FPL FOOD, LLC

Process and Problems with Animal Identification
Company overview

- Corporate offices and Harvest facility in Augusta, Ga
- Further processing in Thomasville, Ga
- Feedyard and farms centered in Reidsville, GA
- Harvest 5000 – 5500 per week in one shift
- Fresh, frozen, and case ready products
- 2500 acres total, 6000 head capacity plus grow yard and cow – calf operation
USDA Back tags

- Issued to each individual stockyard and some large producers
- Specific number for each state
- Alphabetical code for each stockyard
- Barcode also on each back tag that is specific to that producer or stockyard
- The barcode can be scanned into the system or manually input
Electronic Identification

- Used on a percentage of the fed cattle and all NHTC cattle
- Also used on Canadian cattle
- Employee uses a hand reader to scan the tags
- Then downloaded into the computer system at the harvest facility
- Relatable to the visual identification on the cattle whether back tag or ear tag
- Harvest facility was set up for EID protocols for NAI program
Metal Eartags

- Most of the states do not require cattle to be tagged if going directly to slaughter
- By far, the hardest form from which to gather information
- Our feedyard is a certified tagging site for slaughter cows that we have to leave longer than 5 days
Tag collection process

- Pull back tag, any flap ear tags, and metal tags off the animal after knocking
- Enter or scan the state code and number from the back tag
- Place all of the tags into individual plastic bag for APHIS
- Individual bags are kept separate by lot numbers and placed in box for collection by APHIS throughout the day.
Back tags

Advantages
• Most favorable for stockyards to use
• Easiest to retrieve for collection
• Favorable for scanning into our system

Disadvantages
• Difficult to get consistent placement and retention
• Not retrievable if not placed correctly on the shoulders
• Dirty tags and “extra” numbers
Electronic ID Tags

Advantages
• Most logical solution for harvest facility
• One of the most reliable and trusted by consumers for traceability

Disadvantages
• Most cumbersome and illogical for stockyards
• Cost to purchase and maintain the equipment
Metal EarTags

Advantages
• Stays on better than back tag
• More consistently placed for retrieval and collection
• All advantages

Disadvantages
• Next to impossible to read, too many numbers to write down, no way to scan and enter into system
• Please see above
• Please see above
Pain Points

- Improper placement of back tags by stockyards
- Back tags fall off of the cattle
- Grouped cattle sometimes are not tagged
- USDA will not use a number from unreadable (dirty tags) state code
- Barcodes will sometimes have an extra number in it
- VS 127 forms not sent in timely manner