

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LIVESTOCK IDENTIFICATION

Chair: Bob R. Hillman, Austin, TX

Vice Chair: Kevin D. Maher, Ames, IA

Jim Akers, KY; J Lee Alley, AL; Joan M. Arnoldi, WI; Teri N. Baird, CO; John R. Behrmann, PA; Paul Brennan, IN; Becky L. Brewer-Walker, OK; Allen Bright, NE; Matt Brockman, TX; James T. Case, CA; John Chatburn, Boise, ID; Karen Conyngham, TX; Terry Detrick, OK; Anita J. Edmondson, CA; James J. England, ID; J. Amelita Facchiano, TX; Glenn K. Fischer, TX; Robert Fourdraine, WI; Tony G. Frazier, AL; L. Wayne Godwin, FL; Larry M. Granger, MD; Randy R. Green, DC; Jennifer Greiner, IN; Kent Haden, SC; Steven L. Halstead, MI; Jeffrey J. Hamer, PA; E. Ray Hinshaw, AZ; Joe N. Huff, CO; Jon G. Johnson, TX; Dick Jurgens, IL; Susan J. Keller, ND; Cleon V. Kimberling, CO; Terry Klick, OH; Ralph C. Knowles, FL; Maxwell A. Lea, Jr., LA; James W. Leafstedt, SD; Jim Logan, WY; Kelli S. Ludlum, DC; Jodi A. Luttrupp, VT; Amy W. Mann, DC; Bret D. Marsh, IN; Terry R. Menlove, UT; Jim Niewold, IL; Dwayne C. Oldham, WY; Kenneth E. Olson, IL; Boyd Parr, SC; Angela Pelzel, TX; Laurie S. Prasnicky, WI; John R. Ragan, MD; Valerie E. Ragan, MD; Nancy J. Robinson, Mo; Bill Sauble, NM; Shawn P. Schafer, ND; Charly Seale, TX; J. Gary Shoun, CO; Rick L. Sibbel, IA; Glenn N. Slack, KY; Bob Smith, OK; Glenn B. Smith, GA; Mark Spire, KS; Joe Starcher, WV; Robert Stout, KY; Richard C. Traylor, TX; Victor L. Velez, CA; Elizabeth K. Wagstrom, IA; Rick Wahlert, CO; Gary M. Weber, DC; John F. Wiemers, IL; Gary W. Wilson, OH; Ross Wilson, TX; Cindy B. Wolf, MN; Taylor Woods, MO; John F. Wortman, Jr., NM.

The Committee met on October 17, 2006 from 8 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. at the Minneapolis Hilton Hotel, Minneapolis, Minnesota. There were over one hundred seventy four Committee members and guests in attendance. Dr. Bob Hillman, Chair presided, assisted by Kevin Maher, Co-Chair. Committee Chair Hillman welcomed Committee members and guests to the meeting, discussed the Committee meeting expectations and addressed United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) Committee policies and procedures.

The Honorable Bruce Knight, Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) addressed the Committee. He thanked the Committee for the years of work, building the foundation of National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and emphasized that NAIS participation is voluntary, with the following four guiding principles:

- 1.) Avoid unnecessary burden to livestock producers
- 2.) Avoid growth in government
- 3.) Maintains flexibility
- 4.) Keep data in private hands

He reported that, nationally, over 320,000 premises have been registered, evaluation and approval of three tag manufacturers' has been accomplished with a fourth under evaluation, and eager to approve more. He stated more approvals would provide a choice for producers and keep the cost lower.

Nine animal tracking databases have been approved and nine more are in process. He stated that animal identification is invaluable for animal health improvement and must meet the needs for animal health.

Mr. Knight reiterated that Secretary Johanns had already set challenging goals before he was appointed. These included:

1. 25% of premises registered by the end of January, 2007
2. Critical mass number of premises enrolled by 2009
3. Finish the job and deliver on the commitments of USDA.

