UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2005

RESOLUTION: **5** **APPROVED**

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION

SUBJECT MATTER: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM TRACKING DATABASE

DATES: Hershey, Pennsylvania – November 3-9, 2005

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It is widely understood that the National Cattlemen's Beef Association representatives are now stating that the national animal tracking database is for animal disease surveillance, monitoring and control purposes only (9/28th 2005 ID Expo, Chicago, and 10/12th ID Stakeholders Hearing, Kansas City) and not for purposes of containing information that would "add value" for marketing purposes.

Also, by law and precedence, the gathering of animal tracking information supporting animal disease surveillance and monitoring has been and should remain activities undertaken by state animal health officials and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS).

With the knowledge that USDA-APHIS-VS was soon to complete the national animal tracking database proposed in the initial National Animal Identification System (NAIS) plan, the NAIS Cattle Industry Work Group has recommended that the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) play a pivotal role in facilitating and implementing the NAIS tracking database as initially outlined in the NAIS plan.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to implement the animal tracking database for disease surveillance and monitoring as initially outlined in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) plan.

RESPONSE:

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE, VETERINARY SERVICES (APHIS-VS)

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is committed to developing National Animal Identification System (NAIS) policy in a fully transparent manner that invites the input of producers and stakeholders large and small.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) believes that maintaining the animal movement data privately is the best solution for advancing the NAIS. Producers have expressed concern about the potential misuse of such data, and these concerns will only increase as more producers gain knowledge of the NAIS. Therefore, having stakeholders maintain control of their information is a practical solution. As a result of discussions about the industry's ability to achieve a single privately held database, we have proposed a solution for the information technology architecture that will enable the linkage of multiple databases. We are considering a metadata repository to support this architecture. By simple definition, metadata is usually described as "data about the data." The establishment of a metadata layer is an effective way of supporting a distributed architecture for animal movement databases.

The advantages of a metadata layer, given a distributed architecture, include: (1) tracing efficiencies, and (2) decreased query impact on source systems (the private databases). A significant benefit would be that only the private databases that have data on a particular animal would need to be searched when a query is submitted via the Veterinary Services Health Information System. That is, the metadata layer would direct (or route) the query only to those databases with information on the Animal Identification Numbering (AIN).

Participating private systems will need to be at a level that would allow query requests from an external source and be able to send newly-entered AIN data to the metadata layer on a regular basis.

USDA could manage this layer containing information about all participating source systems. Also, USDA would have a legal agreement with the industry organization and/or company responsible for databases. The agreement would define the legal responsibilities to ensure requirements of the system, access to the information and archives for historic data are met. The legal agreement would also define the necessary safeguards to preserve the data if the organization or company ceases business or decides to cease maintenance of the database.