

For Immediate Release

### **Secretary Johanns Considers USAHA Proposal on NAIS**

(20 January 2006)—Washington, D.C. was the destination and the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) was the subject, as Dr. Bret Marsh, United States Animal Association (USAHA) president, and Dr. Bob Hillman, chairman of USAHA's Committee on Livestock Identification, visited with U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Michael Johanns on Jan. 17.



**Dr. Bob Hillman, Secretary Michael Johanns, Dr. Bret Marsh**

During their visit, the USAHA representatives delivered an invitation to Secretary Johanns to host jointly facilitated sessions about the NAIS. Drs. Marsh and Hillman were tasked with making the trip during USAHA's annual meeting in November, following the adoption of Resolution 5, regarding NAIS's tracking database.

According to Dr. Marsh, these meetings would present a new opportunity for USDA to work with stakeholders to move ahead to the final goal: a viable nationwide animal identification system. Under USAHA's proposal, each stakeholder group would designate up to three individuals to participate. The meetings would be facilitated—not just listening sessions—to hammer out strategies for achieving the end goal.

Dr. Marsh applauded the work of the national species working groups and the USDA, but, he acknowledged, the time has come to move to the next step. "We need to get down to a smaller group of people who understand the finer details of how this system has to work," he said. "Then we need to identify the common ground with the hope of moving this initiative forward."

During the meeting, Secretary Johanns pledged to consider USAHA's offer, tasking his staff to review the proposal. Dr. Marsh stated that USAHA is looking forward to the Secretary's response.