He stated that for a safer and more secure food supply, some people feel strongly the system needs to be mandatory, that most ranchers are aware of the importance of a national animal identification system, as well as the pork industry, but there is resistance in the countryside. He said that we must emphasize the national animal identification system is voluntary and that we need to sell it to producers so they can see the benefits and that it is in their best business interest to participate.

Dr. John Clifford, Deputy Administrator for Veterinary Services (VS) made the following report to the committee: Comments were made regarding premises identification and the role of States and the Federal Government. Animal health is the focus of the USDA's NAIS. The program will enhance U.S. efforts to respond to intentionally or unintentionally introduced animal disease outbreaks more quickly and effectively. USDA strongly believes that the best approach is a voluntary system driven by the States and the private sector. The NAIS only works if the States, industry, and producers actively shape and use the program.

Progress continues, with the help and support of State and industry partners. Premises registrations continue at approximately 2,500 per week; the animal identification phase is moving forward; and the development of private and State animal tracking databases (ATDs) is progressing as planned.

Because the NAIS is a completely voluntary program, USDA must continue to consider all issues of concern that may cause producers not to participate. Confidentiality of information has been an issue that USDA has taken very seriously. With regard to NAIS information, USDA has taken the position that information should only be used when specific disease issues need to be addressed or responded to. In keeping with this position, and in response to ongoing concerns about confidentiality, USDA has determined that the distribution records of animal identification number (AIN) tags distributed to a premises will be held privately or by States in Animal Identification Number Device Distribution Databases (AINDDD), rather than in USDA's AIN Management System. AIN tags used for disease and/or regulatory programs will continue to be administered through the AIN Management System. Therefore, State and Federal Animal Health Officials will continue to use the AIN Management System for all program AIN tags.

Premises registration continues to be a primary focus for the implementation of NAIS. USDA is considering options that would establish cooperative partnerships to achieve premises registration through contractual arrangements with industry organizations that represent producers engaged in commercial animal agriculture. These communication/outreach efforts would be a "producers to producers" approach in which producer organizations would contact producers and complete the premises registration forms that the State would then administer. USDA has roughly \$7 million in

carry over NAIS funding that can be used for these cooperative partnerships with industry to boost premises registration participation. Activities would run through March 2008, unless funds were depleted earlier.

Finally, USDA understands that producer and stakeholder education and outreach is vital to achieving successful levels of participation in the program. USDA has taken several proactive steps with regard to outreach efforts. USDA is sponsoring a 2-day communications workshop in late October to improve the consistency and effectiveness of premises registration outreach materials. USDA is working to improve the consistency of program messaging and the timeliness with which those messages are shared with program partners. USDA is also improving the readability, user friendliness, and navigability of the NAIS Web site. Providing accurate and timely information about the program is a key objective for USDA.

Following the presentations by Undersecretary Knight and Dr. Clifford, Committee participants were provided the opportunity to ask questions and bring up issues of importance to them. Topics discussed included confidentiality of information, incentives for participation, private vs. public animal tracking, outreach, opposition by animal owning entities outside mainstream animal agriculture, responsibility for animal event reporting, need for infrastructure support, cooperative agreements, and impacts of small and large livestock operations on disease control efforts.

Mr. Neil Hammersmidt, NAIS Coordinator, VS, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA, provided the following National Animal Identification Program Update: NAIS will be “phased-in” over time through the implementation of the following key components: premises registration, animal identification and animal tracking. Premises registration is well underway and has made great progress. USDA continues to work closely with States and industry to further develop and implement animal identification and animal tracking.

Animal Identification

- Methods of identification

The method of identification is species-specific. For example, in cattle and other species that use eartags, the defacto standard is a visual eartag. Basic tag criteria have been established that the tag must meet, but different sizes of tags are being made available to allow flexibility to the producer since some may want a stand-alone official ID tag and others may prefer a tag that can also have a herd management number written or printed on it. USDA has also provided an option for supplemental identification radio frequency ID (RFID), retinal image, DNA, etc. to support the integration of technology that enhances the utility of the AIN tag.

