

Summary and Future Action*

Moderated by Nancy Robinson

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

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

We have learned a lot I think through the last couple of days. I am no less convinced than when we started this process that the need is definitely there, the technology is largely there and the human resources for implementation are largely there. I think this symposium has accomplished several things. One, it has informed a lot of us. We are at very different levels of understanding in this process, but I think this meeting has helped to bring a lot of us to at least an understanding that is a little more uniform across the board. I think we have raised some awareness of issues that cut across the various species and segments of the livestock industry as it relates to livestock ID so that we realize our own single particular interests aren't necessarily the only ones that we have to deal with as we proceed in trying to develop systems of livestock identification in our livestock industry in the United States. I think it has helped us know where there is some consensus and where there is not and I will be doing just a little more about that before we adjourn here. I think it has clearly shown that we need to continue this effort with all interests involved in resolving these issues so we don't continue to work at these independently and as a result we work too slowly apart than we do together. So there is much more work to be done and that is one of my goals for this session is that indeed we don't go home and in five years come back and say the same things again, but that we make real progress. It is my intention that what I would like to do is see if we have developed some consensus on some issues that we can indicate to LCI membership and the livestock industry at large, that we have accomplished some things here today that are going to be meaningful for them. And also that where there isn't consensus, or where there are issues that still exist, it is my intention that we develop some smaller task groups to continue to work on those issues. I hope many of you will agree to be part of that process as well. Certainly, by doing so we keep this process moving, we don't just simply go home and talk again within our own groups or our next door neighbor and no one else.

I think it is then important that we begin to look at where some of the consensus is within our industry. I will throw out some things. I will also ask you for some of your ideas as to what some areas of consensus that we may have reached or can reach at this meeting. I think we have heard many times over through this meeting that whatever system is developed, it will largely be driven by economics. How can that producer, that market, that packer, that retail store, realize more profit by doing certain things which relate to livestock identification, trace back, whatever it may be?

Now, what I would ask you to do if you don't agree with these, you need to get up and vehemently protest. We can literally take a vote to see if there are sufficient hands that we do have consensus on that point.

Those who agree with that the *system will largely driven by economics*, please hold up your hand. Thank you. Those who disagree. I think we can say we have consensus; it looked to me as though we had at least 3/4 or more of the crowd that agrees if not 90% or more.

I think we have also heard through these sessions, that whatever we do, it must be simple. Now we can all probably disagree somewhat as to what simple is, but I think what is trying to be said is that if we make it too complex, producers and others who have to put these systems into place in their operations will simply reject them. Easy to use, might be one aspect of simple. Uniform. Compatible, that might be a whole element in itself, we will reserve that one.

OK, those who agree that any *system must be simple, easy to use, uniform*, please hold up your hand. Simple, yes, easy to use, that is great. How would you clarify it?

Glenn Slack, LCI

Is it possible that what we are saying is that the system needs to be uniform as far as its acceptance is concerned? There are going to be differences among species and those types of things. I think the person that added the word uniform was on to something but I think there is that equal appreciation of the different species needs and that type of thing as well. But there is some element of uniformity in all of this I think.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Yes, but again are we talking about uniformity of codes, uniformity across species? It is a different element.

Unidentified

Are you possibly talking about something like transferring to the user? In other words, the user doesn't have to hassle with a complicated system in order to get the information that they want.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

We are talking about number two, and information being able to access information. So, systems must be easy to use particularly in accessing basic information.

Ken Olson, American Farm Bureau

I guess it seems like if you are going to be unique for species, all of a sudden you are away from a national ID system. There are unique aspects of databases for each of the species but that is a separate issue. I think you do have to have some uniformity if you are going to have a national system, there has to be some uniformity where if you need to do traceback, they have a standard format to know where to go. So there has got to be a standard format for identification information, for basic identification, not parentage and things like that. If you are going to have a national system, there has got to be some standard format for that.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

It has been suggested a minimum uniform standard must be developed in order to proceed with systems of ID.

