is consistent with what we had there. There does need to be one centralized place for a premise ID file that will make it possible to

access the other databases. So I think that is consistent. There has got to be one central location for who owns the animal or where the animal is but then all the other databases feed off of that. I think our focus needs to be on having something that may be long term can feed into the food safety aspects of it. To sell it, it needs to primarily address the identification needs and databases in use on the farms.

**Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders**

I would like to agree with Ken. I think our national system should define the minimums and then producers who want to do extra or whoever wanted to do extra, that certainly would be fine. I would like to clarify this too, that the system I outlined wasn't my idea of what we should do. It was everything I wished for. My feeling isn't that this is a realistic alternative or realistic solution, it is just pie in the sky. If you could have everything you wished for, what would it be and that was my wish list.

**Beth Lautner, National Pork Producers**

I do want to express appreciation to LCI for putting this meeting together to get people up to speed. I think people came in with a lot of different levels of knowledge and I think we can all walk out of here with some basic information and carry it forward. I think as commodity groups we all deal with a lot of different issues all the time, and what this did for us is help raise the awareness that this is something we better get into, we better address, we better say what we need. We need to recognize what other species needs are. I think was important for us to find out here today. I think we support the concept of premise ID and the one thing that I think needs a lot more discussion is, as the pork group discussed at lunch today, who is the keeper of the numbers? That is what we are looking for: who is that keeper of the numbers? Who gets the gateway into those numbers? I think we look at it just as previous people have said, we need the minimum that is needed for regulatory action. When something is mandated, that is supposed to be mandated as far as interstate movements and some of those types of things, where we have to do that, that needs to meet the minimum needs. We don't need two systems out there-one that meets production needs and one that meets regulatory needs. We need to have something that would meet these minimum standards and then we can expand on that for the production end. I think that is what we need to look at. Where we have a mandated system, what will work into that to help that system work? As I mentioned yesterday, with sow and boar identification, we have 10-30% ability to traceback, where we should have 95-98%. So we need to fix that and we need to look at what we need to do since that is mandatory. We have to do that. But where it is voluntary, where it is going to be production type of information and the producer benefits, let that be on a voluntary basis that will expand on those systems. I think really the discussion will be who is the keeper of the numbers.

**James Davis, USDA-APHIS**

When we look at who is going to be the keeper of the numbers, that is a question that I think has got to be given a lot of serious consideration. There are several different ways you can look at a national identification system, program. I like the concept that the minimum is what is needed for regulatory. I think that is something we have got to keep in the back of our mind. When you look at what is the minimum, let's look at what we saw yesterday. K-I-S-S, keep it simple, stupid. If we look at that system, it

could very easily be a national premise identification system numbering concept; I am saying concept. I am going to go very briefly through something that could work from two different aspects. Today, we have a national premise identification system already in existence. This was brought to me at lunch today. That is our postal code, the nine digit system. Very confusing to many people. You would have to look up a number every time. There is yet another system developed by the postal system. You could use postal code abbreviations; for instance this is Missouri, you use MO for Missouri. I am a firm believer that the state has a very integral part in livestock programs, especially in livestock regulatory matters. So I feel it is very important that the state regulatory agencies have very valid input into premise identification. This could be accomplished by the prefix being MO or the state postal code; the state veterinarians or the state animal health authorities assigning each premise in their state a premise identification code. Now this number then would be unique, which is one of the things we wanted. It could be used in many different ways: ear tag, bar code, slap tattoo, however you wanted to use it. It would still identify this premise. It would identify the foci of possible infection. Or the foci of where we might need to go to look for food safety concern. That is what we are interested in from a regulatory standpoint that is to get back to where there is the possibility of detecting the disease and getting it eradicated or managing it if that is a problem. So this code system would allow it to be that. In some of the smaller states, you might only need four or five digits to do it, in larger states, you might need a combination of alpha numeric digits to do it. But that would be the basis of the state to do. Now this is a simple system from the aspect that if you have an animal that you found residues in or you have an animal that showed up as a MCI reactor for brucellosis or you have an animal that you think might possibly be contaminated with a food borne illness, you look at the identification number. If it is Kentucky, then you know you are going to call our friends across the river in Kentucky and they will tell you who the premise is. It gives you a starting point. It eliminates a lot of points in between and that is a weakness of it. But, that can be taken care of. So this is one of the areas we look at. So we have two different systems that are very easy to use as a premise identification system. The concept of 9 digits postal code offers a very unique situation. It is something that I am going to be exploring. I think it gives us a framework that we can work with. The concept of making it more visible for easier identification and probably easier acceptance by the producer is going with the state postal code and then let the state veterinarians assign the numbers. This might make it a little more palatable. Any system like this is not going to be 100%. What you would see right off the bat is there would be a large percentage of the premises that would not enter into this originally and that is okay. We have a good fallback system, from a regulatory standpoint. Remember, we are talking a regulatory concept right now; we are asking what is the minimum. Our bar codes and back tags do a pretty good job for us though we have some problems with sows and boars that could be worked through. A challenge would be maybe changing it from a back tag to a ear tag and getting these collected is hard. This is a challenge we will be working on. That is one concept. Maybe finding a better adhesive is another concept but these are very minimal concepts we are looking at. So what I am saying is, there are some systems that will give us a national premise identification code that can be easily implemented, highly visible and relatively inexpensive that can be used as an ear tag, tattoo, or incorporated into your electronic identification where it is a block on your database that this is a premise ID number. So it is all tied together with one premise ID code used for all species.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I want to follow up on a recommendation that also came out of Group II this morning: that producer groups agree -- and I think that encompasses a full array, including commodity groups and farm organizations, of what is represented here; -- to purchase only equipment following ISO standards. Mr. Giles spoke a moment ago and reminded us that the standard is, as we speak, being worked on. The development is probably a ways away but what I am wondering is in fact what Group II had consensus on this morning. Can we agree that as leaders we need to say today that we are going to be able to embrace what comes out of ISO's recommendations or support the standard that is set?