For AIN tags, the basic requirements include:

- “840” must be imprinted on the tag
- U.S. Shield should be imprinted, when possible
- “Unlawful to Remove” should be imprinted, when possible

Four tags have been approved for use in the NAIS. All are RFID tags and all are International Standards Organization (ISO) 11784/85 compliant.

As species working groups have finalized their recommendations, other methods will be authorized for use with the NAIS. For example, the equine industry recently recommended the use of ISO 11784/11785 compliant injectable transponders.

- Administration of AIN devices

The records of which AINs are distributed to a premises provides high correlations with “premises of origin” -- information that is critical when there is a disease event. Distribution records will now be held in private or State systems in AIN Device Distribution Databases. This change in the program does not alter the availability of the data when needed by Animal Health Officials and data integrity is ensured through controls/requirements on the administration of AIN devices.

Primary “Business Rules” will apply to the administration of AIN devices:

- Premises Identification Number (PIN) is required to obtain AIN tags
- Entity that provides the AIN devices to the producer validates the PIN
- Entity that ships/delivers the AIN devices reports its distribution to an AIN Device Distribution Database

Entities that maintain the AIN Device Distribution Databases must provide distribution records of AINs that are included in a disease investigation to USDA when requested. A similar protocol to the one being put in place for ATDs will be used.

Animal health officials will continue to administer AIN Devices used in disease programs through USDA's AIN Management System.

- Flow of information for AIN distribution records

The following steps describe the flow of information for AIN distribution records:

1. APHIS Allocates AIN to Manufacturer
2. AIN Device Manufacturer reports information to the AIN Management System
 - ♦ List of PINs shipped from plant
 - ♦ Product Code of each AIN device
 - ♦ Date shipped
3. AIN Device Manager reports information to the AIN Device Distribution Database (ADDD)
 - ♦ AIN Distributed
 - ♦ PIN of each AIN was distributed to
 - ♦ Date of distribution
4. ADDD provides information to the AIN Management System
 - ♦ List of AINs distributed
 - ♦ Date of distribution
5. USDA's Animal Trace Processing System Integrates ADDDs
 - Request for record of distribution to a premises when disease event occurs
 - Similar process as ATDs

Robert Fourdraine, Director, Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium provided a report on the actions of the NAIS Advisory Subcommittee: The NAIS Advisory Subcommittee provided a full report to and requested action from the Secretary's

Advisory Committee on Foreign Animal and Poultry Diseases (SACFAPD) on the following key topics.

1) NAIS Strategic Plan

The Subcommittee reviewed the NAIS Draft Strategic Plan and subsequent updates to the plan. The Subcommittee recognizes the importance of NAIS to protect the US livestock industry and that timely implementation of NAIS is extremely important. Since implementation of NAIS seems to be focused on the cattle industry it is important that key components of NAIS recommended by the Cattle Working Group are made available as soon as possible.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA keep timelines for all components of NAIS and move forward expeditiously to distribute the AIN 840 series numbering and ISO RFID for the cattle industry.

Based upon a draft cost benefit analysis presented to the Subcommittee in 2005, the public-private partnership outlined by USDA to implement NAIS and producer and industry concerns related to the cost of implementing NAIS, the Subcommittee recommended a cost share program as the most appropriate method to fund implementation of NAIS.

The Subcommittee recommended a 50-50 cost share projection between industry and government.

The Subcommittee recognized that the information contained in the draft cost benefit analysis should be used to define what portions of NAIS should be funded by each segment.

The Subcommittee recommended USDA-APHIS-VS utilize these cost projections in moving the initiative forward as recommendations to the Secretary in defining cost allocations between Federal, States and industry.