John Kellar, Agriculture Canada

Maybe just a turn of phrase is required there, systems must meet unique species requirements.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Very good, systems must meet unique species requirements. Systems must meet unique species requirements. Those who agree, hold up your hand. Might have to count on this one. Again. Those against, or don't agree. On systems must meet unique species requirements.

Glenn Slack, LCI

Can I offer an amendment to that statement to strike the word "meet" and insert the word "allow for? Systems must allow for unique species requirements."

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Does everyone agree? What this says to me is that as we develop systems of identification, they must allow for some of the unique requirements of the various species. Whether it is in some species you definitely want ID right from day one of birth of the animal to others where maybe you don't need ID until it reaches the feed lot of whatever it may be.

Ken Olson, American Farm Bureau

I guess the point is that is not part of a national ID standard; that is part of the database that goes along with it and what this is trying to do is facilitate the use of additional databases. That is not a part of the standard because if you start doing that, why all of a sudden you would have just a whole conglomeration. The basic guts of the thing has got to be animal identification that allows you to access the other commercial databases.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I agree with that. I see it, I guess, as a separate.

Beth Lautner, National Pork Producers Council

The consensus we are building here is not a national ID system, not necessarily . . .

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Systems.

Beth Lautner, National Pork Producers Council

Systems, okay. I don't believe that one system fits all. I guess the concept we are talking about do we agree with a unique animal ID that is somehow tied to a unique premise ID, those kinds of things? What we are saying here is that this allows for unique species requirements. I am thinking about application of that system. I don't want to be mandated that I have to put it under the skin or I have to put it in any specific location. That is what I am thinking when I am looking at this, but I need clarification of what..

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Well, then we need to clarify the statement. We need to further expand on the statement, perhaps to make sure we are all agreeing to what that means as far as..

Neil Hammerschmidt, Holstein Association

I think we are struggling because we are trying to talk about two different issues at the same time. Uniqueness of species, one species might feel that it is a requirement to have the transponder implanted; another species might find it adequate to have it attached and therefore, to me those are some of the uniqueness that we should allow for. The types of identifiers. When it gets to code structure of the animal ID's, I think those kinds of things will be standardized across all species.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Are we closer to having a consensus of understanding of what this one is?

Glenn Slack, LCI

We have two more suggestions for clarification on the wording, maybe that will help, maybe it won't. *Systems must allow for unique for species needs, instead of requirements, or systems must allow for unique species requirements for implementation.* How is that for confusing the issue?

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I am not sure I understand what "for implementation" ..maybe it is not a consensus, right.

Glenn Slack, LCI

The way I thought the person was approaching it in the original suggestion was that it is really "need" that we are saying, it is not necessarily "requirements" in that respect. It is really systems "need" to allow that different species are going to have needs and it needs to be a workable type of system or systems to allow for that. The umbrella needs to be allowable for that.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Systems need to be adaptable, that takes in a whole host of what we have been talking about.

Fred Bauer, International Llama Registry

Before we go any further, we could get a consensus on whether we agree on the concept of a unique number for each animal? Because a lot of this, I think a lot of the confusion is because there is a fundamental disagreement on that. For instance, if we are in consensus that each animal should have a unique number, then we don't even need to worry about the unique species requirements because all the number does is give us a tool to work with, with software and databases to do anything we want with all the different species and all the different needs. But, if we don't agree that each animal should have a unique number, then we are talking about a whole different ballgame.

Glenn Slack, LCI

Let's take a vote on what it reads now and if it fails, somebody else put up some new wording.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Systems must allow for unique species requirements or needs, those in favor, agree. Those opposed. I think it would be hard put to say there was consensus on that.

Fred Bower, International Llama Registry

I would like to know if we agree that there ought to be a unique number for each animal, if that is the fundamental of the national system that we are talking about.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

So each animal will carry a unique ID.

