

APHIS Finalizes Interim Measures For National Animal Identification System

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has published in the *Federal Register* a final rule that recognizes additional numbering systems for identification of animals in interstate commerce and state/tribal/federal/industry cooperative disease and eradication programs. It also recognizes a new standard numbering system to identify premises where animals are managed or held. This final rule is based on an interim rule that has been in place since Nov. 8, 2004, and contains only minor revisions in response to public comments.

The final rule recognizes animal identification numbers (AIN) for the identification of individual animals, the group/lot identification number (GIN) for the identification of groups or lots of animals, and the premises identification number (PIN) for the identification of premises. The rule also prohibits the removal of official identification devices and eliminates potential regulatory obstacles to recognizing emerging technologies that could offer alternatives to existing animal identification devices and methods.

APHIS received 16 comments on the interim rule from producers, producer associations and state governments. In response to comments received, the final rule was adjusted in the following manner:

- The definitions for AIN and PIN were clarified to show that they are "nationally unique" numbers.

The AIN is a unique 15 digit number which is used for the NAIS and other programs, including breed registry and performance recording by the livestock industry. The first three digits of the AIN contain the country code (840 for the United States). During an interim phase, the use of manufacturer codes assigned by the International Committee on Animal Recording or "USA" as the first three digits of the AIN is also recognized as official identification. A separate proposed rule will define the specific dates for the transition to the 840 only version of the AIN. The final rule published July 18, does not require retagging of animals, and it amends the definition of "official eartag" to require the use of a U.S. shield only for eartags using "840" AINs.

- The GIN format was changed to add two digits. The interim rule defined a GIN as consisting of a seven character PIN and a six digit representation of the date on which the group or lot of animals was assembled. That format made no provision for situations where more than one group of animals would be moved from a premises on a single day. The addition of the two digits provides for the identification of multiple groups/lots of animals moving from a premises on a single day.
- Tribal authorities were added to the list of entities that can assign PINs.

The NAIS is an industry-state-federal partnership implemented in 2004. The intent of the program is to promote animal health by establishing a system that provides for identification of animals or groups of animals, the premises where they are located and the date of entry to each premises. When this information can be retrieved quickly in the event of an animal disease outbreak, animal health officials can respond quickly and effectively to control the threat. USDA's first priority was to have components of the national premises registration system in place in every state by July, 2005. With that accomplished, the priority has been to promote voluntary NAIS participation by focusing on the premises registration component. So far, over 400,000 premises have been registered nationwide.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> and click on the "Newsroom" button. For additional information on this topic, visit the USDA-APHIS-NAIS Web site at <http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/index.shtml> or contact Wayne Maloney at (301) 734-7255.

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