

## ***United States Animal Identification Work Plan***

While the need for national animal identification in the United States is fueled by fear and furor when a zoonotic threat appears, it is a massive undertaking to actually develop a system. The development of a successful national plan must overcome three large challenges :

All species producers must be in agreement. The needs of a pig producer handling many lots of piglets vary from that of a producer buying and selling dairy cattle; yet, the organizers want to develop a plan that satisfies all animal industries.

Someone must foot the bill. Industries want the government to pay since this is a government-mandated program. Any program will be expensive. USDA has allocated 18 million dollars for 2004 and 33 million dollars for 2005 but the program realistically will cost 750 million dollars to implement.

Confidentiality must be assured. Dairy producers are familiar with government accessible data bases but this is not so for all producers. Some fear unforeseen consequences if premise and animal identification information is accessed by unfriendly interest groups. The location of the database and the rules governing accessibility have not yet been resolved.

The goal of the cattle program is to be able to trace the movement of an individual between each premise from the time it enters commerce. The target is to have this information available within 48 hours of request. The cattle industry favors radio frequency identification tags but the overall plan will remain “technologically neutral” which means that each species group will decide upon their preferred means of identification. The plan will be phased into operation in three stages.

Phase I - Premise ID. All premises that manage and/or hold cattle are to be identified through the state premises system to achieve a national premises system. Premise identification is a prerequisite to individual animal identification, and thus, must be initiated to meet the requirements of the US Animal Identification Number System.

Phase II - Individual Animal ID for Cattle moved for Commerce. The primary timetable requirements established in Phase II for cattle are:

All cattle that enter interstate commerce are to be officially identified and their movement is to be reported to the National Animal Identification Database through the electronic Interstate Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (ICVI). Target: July 2005.

All cattle that enter commerce (intrastate and interstate) must be identified with an official RFID tag prior to leaving their current premises and such movements are reported to the National Animal Identification Database. Target: July 2006

Exception to the requirement includes:

- fed cattle moving from a feedlot direct to a slaughter plant
- cattle moving from their premise of birth direct to slaughter
- cattle moving to another premise when they remain under the same person's control (ownership) and when they are not co-mingled with cattle from other premises.

Phase III

The integration of RFID readers will be initiated as cattle volumes with RFID tags warrant. The system capabilities are to be available July 2004 with significant integration by July 2005. USDA inspected cattle slaughter plants and state licensed markets are to have RFID readers in place by July 2005.

*The information is summarized ifrom that available on the web at  
<<http://usaip.info/bovineplan.htm>>.*