

---

**RESOLUTION NUMBER: 33**

**Approved**

**SOURCE:**

**COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON**

**SUBJECT MATTER:**

**Cattle Contact Tracing System**

---

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Animal health officials across the United States (US) are tasked with protecting the cattle industry. Animal disease traceability (ADT) is a critical component to mitigating potentially economic significant diseases that could be detrimental to normal business operations. Traces are routinely conducted by animal health officials on cattle to mitigate potential disease spread. Traditional components of ADT have limited animal health officials to effectively perform a quick traceback and subsequent response time. Current ADT tools that are available for animal health officials allow for a limited trace on a current animal forward and backward (bookend tracing). Additional contacts during a trace can be determined throughout the process. However, with the current information flow, these close contacts may take additional time that could hinder a response which could be economically detrimental to the industry in the case of a potential foreign animal disease such as foot and mouth disease.

In early 2018, Kansas cattle producers led an effort that resulted in the CattleTrace pilot project which began work to develop a purpose-built infrastructure to track cattle movement through the supply chain (contact tracing) to collect the minimal data necessary for contact tracing. The data points include an individual animal identification (ID) number, a GPS location, and date and time of the read to track animals in the event of a disease outbreak. Tag readers were located at producers' operations, livestock markets, feed yards and beef processors. The pilot project was a collaborative partnership between the state of Kansas, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and producer stakeholders.

The goal for the pilot project was to:

- Develop a purpose-built infrastructure for a contact traceability system,
- Evaluate the infrastructure,
- Determine the value proposition of the system at each production segment and across the industry.

Simultaneously, multiple other states including Florida, Texas, and Kentucky conducted pilot projects with collaborative funding from USDA, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. Project objectives ranged from testing effectiveness of both forms of radio

*[continued]*

frequency identification (RFID) along with different forms of RFID identification, such as ultra-high frequency backtags.

In January 2020, these efforts from major beef producing regions announced a partnership to form US CattleTrace, a stand-alone, non-profit organization solely focused on animal disease contact traceability. Today, the goal is to develop a national infrastructure for disease contact traceability used by state and federal animal health officials fed by private industry's use of the infrastructure for individualized management practices. The organization aims to continue pursuing a voluntary, hands-free, speed of commerce contact tracing system. The organization will utilize the most current forms of ID that allow for the animal disease traceability system to operate at the speed of commerce within multiple segments of the cattle industry.

State and federal animal health officials' continued support of RFID tags and collaboration with industry directed at utilization of a contact tracing infrastructure would directly enhance animal disease traceability efforts of cattle on a national level for a quick, accurate and timely response.

Additionally, sharing of existing contact trace data (ID, time, date, location) by individual state and federal animal health officials with contact tracing systems such as US CattleTrace would serve to expand the database size and geography enhancing the effectiveness and accuracy of contact traces.

**RESOLUTION:**

The United States Animal Health Association urges state animal health officials and the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services to work with industry to enhance cattle contact tracing efforts for economically significant diseases through collaboration and sharing of current cattle contact traceability data. This data should utilize and grow the cattle contact trace infrastructure in which readers can collect and share the critical datapoints (ID, Time, Date & GPS Location).