

Haskell County Animal Hospital

Animal Health Update

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United States Animal Identification Plan (USAIP)

The USAIP was developed through a coordinated effort between industry, state and federal organizations. The development of this plan began in the spring of 2003 and is continually being refined to meet the needs of the livestock industry of the United States.

The USAIP states “Protecting American animal agriculture by safeguarding animal health is vital to the wellbeing of all U.S. citizens. It promotes human health; provides wholesome, reliable, and secure food resources; mitigates national economic threats; and enhances a sustainable environment. Essential to achieving this goal is an efficient and effective animal identification plan.”

The purpose of a national animal identification plan is to ensure the safety of the U.S. food supply and to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry of the United States.

The ultimate goal of the USAIP is to provide the United States with a system that could identify all animals and premises potentially exposed to an animal with a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) within 48 hours of discovery. Our ability to achieve a 48-hour traceback is imperative with some potential, fast moving FAD's.

The USAIP will cover the following species; bison, beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, sheep, goats, camelids (alpacas and llamas), horses, cervids (deer and elk), poultry (eight species including game birds), and aquaculture (eleven species).

The USAIP will be implemented in 3 phases:

Phase I – Premise identification

Phase II - Individual or group ID for interstate or intrastate commerce.

Phase III – Installing required technology in processing plants and markets and other segments in order to track animal movements.

The plan will target cattle, swine and small ruminant industries first. USAIP is recommending the following target dates as goals.

- Premise identification by all states by July 2004 and unique individual or group/lot numbers available by Feb. 2005.
- All cattle, swine and small ruminants possess individual or group/lot identification for interstate movement by July 2006.
- Animals of other species in compliance by July 2006.

Benefits of implementing the USAIP

It will improve disease control and eradication capabilities for quick containment of FAD outbreaks. The USAIP will also improve the United States ability to respond to any biosecurity threat that is either intentional or unintentional. Even without the biosecurity threat of terrorism we need to improve our ability to contain any unintentional biosecurity risk from a FAD. Recent examples are the Exotic Newcastle outbreak in poultry flocks of the southwest U.S. or the more recent Avian Influenza break. The opportunity always

exists for the introduction of a FAD such as Foot and Mouth disease into the U.S. industry just from normal commerce. With global movement of people, animals, animal products and feed the possibility of a FAD introduction into the U.S. will always be a concern. Now with the threat of agri-terrorism, that possibility is greater.

The USAIP will improve the United States ability to meet the requirements of our trading partners and improve consumer confidence in the safety of our food supply.

In order to achieve the 48-hour traceback objective, not only will animals require a unique number but also all locations handling animal movements will require unique identification. Any location in animal or group/lot movements will be assigned a unique “premise” identification number. Examples of locations requiring premise ID numbers are clinics, exhibitions, market/collection points, producer units, hunt farms, ports of entry, rendering and slaughter facilities.

The official premise definition is as follows; “A premise is an identifiable physical location that, in the judgment of the State Animal Health Officer or Area Veterinarian in Charge, and when appropriate in consultation with the affected producer, represents a unique and describable geographic entity (where activity affecting the health and/or traceability of food producing animals may occur) or represents the producer contact location when extensive grazing operations exists.”

Animal identification will occur in two forms. Individual animal ID will be required for animals destined to be commingled and group/lot ID for animals that will move through the production chains groups or lots.

The actual ID device has not been determined at this point. It will most likely be a combination visible ID and radio frequency tag that will best accommodate the needs of the program.

Anytime an animal movement occurs through the production chain, it must be officially tagged with an individual unique ID. That ID or group/lot ID along with the premise ID number of origin and destination will be transferred electronically to a central database. Each movement of an official ID will be transferred with the new destination premise ID until the animal exits the production chain by any means.

It is widely recognized that the cost of implementing the USAIP will be large. Rough estimates put the costs, at least initially, at over 100 million per year. Most of this cost will come from the RFID tags to be used with the program.

The USAIP states, “It is well acknowledged that the costs associated with the USAIP will be substantial and that a public/private funding plan is justified. Significant state and federal costs will be incurred in overseeing, maintaining, updating, and improving necessary infrastructure. Continued efforts will be required to seek federal and state financial support for this integral component of safeguarding animal health in protecting American animal agriculture.”

For a look at the entire USAIP or for more information you can go to www.usaip.info.

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