Beth Lautner, National Pork Producers Council

Do we want "must allow" for individual unique ID? I guess we ought to be sure the language that comes out of this is not saying we are supporting mandatory unique animal identification, so I think what you are saying is that the system has to be designed so that you can give each animal unique ID if that is so desired.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

So state that again, Beth

Fred Bower, International Llama Registry

The system must provide the capability for unique animal identification.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Do we need a national ID system other than what we already have in place? Do we need a national ID system other than what we already have in place?

YES-Audience agrees.

Glenn Slack, LCI

Maybe we should take a vote on this one and then we will go back to that one.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

We never did vote on four did we? A national uniform standard must be developed. We went to three and never got back, never really finished with three. Those who agree. Those who disagree? OK five. Systems must provide the capability for unique animal ID. That gives us some latitude, I think, to do different things. Okay, those who disagree?

Glenn Slack, LCI

Do we need to put on record the question this gentlemen just raised?

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Absolutely. Do we need a national system of identification? And should it be voluntary or mandatory? Gentleman back here says if it is voluntary, it is not mandatory. Let's don't move off this one until we get a consensus or whatever. Do we need a national system of identification and if so..

Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders

How about if we state it: *current ID systems are not adequate for future needs.*

Neil Anderson, American Sheep Industry

If I could predict the future I would know whether these systems are adequate for future needs. I think it is enough to say, *current ID systems are not adequate for present needs.*

Unidentified

Do we need a system or systems to deal with different species of animals because the dairy industry might be different from the beef industry, might be different from the hog industry, so are we talking one system that is going to be used for everything across the board?

Nancy Robinson , NLIS Chair

Lets vote on this one. Those who agree that *current ID system are not adequate?* Disagree? Most all agree. Do we want to answer the question, should it be mandatory or voluntary?

Unidentified

Statement number one, that it is driven by economics. It is the impression that is a voluntary system. Economics is the driving force. Now when we talk about mandatory ID, that probably needs to be

stated...this group should make a statement, voluntary or mandatory. It is very difficult to get a consensus on but...

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Does everyone agree that by that first statement that we have a consensus that we essentially established that it shall be voluntary.

Arne Nielson, MAGTAG I/S

You are going to run into the problem of having the government impose mandatory aspects, if you make it totally voluntary. Maybe you should leave it; how far do we want to have it mandatory?..but you can't have a traceback system economy driven. There are too many other issues at stake.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

You have some mandatory systems in place, in swine.

Glenn Fisher, Allflex

There are systems being put in place such as the strategic alliance programs like Dr. Wilkes spoke of yesterday. Different breed associations are actively putting forth programs. I am not sure it would be a consensus point, but a strong point I have is the industry is going to drive the initial installation of these types of ID systems. Now that being the case, and let us assume for the moment that is going to be a given, we established what are going to be the minimum standards for these systems to adhere to. Keeping in mind what regulatory issues may come down the pike, either current or future. So, these systems that have been put in place shall we say, that at least they must have the ability to address traceback issues, and to address certain species related disease issues, and I don't have the answer about the wording on it but ... These issues have to be addressed by these developing systems because a lot of us are involved in systems that are going into place right now. It would be good feedback to leave from this group saying we have got to make sure we are adhering to certain standards or certain considerations as these systems are put together.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I think that is a good point, I think it is what I asked Dr. Davis earlier today; what we needed from the government, which was some basics of what they need in order to carry out their regulatory programs. Because those laws, those regulations in large part, particularly for disease and residue control, are already in place. So, you are right. There is a certain minimum standard that will have to be met in traceback for disease control and residue control. We know that is already in place.

Beth Lautner, National Pork Producers Council

It is very important to get regulators to tell us what they need so..

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Minimum uniform standards must meet regulatory needs. Those who agree? Disagree? OK, agreed.

Unidentified

Nancy, I would like to add one more as we are looking at it. And that is, we need to get a consensus from the industry on what would be the best sites if we do use implantable electronic identification.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I am sorry, we are not up to that today. That is for a subgroup. There are issues, we know. We have already identified some of those that need further work and that we will, I promise you, will develop smaller work groups or task groups to do that. But, I just don't see how we can answer that today.

