

USDA TO COMPLETE COMMENT PERIOD FOR A BUSINESS PLAN TO ADVANCE ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is concluding its comment period for the draft *Business Plan for Advancing Animal Disease Traceability*. Comments will be accepted through April 15, 2008. Following a review of public comments received, APHIS will consider any changes needed and finalize the plan.

APHIS released the draft business plan for comment on December 19, 2007. The plan supports the National Animal Identification System's (NAIS) long-term goal of 48-hour traceback, as well as providing benchmarks to guide the program as it moves toward optimum traceability.

To improve traceability, USDA applied a business plan model in an effort to:

- Identify areas of weakness and opportunity,
- Establish benchmarks against which to measure success and
- Communicate a vision for the future of traceability.

The draft plan provides a comprehensive look at the country's current traceability status, including a breakdown by species. It details seven strategies that will provide the greatest amount of traceability progress in a short amount of time. These strategies involve state and federally regulated and voluntary animal health programs, industry-administered animal management and marketing programs, as well as various animal identification techniques. The draft plan allows these varied components to work in harmony. It provides for standardization of data elements in existing disease programs to ensure compatibility, greatly enhancing disease tracing and emergency response capabilities.

By drawing from already existing systems and data, it reduces the cost and the amount of time and effort needed to implement a national animal identification system.

The draft plan is available on the NAIS Web site at www.usda.gov/nais. Comments on the plan or other aspects of the system can be provided by sending an e-mail to animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov or by writing to the NAIS program staff. The address is: NAIS, USDA, APHIS, VS, 4700 River Road, Unit 200, Riverdale, MD 20737.

The NAIS is a modern, streamlined information system that helps producers and animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to events affecting animal health in the United States. NAIS utilizes premises registration, animal identification and animal tracing components to both locate potentially diseased animals and eliminate animals from suspicion of disease. It is a state-federal-industry partnership, and the program is voluntary at the federal level. For more information on NAIS, go to www.usda.gov/nais.

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 about this topic, contact Wayne Maloney at (301) 734-7255 or by email at wayne.maloney@aphis.usda.gov.

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