



Florida Farm Bureau Federation Issue Briefs

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NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

Issue:

Enactment of the National Farm Animal Identification and Records Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall establish an electronic nationwide livestock identification system to require the identification of livestock to enhance the speed and accuracy of the response of the Department of Agriculture to outbreaks of disease in livestock. Because livestock diseases are not constrained by state boundaries, the livestock identification system shall apply to all livestock born in the United States or imported and cover the movement of livestock in both interstate commerce and intrastate commerce.

The livestock identification system shall be capable of tracing, within 48 hours, livestock from birth to slaughter.

Background:

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the framework for implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) designed to identify any agricultural premise exposed to a foreign animal disease so that it can be more quickly contained and eradicated.

Veneman also announced that \$18.8 million would be transferred from the USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to provide initial funding for the program during FY 2004.

“While many livestock species in the United States can be identified through a variety of systems, a verifiable system of national animal identification will enhance our efforts to respond to intentionally or unintentionally introduced animal disease outbreaks more quickly and effectively,” Veneman said. “This framework is the result of concerted efforts to expedite the implementation of a system that meets our goals and enables farmers and ranchers to adapt existing identification programs and to use all existing forms of effective technologies.”

Veneman announced Dec. 30, 2003 that USDA would expedite the implementation of a national animal identification system for all species after the discovery of a BSE positive cow in Washington State. Today’s announcement concludes several months of a USDA working group’s efforts to develop an implementation framework for a U.S. animal identification plan.

Veneman said that the CCC funding is earmarked for the initial infrastructure development and implementation of the national system, but both private and public support will be required to make it fully operational. The Administration’s proposed FY 2005 budget includes another \$33 million for the effort.

The implementation of a NAIS will be conducted in three main phases. Under Phase I, USDA would evaluate current federally funded animal identification systems and determine which system(s) should be used for a NAIS, further the dialogue with producers and other stakeholders on the operation of a NAIS, identify staffing needs, and develop any regulatory and legislative proposals needed for implementing the system.

Phase II would involve the implementation of the selected animal identification system at regional levels for one or more selected species, continuation of the communication and education effort, addressing regulatory needs and working with Congress on any needed legislation.

In Phase III, the selected animal identification system(s) would be scaled up to the national level.

The first step in the process is to select an interim data repository to handle incoming national premises data. USDA has commissioned an independent analysis of repositories that are currently part of various USDA-funded animal identification projects around the country. Once the system is identified that shows greatest potential for use on a national level, USDA will enter into cooperative agreements with states, Indian tribes and other government entities to assist them in adapting their existing systems to the new system.

USDA is committed to develop a program that is technology neutral, so as to enable producers, to the extent possible, the flexibility to use current and effective systems and technologies, as well as adopt new technologies as they are developed.

FFBF Policy:

Action:

We are currently working close with the Florida Cattlemen's Association and the Department of Agriculture. The FFBF Beef, Dairy and Poultry advisory committees will develop a resolution to be considered at the 2004 FFBF annual meeting.