

**Welcome & Opening Remarks**  
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**NIAA Chairman of the Board**

ID/INFO EXPO 2004  
May 19, 2004

Welcome to ID/INFO EXPO 2004. Please, look at the people sitting all around you. It is a big group. These people and yourself are truly on the cutting edge of change. On behalf of animal agriculture, I thank all of you for being here.

The many professions of animal agriculture are continually adjusting to the many and varied pressures of a changing society. The mission and responsibility of most of us here today is shepherding and nurturing the many dimensions of animal agriculture. The newest dimension of animal agriculture is animal identification. This ID dream and vision is taking shape.

As with any evolving culture and business attitude, the insecurities of change has everyone a bit edgy and uncertain. The many ideas and philosophies of each participant this week, nudges all of us to think beyond ourselves and beyond our livelihoods. Each of us will be asked to compromise just a bit to accomplish the bigger goal of the United States Animal Identification Plan. It is a worthy quest. It is a journey that must be mentored and molded. Nostalgia and history will be challenged. Old comfortable ideas will be sculpted into different looking opportunities. Each of us must preserve our foundations of past success while looking to the "new animal agriculture". We are the architects of this new endeavor.

The price for not succeeding is steep. There are challenges and threats all around us. Protecting the animal industries without constricting the "open, transparent business" of animal agriculture is very tough work. We are up to this challenge. We will be tired but energized with this "work in progress". We will partner and collaborate with people and colleagues that may have been worthy opponents in the past. We are moving ahead. We will negotiate aggressively but with deep respect for the process and the outcome. We know that we must deliver on a more coordinated and informed animal agriculture. We know that we face many adversaries, some are yet unidentified. In the end, we recognize that what we do now, will need further molding and amending as the future becomes more clear. We have thought long and hard about these many possibilities. We are willing. We are prepared. We are ready.

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