John Weimers, USDA

One of the things we think about when we talk about systems, we are talking about systems of collecting data or systems of numbering animals. I think that when we talk about systems of numbering animals, that is the minimum standard that we need. I think that our response to the unique animal identifiers is commendable because I think we have gone a long way with that. The comment that was made about voluntary approach not being logistically possible, I would like to see a show of hands of everybody in this room that has either a Mastercard or a Visa card. I wonder..who told you you had to buy one or had to have one of those and is that mandatory or voluntary? At a point it becomes moot because it becomes the way business is done. What started it was economic forces, market forces drove that thing and I think that is the vision I have is this taking off and it just becomes the way business is done in the future.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

So that would go along with our first item, then. Economic..will make it voluntary and at some point mandatory. Data management has been a very critical issue at this meeting. Maybe there is nothing we can say that is unique about it, but perhaps there is an element or point we want to make in our statement here in that respect. Centralized versus decentralized? Do you want to deal with that at this point or is that something that we are going to have to have further discussion on in our industries?

Vern Taylor, Trace-em

Can we address the problem of frequency? The FCC is already in a position to regulate whether or not you can use certain frequencies. I would hate to see us, after all the money I have spent in the last 15 years of developing things, to be left out of this. We operate at 2.048 megahertz. The ISO standard is 134.2 and I can't change. I can change to the frequency but I can't change without making everything larger, more cumbersome. It becomes too heavy for the cow to carry on her ear. Can we state, for our national system, that it can be frequencies approved by the FCC?

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I don't think that will come within the ISO protocol.

Vern Taylor, Trace-em

There are a lot of things that may not be ISO before we are done.

Unidentified

. . This comes within the factors driven by economics.

Vern Taylor, Trace-em

That is fine, but if you leave it as a standard, and you state it as a standard, then it isn't driven by economics. It is being regulated.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

I would be very concerned about us moving off track from where groups have spent years and years on developing standards. That this group suddenly is going to say...

Glenn Slack, LCI

Frequency is obviously a major issue from your point of view and therefore it is a major point of view of this whole body in here. I don't think with the time allotment, we are going to be able to discuss it in detail enough. It is foreign to me just to admit very frankly to you and I have a lot more to learn about it. I don't think we are going to be able to do that in the next five minutes. We are already overtime. I think we need to make a note of it that that is an area that we need to have further discussion on.

Fred Bauerer, International Llama Registry

I would like to see us discuss it, but I think it might be too controversial or not a consensus today that we pledge to buy only ISO approved equipment.

Beth Lauter, National Pork Producers Council

What is the result on number four, . . . (inaudible.)

Glenn Slack, LCI

We said we need to develop it, I don't think that was looking at it from international standards necessarily. What we originally started with this morning was can we get an endorsement so everybody feels comfortable. We are embracing or going to be embracing whatever ISO comes up with; that there is not going to be some group over here that is going to say, well we are going to try to somehow go around that position

Chuck Sattler, National Association of Animal Breeders

On the issue of the databases, I don't know if we can decide, I think maybe it is a moot question and that maybe our best action would be to say something like encourage the development of standard protocols for exchange of ID data. Because I don't think we will ever have a centralized database so we

are going to have to develop systems to live with segmented databases and to do that we will need to have standard exchange protocols so that we can get this data back and forth.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Standard exchange protocols in the sharing of database information? Non proprietary...

Unidentified

Nancy, how does this sound? *Central identification capture center that protects confidentiality, provides for the needs of the regulatory sector and allows for private enterprise.*

Beth Lauter, National Pork Producers Council

I would like to make a comment. From our standpoint, we really need to sit down and look at all the options first. I recognize that whatever system develops... (inaudible), but I am not sure I like putting a title to it at the present time. I am uncomfortable giving a name to it. (Inaudible) I don't think we have reached a consensus on where it should be.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

That is a point. Any other discussion? Those who agree that a essential identification capture center that protects confidentiality, provides for the needs of the regulatory sector and allows for private enterprise, show of hands, agree? Those who disagree? Apparently not consensus but that is an important discussion item that will have to go into some work groups, while you can continue to work within your own organizations to help us.

