



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA APPROVES FOUR ADDITIONAL VISUAL IDENTIFICATION TAGS FOR USE IN THE NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22, 2008--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today approved several new visual identification tags: three individual animal identification 840 tags from Destron Fearing/Digital Angel, where 840 represents the U.S. country code, and one premises identification tag from Allflex. In USDA's National Animal Identification System (NAIS), identification tags and devices are used to provide a greater level of animal traceability in the event of an animal disease outbreak.

“Animal traceability during a disease outbreak is important to protecting this country's livestock industry--and animal identification is a key component of traceability,” said Bruce Knight, under secretary for marketing and regulatory programs. “By providing producers with a wide variety of approved identification devices, they can choose to identify their animals with the device that works best for their operation, while at the same time increasing traceability.”

The individual animal identification 840 tags from Destron Fearing/Digital Angel of St. Paul, Minn., are medium, large and extra large panel tags for use in cattle. This brings the total number of visual 840 tags to seven.

The premises identification tag from Allflex of Dallas, Texas, is designed for use in slaughter swine. There are now two slaughter swine premises tag options available.

With the addition of these four new visual tags, producers participating in NAIS can choose from 26 different devices made by 8 manufacturers. They have the option of visual 840 tags, RFID 840 tags, or RFID 840 injectable transponders for individual animal identification of animals born in the U.S. The 840 tags can be used for more than just identification--they may be used for animal health programs, movement records, marketing programs, breed registries and genetic programs. The 840 tags can also be used to document an animal's origin when meeting country-of-origin labeling requirements. Swine producers also have a choice of premises tags for slaughter swine.

NAIS is a modern, streamlined information system that helps producers and animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to animal health events in the United States. The program consists of three parts: premises registration, animal identification and tracing. So far, more than 487,670 premises across the country have been registered as part of the program, and more than 5 million 840 devices have been shipped from the manufacturers.

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Only APHIS-approved manufacturers are authorized to manufacture official animal identification devices for use in NAIS. For more information on NAIS, a list of approved device manufacturers and information on how to become an approved manufacturer, please visit www.usda.gov/nais.

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