

UNITED STATES ANIMAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION - 2009 RESOLUTION

OCTOBER 14, 2009, SAN DIEGO, CA

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 40 APPROVED
SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION
SUBJECT MATTER: NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Animal disease events threaten the economic viability of the animal industries of the United States and the ability of the animal industries to produce a secure source of food, fiber and other important animal products for our nation. The lack of reliable livestock traceability inhibits state animal health officials from efficiently and effectively managing and responding to animal disease events. The primary goal of an animal traceability system is the ability to respond quickly and efficiently to disease outbreaks by tracing individual livestock movements rapidly and accurately, which can only be accommodated by assigning a unique identification number to all livestock premises. The cost of implementing an animal identification system is a concern to many livestock owners, and there is additional concern that an identification system may cause a loss of their ability to keep pace with the speed of commerce in the marketplace. There is also a concern about the security of data held in the system.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) strongly encourages the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to incorporate the following vital components in an animal identification system.

- Require all livestock producers who transport livestock interstate or participate in disease control and eradication programs within the Title 9 CFR to have a livestock location identifier.
- Allow maintenance of state databases and develop standards whereby the state data systems will be compatible in order to facilitate rapid and effective epidemiological efforts in livestock traceability. This data may be held at the state level unless and until there is a need for the information to be shared in the event of a disease investigation.
- Continue to recognize and encourage the use of official permanent individual or group animal identification for official traceability systems.

INTERIM RESPONSE:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services recognizes the merit that animal identification provides to animal disease traceability. Secretary Vilsack has directed APHIS to implement a new framework or approach to animal disease traceability that addresses many of the concerns and suggestions stakeholders have shared.

Our first priority will be to publish in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) a new animal disease traceability section to create a basic overarching infrastructure for the new traceability program. While existing animal identification regulations will be merged into this section, new regulations will apply only to animals moving interstate. The State or Tribal Nation of origin will need to have a system capable of tracing an animal back to the smallest epidemiological unit the State or Tribal Nation deems appropriate for zoning and disease control. The basic requirement will be that animals moving interstate must be traceable and as such identified by a method defined in the CFR or approved by the State or Tribal Nation where the animal is being shipped before beginning interstate movement. The CFR will also include clear criteria and performance measures so States and Tribal Nations know what their traceability systems must achieve and be capable of for their livestock and poultry to qualify for interstate movement.

The States and Tribal Nations will be responsible for the administration of their producers' traceability information and will determine where the information is maintained. It is possible that a State or Tribal Nation may ask the USDA to hold their traceability information as the USDA will provide free access to information systems that support traceability efforts. The USDA will assist States and Tribal Nations as requested. Connectivity and compatibility of information and identification systems is essential and USDA will be looking for ways to obtain adequate funding for the traceability activities and that the funds are administered through policies that result in the deployment of cost effective solutions.