Given the present uncertainties associated with implementing a fully operational real-time animal health ID tracking system across all species under a voluntary, “technology neutral” system and, given the uncertainties associated with industry being able to meet self-imposed timelines for database development, testing and implementation of a consensus driven privately managed data base system, USDA should implement a low-cost interim system for NAIS. This interim low cost system can be described as the “Book-ends” approach. Where and when appropriate by species, the animal’s individual identification is reported prior to leaving the herd or flock of origin when a change of ownership occurs and the same animals individual identification is also reported at slaughter or death. USDA should have this low cost interim “book-ends” system in place, in the event full implementation of NAIS is not practical at this time or in the foreseeable future, to protect the health and welfare of the nation’s livestock industry.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA shall maintain the AIN allocation and AIN retirement information within the AIN system.

2) NAIS Information System

The Subcommittee reviewed the different components of the NAIS Information system and changes that were made since 2004 in regards to design and oversight of each of the IT components. The Subcommittee feels that by privatizing the animal ID

and tracking component of NAIS, increased cost will be placed on producers and industry by having to pay for data management and potential patents that will play a role in data management service charges. The Subcommittee feels producers should be given the choice to either participate in a private or public (state or federal) solution.

The Subcommittee recommended that all producers have the opportunity to utilize a government-managed animal tracking database system under NAIS.

The Subcommittee has received concerns about potential patents that may drive up the cost of NAIS, especially if animal ID and tracking are to be funded by producers. It is important that the patent issue be reviewed so all stakeholders are aware of potential patents and its implications.

The Subcommittee recommended USDA conduct a complete research of all patents and intellectual properties (IP) pertaining to animal identification issues that could be a potential conflict and/or of relevance to the NAIS and that a summary of such be provided to the Subcommittee. The findings of IPs that are relevant to the tracking database should be made available to industry stakeholders and considered in relation to the potential formation of the legal entity that might establish the private animal tracking database.

The Subcommittee feels strongly that access to the animal ID and tracking databases (ATD's) outlined in the Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS) needs to support state and federal animal health officials in responding to diseases or emergencies in a timely manner.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA establish the following description for when the State and/or Federal Animal Health Official would access the ATPS to submit a request for information to the ATDs:

- An investigation of foreign or emerging animal diseases of concern
- An animal health emergency as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture and/or State Animal Health Official; or
- A need to conduct a traceback/traceforward to determine the origin and distribution of infection for a program disease such as brucellosis and tuberculosis.

3) Outreach

The Subcommittee is very concerned that the correct messages about NAIS are not reaching producers. Many of the concerns voiced publicly are based on incorrect information or lack of information. NAIS is a public-private partnership. In order to have an adequate level of participation, it is important that states and industry are involved in communications and providing consistent message to producers.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA leverage its NAIS communication and outreach funds through partnerships with industry organizations to accurately communicate the components of NAIS.

4) Species working group reports

The Subcommittee has reviewed species working group reports. Several reports are still in progress. However, the cattle, swine, sheep and equine species reports are completed and ready for adoption. The goat species working group report is not completed. However an interim report has been given to the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee recommended that the USDA adopt the Cattle Species Working Group and the Pork Industry Identification Working Group reports with addenda.

The Subcommittee recommended that the USDA adopt the Sheep and Equine Species Working Group reports.

The Subcommittee and industry are concerned that without USDA adoption of the ID technologies proposed by each of the species working groups, implementation of NAIS will not proceed in a timely manner and will cause undue hardship on producers and industry having to facilitate multiple technologies. The Subcommittee feels that a technology standard must be established and serve as a base line, however over time the standards need to be revised in order to adopt new technology.

Following the cattle species working group recommendations, the Subcommittee recommended that the SACFAPD recognize ISO 11784 and 11785 as the immediate RFID standards for the bovine industry and that USDA continue implementation of NAIS within the cattle industry using the RFID performance standards established by the Cattle Species Working Group.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA-APHIS-VS establish a process to audit the performance of official identification devices and to ensure that devices meet the established standards that reflect various production environments and use over extended periods of time.

