

USDA Approves First Visual-only Animal Identification Eartag for Use in the National Animal Identification System

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has approved the first visual-only 840 animal identification device for use in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The 840 prefix is the country code for the United States. The newly approved device enables producers who prefer to use a visual-only 840 tag—instead of radio frequency identification (RFID) 840 tags—to participate in NAIS' animal identification component. Producers who use NAIS 840 tags (either visual-only or RFID tags) will be able to easily provide information about the origin of their livestock to packers for country of origin labeling (COOL). Packers can rely on this information for their origin claims about products, in accordance with COOL.

The visual-only 840 tag is manufactured by ITW Fastex of Des Plaines, Ill., and is suitable for use on cattle and bison. The panel tag provides the option for producers to have the animal's herd management number printed on the tag; the back of the tag (male piece) is offered in either a button or small panel tag. ITW Fastex also produces an RFID 840 tag that was approved for NAIS earlier this year.

With APHIS' approval of the visual-only 840 tag, there are a total of six approved manufacturers and 15 available NAIS-approved devices. Other firms manufacturing NAIS-approved devices include Leader Products, Global Animal Management/Gissler Technologies, Y-Tex Corporation, Destron Fearing and Allflex USA. A complete list of available tags and manufacturers is available on the NAIS Web site, www.usda.gov/nais.

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, which is voluntary at the federal level, consists of three parts: premises registration, animal identification and tracing.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at www.aphis.usda.gov and click on the "Newsroom" button. For additional information about this topic contact Joelle Schelhaus at (301) 734-0595 or by e-mail at joelle.r.schelhaus@aphis.usda.gov.

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