

NAIS Facts and Myths

Myth: There are fines for producers who do not register in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

Fact: There are no Federal penalties or other “enforcement” mechanisms associated with the NAIS. You will not be penalized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) at all if you choose not to participate in the program.

NAIS provides the opportunity for producers that are not part of a disease program to voluntarily participate in national health safeguarding efforts. In order to standardize data, USDA is using NAIS data elements, including the PIN, for the administration of Federal disease programs. A PIN is not required if the animals at the premises are not in a Federally-regulated disease program.

States and Tribes may choose to keep participation voluntary or not, based on local needs. Producers should check with their State animal health authority for existing animal identification requirements that are currently in place at the State level.

Myth: USDA wants to identify every animal in the United States, including pets, for NAIS.

Fact: The focus of NAIS is animal agriculture—livestock and/or poultry. USDA, along with State and industry partners, encourages owners of the following species to participate: cattle and bison; equines; poultry; swine;

sheep; goats; cervids (deer and elk); and camelids (llamas and alpacas). Household pets (e.g., cats and dogs) and other animals not listed above are not included.

Myth: USDA wants to identify and track the movement of all livestock in the United States.

Fact: Attempting to record all animals and movements is not practical, and that is not the intent with NAIS. Rather, the intent with NAIS is to prevent the spread of animal disease. This, by extension, protects your animals and your livelihood, retains your access to markets (both at home and abroad), and minimizes the economic damage caused by a disease outbreak or animal health event. The only animals recommended for identification are those that are moved from their premises to locations where they “commingle,” or come into contact with, animals from multiple/other premises. Due to the nature of their movements, these animals may pose a significant risk of disease transmission or have a greater impact on the spread of a potential disease. Animals with a “lower risk” of, or “lower impact” on, disease spread are not the focus of NAIS. For example, the following situations are not applicable to NAIS:

- Livestock that never leave the premises of their birth, even if they move from pasture to pasture within that premises
- Animals that never leave their

premises other than when they “get out”

- Animals that are only moved directly from their birth premises to custom slaughter
- The participation of animals in local trail rides
- The movement of animals to small local parades or fairs. (Many local fairs and similar events may have their own animal identification requirements that are not affected by NAIS. You should check with animal health officials or event organizers for any such existing requirements.)

Myth: USDA will use NAIS to provide “real-time” government surveillance of livestock.

Fact: NAIS is not a “real-time” tracking system for animals. There is no constant or continuous observation of animals; comments implying otherwise are simply untrue. Rather, animal movement records will be established only when the owner or caretaker of the animal chooses to report such information.

Animal location and movement data will be held in multiple, secure databases managed by private industry groups and the States. Animal health officials will only post a request for animal movement and location records in the case of a disease outbreak or animal health event. Federal law protects individuals’ private information

and confidential business information from disclosure.

Myth: Producers can no longer provide comments or feedback regarding the NAIS.

Fact: NAIS continues to evolve to meet producer demands, and participant input to the program is critical. USDA has established an e-mail address for NAIS: animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov. Comments are always welcome.

USDA and its State and industry partners have also enlisted the help of NAIS species working groups to provide the species specific, ground-level information that is necessary to create an effective system. These groups represent members of every aspect of animal industries who have volunteered their services and expertise on behalf of the

NAIS, and are another way for people to provide input and help shape the development of NAIS.

Producers, animal owners, and other stakeholders can submit comments to their species working group through the NAIS Web site (www.usda.gov/nais), or by sending an e-mail to animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov.

Please remember to include the name of your working group in the “subject” line of the e-mail. As leaders in the development and implementation of NAIS, State and Tribal NAIS administrators also welcome input on the program. Visit the NAIS Web site for your State or Tribe’s contact information.

Additional Information

For more information about NAIS, contact:

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