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Forum One Step toward ADT Successful Implementation

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.—While some pieces of the USDA’s animal disease traceability (ADT) ruling that became effective March 11 are falling into place answering the “what,” other “what” questions are arising among State and Tribal animal health officials, livestock producers, livestock marketers and handlers, fair and rodeo managers and meat processors from across the country. ADT program’s next step—the “now what”—also presents challenges to those involved in the program, as the ADT program places ownership at the hands of each State and Tribe.

To that end, more than 160 industry and regulatory leaders gathered Aug. 6-7 in Denver, Colo., to address challenges, share ideas and develop practical solutions to ensure the success of the country’s voluntary ADT program. The “Joint Strategy Forum on Animal Disease Traceability: Bringing Industry and Regulatory Leaders Together to Create Sensible Solutions” was developed and hosted by the U.S. Animal Health Association and the National Institute for Animal Agriculture.

More than 25 speakers and moderators from across animal agriculture provided information and insight during the Forum. Reaction breakout sessions provided participants opportunities to cite “this will work,” voice concerns and challenges and increase their knowledge of the ADT ruling and their role in helping make ADT as effective and as efficient as possible.

“Animal disease traceability—or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they’ve been and when—is extremely important to ensure a rapid response when an animal disease event takes place,” states Steve Crawford, president-elect of USAHA. “An efficient and accurate animal disease traceability system helps reduce the number of animals involved in an investigation, reduces the time needed to respond and decreases the cost to producers and the government.”

Victor Velez, California Department of Food and Agriculture, Animal Health and Food Safety Services and co-chair of the Forum, adds that those in food animal agriculture have questions about ADT final rule compliance.

“We know we face bumps in the road to ensure the success of ADT, and this platform provided the opportunity to interact and learn from Federal and State government and industry leaders,” Velez states.

“One goal of the Forum was to discover common ground and discuss ways collaboration can lead to 100 percent industry compliance of the ADT final rule. The dialogue was extremely robust, and definite inroads were made toward understanding the rule and moving forward with implementation.”

Crawford stresses that the Forum was an important jumpstart.

“There is more talk that needs to happen going forward, and the White paper that comes from this meeting will be a useful foundation piece in the implementation of ADT nationwide,” he explains. “These efforts will evolve and improve over time, with our long-term goals remaining the same—sound animal disease control and business opportunity.”

A White Paper summarizing the Joint Strategy Forum on Animal Disease Traceability: Bringing Industry and Regulatory Leaders Together to Create Sensible Solutions” will be published and available online at www.animalagriculture.org by Sept. 1.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization that unites and advances animal agriculture—the beef, dairy, equine, goats, poultry, sheep and swine industries. NIAA is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of diseases 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’s members include animal producers, veterinarians, scientists, state and federal officials, and agribusiness executives.

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) is a science-based, non-profit, voluntary organization. Its 1,100 members are state and federal animal health officials, national allied organizations, regional representatives and individual members.

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