**Unidentified**

I think there is something that you have to be aware of when it comes to this type of technology and that is regardless if something falls within the ISO standards, it does not equate to uniformity or standardization especially among readers. It just doesn't work that way. I mean, the barn door has been open and you have got a number of manufacturers with a number of different systems. Even if they are ISO compatible, you cannot read one system from another with the same reader. So you are going to have multiple systems. They are already out there. The barn door is open. So don't think for a minute that you are going to agree to get ISO equipment and you've got an uniform program. It is not there. Even if we look at the range Allflex reads in, or TI, the 134.2, you could have two manufacturers reading at the same frequency and yet, because their systems either use a shift key or they are reading off of a number of different frequencies within that range, you still can't read the same product with the same reader.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I think what we are looking at is kind of like a UL label on a piece of electrical equipment. We are saying it is something that has met some standards that have been established by an independent body and obviously there will be the differences in the equipment itself.

**Unidentified**

I agree with having something but you are not going to have just one reader doing everything. So you are still going to have the same problem when you get to a processing plant or a feed yard situation. This animal now has an ID system from one and they have multiple readers then in the central organization to read the various different systems coming in and out.

**Glenn Slack, LCI**

I agree with you from that standpoint. I think that is a whole other issue, a step above maybe what this recommendation is getting toward. I think it is something that we are going to have to confront, and sort out.

**Fred Bower, National Llama Registry**

I made a recommendation along those lines in Group II and I wanted to first of all respond to something that the man speaking just before me said. I don't care. I think it is up to the manufacturers of these devices to get their act together and make them compatible. In fact, I thought we were told in the Group II session that the ISO standards called for compatible readers. I might be mistaken about that, but the point is that it is not really our problem if the manufacturers of these devices want to compete among themselves and maintain some specialized niche. Our problem is to solve our own problems and we need universal readers for that. So let them get together and do it. Along those lines, the idea of that recommendation is that we pledge, not just agree, but pledge to purchase only equipment that follows ISO standards or, if those standards are not good enough to get compatibility, only equipment that follows compatible standards. If we make that pledge here, and get that out, then the manufacturers are going to fall into line.

**Glenn Fisher, Allflex**

I just want to offer a comment a little more related to the establishment of the ISO standard and the issue of the readers. I have heard that comment a few times today that the manufacturers aren't going to step up and expose our competitive positions but suffice it to say, there is going to be a standardized reader. An ISO standard gets put into place, as it sits right now. I appreciate that there are going to be some minor modifications, however there will be one reader that will adhere to that standard. Those things exist right now, and it really isn't something that is developmentally three, four, five years away. Technology is going to keep a step ahead, and that will be a challenge to continually incorporate the best of the new technology into the standard. I don't think we consider the standard as a stopping point or that is where the industry will be from this point forward. I think we should look at it as a starting point. This is where we are going to start from and try to coordinate the efforts from the standard point, just to make the point without overly stressing it that I think there will be a single reader though, in view of what the ISO is asking.

**Arne Nielsen, MAGTAG I/S**

I will speak as a member of the ISO working group, up to now at least. Remember we have two things, one for the code structure, ISO/DP 11784, and another one discussed just today and yesterday, ISO/DIS 11785. That is the technical standard. We have a standard which makes it possible to wait if the device follows the standard for the elite number. All the devices will follow that standard, I should say. The discussion today is not about that. It is about companion animals or not in the standard. So, I guess I am not agreeing with you. We have seen a prototype of those readers work well so I am confident it will work.

**Vern Taylor, Trac-em, Inc.**

It isn't quite as easy as the young man says. There are different technologies that allow the thing to read or not to read. Some that are similar certainly can be read with similar technologies, but those different technologies cannot be read the same. You may be giving up large distance differences if you limit it to what I have understand your specs to be, your standards to be. One of those is the frequency, 134.2 kilohertz; while that is a fine frequency, it does not allow for the distance that everybody wants to see.

We are able to read from a 5 foot distance with the one inch ear tag but only at 2.048 megahertz. So if the standard is given that you must operate no higher than 134.2, you are going to eliminate or restrict that new technology.

**Neil Anderson, American Sheep Industry**

I hope this isn't the last word on it ultimately, but I want to apologize to Mr. Nielsen for a comment I made this morning. I said that in my view of his experience in his country has been that it was a top down system. He clarified that for me and I appreciate being informed. It was developed by dairy producers and then accepted by the government. So, maybe there is hope there for us. Personally, I believe the Holstein people, the beef people, Dr. Daryl Wilkes, everyone who has spoken here who has something cooking in the market, I hope that they go ahead and very strongly. What I fear is that if we take the advice of the gentlemen over here whose face nor name I can remember: the idea that if we can get the packers aboard that they will clarify it for us. I have a very strong personal bias for the producer. I think the producer is the level at which we should focus our attention. If the packers and the regulators get together on this, it will end up that producers will never have any value added opportunities, at least in the red meat area. It will be just like biotech; all the fat, no pun intended, gets squeezed out of the system and what's left is just the bare bones for the producer. So I would say to anyone who has a producer interest, work real hard. Maybe the government won't accept it as it did in Mr. Nielsen's country but at least we maintain a position. The fact that the packers aren't here today, I think is message enough.