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USAHA ENCOURAGES STAKEHOLDER COMMENT ON PROPOSED TRACEABILITY RULE

August 9, 2011
For Immediate Release

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St. Joseph, Mo. – The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) encourages all animal health stakeholders to review and provide comment on the proposed animal traceability rule, published yesterday in the *Federal Register*. The rule follows 18 months of work to develop a revised plan for a workable livestock traceability system in the United States.

“We are pleased to see the publishing of this rule, after months of effort by USDA collaborating with states, tribes and industry to reach this point,” says Dr. Steven Halstead, president of USAHA. “USAHA looks forward to reviewing the details of the rule and providing feedback to continue meaningful progress on animal disease traceability. We would encourage all those with a stake in animal health to provide comment”

The proposed rule, which applies only to interstate movement of animals, is administered at the State and Tribal levels. The system will be designed to allow for flexibility, and encourage the use of low-cost technologies. USDA has indicated it wants to ensure that the process for implementation is transparent through the federal rulemaking process.

“The goal of the system is to assist animal health officials in minimizing impacts of disease outbreaks on commerce, and maximize the ability of producers to conduct their business.” says Halstead. “USAHA appreciates the outreach of USDA in this process of evaluating a complex task. Many have put in significant effort over the years, and it is time for meaningful traceability to become reality.”

In February 2010, Secretary Tom Vilsack announced a new, flexible framework for animal disease traceability in the United States. Since that time USDA has hosted several public meetings, as well as working closely with its State-Tribal working group. Additionally, USAHA partnered with the National Institute for Animal Agriculture to host a traceability forum last summer, to enhance the dialogue and move toward consensus points regarding traceability.

“USAHA has supported a traceability system that focuses on interstate commerce, allows state or tribal database administration, and encourages permanent individual or group animal identification,” adds Halstead. “That being said, we must remain diligent to do so in a cost-effective manner, not only for producers but every taxpayer.”

The proposed rule will be published in the August 11 *Federal Register*, with a 90-day comment period.. View the rule and related information at www.aphis.usda.gov.

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USAHA, this nation's animal health forum for over a century, is a science-based, dues-supported, voluntary organization whose membership includes state, federal and international animal and public health agencies, allied industry and professional organizations, as well as individual members representing academia, animal owners and animal health professionals. USAHA primarily serves as a forum for communication and coordination among animal health constituents on issues of animal health and disease control, animal welfare, food safety and public health. USAHA operates with 32 species- and subject-oriented committees, and hosts an annual meeting each year with the American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians.