

## Quick Facts: NAIS and Small Farms

### Common NAIS Myths

- *“The NAIS will burden small farmers and homesteaders and make it impossible for them to own and raise livestock.”*
- *“The NAIS only benefits large farmers; no one else can afford to implement it.”*
- *“Homesteaders who raise their own meat, and even people with just a one-egg hen, will also have to register their homes as premises, identify all their animals and submit all the paperwork and fees.”*

All livestock and poultry owners want to maintain the good health of their animals. There are many ways to accomplish this goal. One effective way to protect your animals' health is to participate in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

Animal diseases don't distinguish between different types or sizes of farming operations. Because animals at any location can be affected by disease, NAIS is an equally valuable tool for both small and large farm operations.

NAIS provides the opportunity for producers that are not part of a disease program to voluntarily participate in national animal health safeguarding efforts. Its goal is to limit the spread of animal diseases, minimize animal losses, and protect producers' livelihoods. By participating in NAIS, owners can be alerted quickly when a disease that could affect their animals is

detected in the area. This means that they can more rapidly take the necessary steps to protect their animals' health. Using NAIS information, owners may also be able to faster eliminate their animals from disease suspicion during an animal disease event. With this greater speed, owners—of both small and large operations—can save themselves time, money, and inconvenience.

NAIS is a flexible system—it is not one-size-fits-all. There are three components: premises registration, animal identification, and animal tracing. Depending on what works best for their operation, producers can choose to participate in one, two, or all three NAIS components.

### Do your animals remain on their birth farm for their entire life?

Owners who do not sell livestock for a living, whose animals are raised for their own consumption, can participate in NAIS for little or no cost and with minimal effort.

Since these animals do not leave their birth farm until custom slaughter, simply obtaining a PIN would be a sufficient level of NAIS participation to benefit the owner. There is no cost associated with signing up for a PIN and the process takes very little time to complete. There is a simple form to fill out that asks for basic contact information and the species kept at the location. In most States, the form can be completed online.

**Premises registration** involves signing up to receive a premises identification number (PIN). The PIN is the standard in the United States for identifying the location of all livestock and poultry operations and/or facilities.

**Animal identification** involves identifying animals, either individually with an animal identification number (AIN) or as a group, using a group/lot identification number (GIN). Animal identification serves as a tool to enhance animal disease traceability. Both AINs and GINs are linked to the PINs where animals are kept when an identification is assigned. Other official numbering systems and methods are NAIS compliant.

**Animal tracing** involves the reporting of certain movements of an officially identified animal that present a higher risk for disease transmission. Recommended reportable movements include: moving an animal through a public market or auction, private sale of an animal that involves moving it off its birth premises, and participation of an animal in regional or national exhibitions or sporting events. Animal movements are reported by the person responsible for the animals, and they are recorded in State and privately owned animal tracking databases (ATDs). If an animal health event occurs, State and Federal animal health authorities can request relevant records and perform tracebacks more quickly and efficiently.

Because these animals do not come into contact with, or commingle, with animals from other locations, their risk of disease exposure is low. They do not need to be identified through NAIS.

#### **Do you have animals that leave your farm for show or sale?**

Animals that leave their farm of origin to attend shows or sales and come into contact with animals from other locations face a higher disease risk. Having a PIN for their birth premises does not provide an adequate level of traceability. These animals should be identified with an NAIS compliant identification device before leaving their birth farm.

Animal identification is more commonly done through individual identification using an 840 animal identification number (AIN) device. To meet the varying needs of animal owners, 840 devices are available as visual tags, radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, and injectable transponders. The cost for 840 devices largely depends upon the style of device used. Visual tags are the least expensive option.

For animals that move through the production process as a group, group/lot identification numbers (GINs) can be used. The GIN is a 15-character number consisting of the PIN; the date that the group or lot of animals was assembled; and a two-digit number to reflect the count of groups assembled at the same premises on the same day (starting with 01). GINs are created and self-assigned by the person responsible for the animals on each farm. There is no cost associated with a GIN.

#### **What movements should be reported?**

Animals that move frequently and commingle with large quantities of other animals from multiple locations would be candidates for animal tracing. This group typically includes commercial livestock and horses that, when moved, require either a test for equine infectious anemia or a health certificate. These are the animals at the greatest risk of disease exposure and should have their movements to locations of commingling reported.

Animals not described above, including all animals that never leave their birth farm, are not candidates for animal tracing. Their movements would not need to be reported.

#### **What species are included in NAIS?**

Specific livestock species are included in NAIS because of their risk of being affected by domestic and foreign diseases. These livestock species include:

- Cattle/bison
- Equines
- Swine
- Poultry
- Sheep
- Goats
- Cervids (deer and elk)
- Camelids (llamas and alpacas)

Household pets (cats and dogs) and animal species not listed above are not included in NAIS.

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#### **Additional Information**

For more information about the NAIS, contact:

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