The Subcommittee recommended that USDA establish an objective process for evaluating new technology and a method for incorporating technology into NAIS that includes open standards (non proprietary) and proven effectiveness. USDA is requested to provide a report by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) ID Info Expo with prior review by the Subcommittee.

Dr. Fourdraine also made a presentation discussing the need for an interim step in the implementation of the NAIS. He stated that debate continues to surround the policy, positions, and recommendations of the NAIS, effectively delaying its acceptance and implementation. Debatable subjects include: Voluntary vs. mandatory; Technology neutral; Patent infringements; Federal monies can only be used for premises registration; Lack of State funds to support NAIS; Extensive retro-fitting cost to accommodate successful low frequency electronic identification reads; Overall cost of NAIS; Confidentiality of all NAIS records; Producer liability; Control and access to the animal tracking database.

Five years has passed since the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in Great Britain and the events of 911. The "Let's Do" spirit of the initial task force and committees has evolved into "Let's Debate". In the mean time the fact remains the same as it was in 2001. State and Federal animal health officials still lack an effective disease surveillance and monitoring system capable of curtailing a fast moving, highly contagious disease, at today's speed and range of commerce.

Certainly the control and access to the animal tracking database has become one of the most contentious discussions to date and promises to be the most costly and time consuming component to implement. While the continued debate and initiation of the NAIS is projected through 2009 and possibly beyond; is there an interim step that can be implemented at the state and local level that will improve traceback capabilities of the current surveillance and monitoring system?

One such step has been characterized as “The Bookends” supporting disease tracebacks. Historically animal disease tracebacks have been hampered by the fact that health officials only have one starting point (bookend) to use when trying to identify the origin of disease diagnosis and exposure. Unfortunately, that bookend does not appear until an animal has already expressed a disease and possibly caused subsequent herd-mate exposure. The animal health official is already at a disadvantage when he first learns the physical location, animal identification (if any) and current owner of the animal in question.

Implementing NAIS requirements for Premises Registration and Animal Identification will immediately provide animal health officials a bookend of origin that will significantly enhance current traceability efforts. Animals originating from the birth farm would be officially identified prior to a change in ownership. Both, electronic or visual official identification devices should be acceptable. As long as the premises linked, uniquely numbered official identification device remains with the animal, subsequent owners need not re-identify the animal. Subsequent changes in ownership are encouraged to be recorded at the producer level but not required to be reported. The official identification will only be used to identify origin if the animal expresses a contagious disease.

The bookends system enables the state veterinarian to conduct simultaneous staff investigations starting at the points of origin and disease detection to locate other owners and exposed herds. Official identification associated with the historic tuberculosis and brucellosis programs was based on the “Bookends” approach to traceback. The current Scrapie Eradication Program’s identification procedures for sheep and goats are based on “Bookends” traceback capabilities. Canada started their national animal ID program in cattle based on the “Bookends” approach. The “Bookends” have proven to reduce the time required for traceback by 50% and could on occasion meet the 48 hour NAIS traceback goal.

The cost to initiate the “Bookends” system at the state and federal level should not exceed current funding supporting premises registration and the AIN management and distribution system. The cost to producers will be self-determined by being given the choice to utilize visual devices, to simply comply, or electronic devices, to aid in the capture of on-farm value-added data.

“THE “BOOKENDS” supporting disease traceback is not the cadillac of the NAIS, it’s a chevy; but for the price of an ear tag, producers can help animal health officials in protecting a multi billion dollar livestock industry.

Ms. Julie Stitt, Director of the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) provided a thought- provoking report on the development, implementation and progress of the national animal identification system in Canada.