Unidentified

Maybe what that is getting at is some more general statement about the ability to exchange data across databases. Whatever databases develop need to be able to exchange data.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Exchange information data from databases which are developed is a must.

Ken Olson, American Farm Bureau

I think the minimum uniform standards really imply that should be a part. It seems like here, rather than saying capture center, if we just said "the system should protect confidentiality, provide for the needs of regulatory sector and allow for private enterprise" it would probably address what we have been saying.

Nancy Robinson, NLIS Chair

Let me just say to all of you, how much I appreciate your attendance, your steady attention at all of our sessions. I hope we leave you going home feeling good about the time you spent here and certainly for many of our participants, you have had to come from abroad, the expense of coming here as well. I

want to thank them particularly because I know it has taken a lot for them to make that effort and take that time to do so. I want to give a special thank you to Glenn and the staff. They have done a monumental job I think. We get to sit there and come up with really great ideas but they are the ones that have to implement them and I think they have done extremely well.

Glenn Slack, LCI

I would like to tell you that there is at least one forum that will be coming up in the near future that will certainly be taking this discussion to another level. That will be during the LCI's annual meeting that will be occurring April 5 thru the 7th in Kansas City, Missouri. I encourage each of you to consider participating in that meeting as the LCI Identification Committee will certainly be a highlight of this upcoming meeting. We will be taking the information gleaned from this group and trying to take things to another level. So we would encourage you to try to stay in tune with that meeting. The *LCI News Special Edition* has information about those dates so you can put them on your calendar. Most importantly, I would like hopefully for everyone to leave with a very positive feeling and with smiles on your faces about the last two days. Now I know when we adjourned last night and we went to the social hour and dinner, I was just flooded with positive comments about how well the symposium was going, and quite frankly the feeling that I get from people today and the expression I see on their faces is a feeling of being overwhelmed, a feeling of just how big this issue and discussion really is and how much we have ahead of us to do. I offer to you that I think that is okay. I know certainly that the planning committee has realized it but yet there is still a lot that we have learned throughout. I think listening to Neil Hammerschmidt, who thought he had his finger right on the species needs, admit this morning how his eyes were opened because very quickly he realized there were some very distinct differences among species groups and we all have to respect that and understand that as we move forward.

I think that, in itself, is what this meeting has accomplished. It has increased our awareness not only of this issue as a whole as it relates to animal agriculture in the United States and the implications that it has abroad, but it has made us aware and more knowledgeable of the different considerations that we must each individually have, no matter which sector we are in or which segment of animal agriculture we spend day in, day out. There are a lot of other considerations that need to be factored in to that and I think we have all been very well educated into what those are.

I don't know how many of you maybe had the thought this week as someone was speaking at the podium, "That guy just doesn't get it." I can almost bet there are some producer group representatives here that thought while listening to some manufacturers, "They just don't get it, they don't understand where we are." At the same time, I know there are some manufacturers thinking, "These guys just don't get it, because we have it figured out." I know I have seen it and I have heard different people, depending on what segment you are in, discussing with me that you sort of have that laid out.

ISO feels that they have things going in the right direction and everything is going to hinge on that and a lot of things will, but there are a lot of other considerations. We need to be giving more consideration to exactly what ISO is going to be developing and putting before us. I certainly encourage everyone to try to stay in tune with that development and we will try to keep you informed.

In essence, the point I am trying to make here is that this meeting served a very good purpose from the standpoint of awareness in all the different sectors. Not only was awareness heightened to the level that it probably needs to be in the issues of animal agriculture, but in our own understanding and being aware of the different considerations that we must have for other segments.

I thank you very, very much for your participation. We want to thank the speakers for all that they have contributed in time and expertise, the exhibitors for all that they have done in helping to educate us on what is out there and what is being developed and where the technology is, and the sponsors for all that you have done for us in helping make this event happen. To all participants, again, thank you for your input. We look forward to keeping you in touch as this issue develops in the future.

End of Final Session