Ms. Stitt reported that the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) is a not-for-profit National Agency, incorporated in 1998, and led by a Board of Directors, representing all sectors of the livestock industry in Canada. The mandate of CCIA is to establish and maintain an efficient Animal Health and Food Safety Identification and Traceability System.

The program was fully implemented on July 1, 2002, and the CCIA has been successfully established as a world leader in animal identification and traceability. Guided by National Standards and operating Under the ID Regulations within the

Federal Health of Animals Act, the CCIA, in partnership with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), has achieved 98-100% compliance nationally. The program is industry supported, sustainable and has proven invaluable through the assistance provided during the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) investigations.

The CCIA system provides multi-species services and currently houses the beef, dairy, bison and sheep trace back data. The CCIA is also working with the pork and poultry systems to assist in the development of their ID and Traceability Systems.

The Canadian Animal Health and Food Safety ID and Traceability System incorporates the three key pillars for traceability; animal identification, premises identification and animal movement and tracking. Additionally, it offers value-added services, as required by industry. Age verification is one example of a value-added service providing benefit and assisting in assuring market access and meeting market demands. The CCIA is committed to ensuring that all program components continue to meet and exceed evolving domestic and international requirements.

In 2003, the Canadian cattle industry committed to the transition from the CCIA approved barcode dangle tags to CCIA approved Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to ensure Canada's Cattle Identification Program continues to meet the ever-increasing global requirements for traceability. The benefits of RFID include; increased tag retention and readability, increased data integrity, ability to read at a distance without line of sight, and capabilities for full animal movement tracking and value-added components.

The program implementation was not easy and as we evolve and expand on the national infrastructure to meet the ever-increasing traceability requirements we continue to face challenges. The successful implementation and commitment to ongoing development of the National Identification and Traceability system in Canada can be attributed to:

- support from the cattle producers and all sectors of the industry across Canada
- 3-year national communications strategy
- shared industry/government partnership
- commitment for industry to lead and administer the program
- commitment to keep the program market neutral and to not disrupt commerce-
- commitment to keep the program simple, user-friendly and cost-effective with the ability to expand as required
- the unfortunate but timely animal health issues world-wide i.e. BSE and Foot and Mouth

The objectives of the CCIA state that as domestic and international requirements evolve, the guiding principles of the CCIA will not change and we will remain committed to protecting the integrity, efficiency and confidentiality of the National database for animal health and food safety traceback for the livestock industry in Canada. We will also continue to offer and expand our services, as requested by the industry and government, in the most efficient and cost effective manner with the highest level of integrity and accountability. We will continue to work with our

livestock industry partners both domestically and internationally to encourage harmonization and protect the health and safety of our livestock industry. We will continue to expand our infrastructure in an effort to increase market access and to ensure we meet the ever increasing consumer demands for traceability.

Dr. Sam Holland, State Veterinarian, South Dakota provided a presentation on Common Sense Animal Identification. A review of the Livestock Conservation Institute Committee minutes for meetings in the mid to late nineteen eighties finds numerous comments and cautions that animal health must be the focus and concern by government, industry, and animal health organizations as restored and improved animal identification (ID) is pursued.

The focus on animal health has been blurred and often times lost as identification efforts have been pursued. Simultaneous to recognition of the need to restore uniform and effective animal identification for disease prevention and control has been the emerging industry needs for animal identification for marketing purposes.

The United States Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) as presented by the USAIP Development Team in 2003 was an all-encompassing plan that attempted to address simultaneously the needs for identification relating to animal health and for marketing needs. The plan suggested a comprehensive plan to identify and track the movement of all animals all the time would be accepted and could be developed and enacted.

Written and verbal comments by this presenter and a few other state animal health officials have consistently questioned the feasibility of such a plan:

- The USAIP is much more than a program for enhancing disease control.
- The need for identification for traditional disease control must be met.
- State databases accessible by USDA and involving the breeding herd for cattle and swine seem more achievable.

My comments today are consistent with these thoughts. It appeared to many attendees that the basic message coming from the 2006 ID Info/Expo held in Kansas City was also consistent with these thoughts – “Get back to the basics – Animal Health.”

My comments to this group today then are the same. “What can we implement, in the near term, practically, that will meet immediate needs for animal health?” It seems states could maintain a database system accessible by USDA, instituting premises of origin ID and individual ID for cattle and swine used for breeding. Premises ID could be instituted in a short time for all breeding animals. The individual ID could be the official alpha-numeric metal tag, or other official ID. This system is proven, is economical, has always had broad industry support, and has demonstrated effectiveness. Feeder animals could continue to be traced through use of marketing records, brand records, health certificates and other industry records.

Allow the market to continue to drive the rapid growth we are observing in animal identification for age, source, and process verification.

As technology evolves and becomes proven through research and field tests, we can then move from low-tech tags to electronic tags and data capture with very little disruption to the marketplace.

While I believe a meaningful, uniform, universal ID system for all livestock with adequate tracking will evolve, as a state animal health official, I would be less than responsible if I did not encourage industry and government to move quickly to get a handle on our ability to traceback animals today for diseases such as brucellosis,

tuberculosis, and others that present risks of exacerbation and the extreme costs associated with such.

Following Dr. Holland's presentation, a Panel discussion, with Robert Fourdraine, Julie Stitt and Sam Holland provided an opportunity for Committee participants to ask questions and provide comments relative to the subjects of the three presentations.

David Cummings, Centers for Epidemiology and Animal Health (CEAH), VS-APHIS-USDA, provided a report on Veterinary Services Process Streamlining (VSPS) eCVI. He reported that in 1997 USDA and USAHA designed a uniform Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI) for use in all states. There was recognition that this could lead to development of an electronic CVI capability. In 2001 and again in 2004, USAHA urged that USDA expedite the development and implementation of an eCVI and related test charts. The eCVI is available now, with diagnostic lab connectivity. All the Information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no cost to the veterinarian or the state. The VSPS provides eAuthentication, confidentiality and privacy. The system also provides real time distribution to impacted states.

Key elements of the system include links to veterinarians, duplicate templates, ability to upload electronic animal identification numbers, digital photograph upload and links to state web sites for the latest information.

In the future, expect to see an import and export module, standards for third party integration, eAuthentication and plan implementation.

Dr. John Wiemers, VS-APHIS-USDA reported for Dr. Dave Morris, who was not able to stay for the Committee meeting, on Pilot Projects funded through cooperative agreement funds. Dr. Wiemers' report provided an overview of seventeen field trials/pilot projects that were supported by Federal Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds from the initial NAIS implementation effort in 2004. All field trials/pilot projects were implemented by State/Tribe animal health officials. Due to timing of work plan submissions and subsequent need for approved extensions of time to complete proposed projects, sixteen of the seventeen State and one Tribe projects have reached completion dates of planned work, but not all final reports have been received. The following information summarizes information received from submitted quarterly progress and final reports to date.

It is extremely important to recognize that results and observations noted in this report should not be interpreted as hard science. These projects were developed in applied situations to demonstrate feasibility and document performance in those situations. Many factors affect the performance of any animal identification technology, let alone low frequency, radio frequency identification (LF RFID) technology which was used in all seventeen of these pilot projects/field trials. Any comparison of products noted in this overview should only be interpreted as an observation for that study. To fully understand the results of any and all projects, the project administrator (State animal health official) should be contacted to explain the entire scope of circumstances in which that project was conducted.

These pilot projects/field trials clearly demonstrate that LF RFID technology is not a plug-and-play application. Regardless of LF RFID technology chosen, the KY project documents, as an example, that RFID ear tag application and placement alone can account for as much as 40% of the variation in performance and is more influential to read rate than the choice of product. Collectively, many of these projects demonstrated

that the environment in which the chosen product is used significantly influences performance. Again, understanding a technology and why and why doesn't a product work in a chosen environment may be more important than the choice of product itself. LF RFID is not designed to overcome human error.

Reviewing these seventeen projects yields two consistent observations common to all projects. The first is the customization of LF RFID technology to individual locations. Every operation is unique. Best results are obtained when one fully understands the limitations of a selected environment for incorporating a chosen animal identification technology; understanding the limitations of a chosen technology, including cost; and then optimally matching the two. Second, choosing a product may best be determined by the availability of service. Particularly in market situations, where speed of commerce is important, multiple observations were made where the need for timely technical assistance, both hardware and software, is critical. Down time is costly, let alone frustrating.

In summary, the real value of the pilot project/field trial component to NAIS is the identification of someone, somewhere who has used various products and technologies that may be of interest to any stakeholder. The intent of this program is to furnish stakeholders with information regarding who to contact for reference experience. It is this opportunity for dialogue among interested stakeholders that will optimally advance NAIS and enhance the safeguarding of America's herds and flocks.

Ms. Jill Wagner, GlobalVetLink (GVL), Ames, IA, provided an update on the Expanding Use of Global Vet Link's e Certificate System. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services commissioned GlobalVetLink (GVL) in 1999 to begin development of an electronic version of their canine/feline "For Sale" certificate- which has evolved into a system that has multi-species, 50-state connectivity.

Shortly after completion of the 'For Sale' certificate, GVL began development of electronic Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (eCVIs) and Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA) Certificates. We've come a long way since 1999, and to date have moved more than 75 million animals on electronic CVIs. Our most recent accomplishment is our electronic equine infectious anemia (eEIA) certificates approved for international use.

GVL has 3 primary clients: State animal health officials, veterinary practices, and diagnostic labs. GVL provides all states with reporting tools to view CVIs for animals imported into the state. This is a no cost service to the state that allows for CVI data to be sorted, exported and/or printed in many different formats. GVL stores all data on our server for 7 years and all CVIs created on the GVL system have mandatory fields that must be filled in allowing state officials to obtain all pertinent information. While each state has access to view CVIs imported into their state, we work with each state on an individual basis before allowing practitioners within their state to utilize our eCVIs services. We do this to insure that everyone at the state office is aware and comfortable with the GVL services.

GVL offers food, companion animal and equine certificates to practitioners so they can move to a paperless format for all of their clients. Practitioners can decrease the amount of time spent on paperwork once they have inputted an origin premises and animals contained at the premises, those groups are saved and can be re-used later. GVL's online EIA application connects the veterinary practice with the diagnostic lab, thereby decreasing the time it takes to get results back to their clients. In 2003 GVL

begin offering an electronic version of the Veterinary Feed Directive to the swine industry. Our most recent project is an offline PC and CVI certificate tailored for our market veterinarians, which offers veterinarians the same conveniences without having to be connected to the internet. We believe that this service addresses the needs of one of the largest groups creating CVIs here in the midwest—the salebarn veterinarians; while at the same time capturing information about animals that are being co-mingled in large groups so that in the event of an animal disease outbreak less than 48 hour traceback is a reality.

One of the most common questions I receive from States is how this service is going to assist them in their goals. For many states one of these goals is to effectively track animals, and more recently doing this by registering animal owner's premises with the state. GVL allows practitioners to input the premises information on a per animal location/owner's address into the system once, and then premises ID number will be included on all CVIs and EIA certificates issued for that owner. Not only are we creating a method in which state officials and their emergency response teams to efficiently track animal movements in accordance with NAIS standards, but we're also making it easy for practitioners & animal owners to be in compliance with the new regulations, which historically - with initiatives like this- enhances the adoption rate.

When a veterinarian creates an eCVI on the GVL system, we instantaneously send that information to the State animal health officials in both the state of origin and the state of destination. From the information that GVL sends to the states, they have the ability to do reporting on a wide array of different fields, including: species, state or origin, reason for movement, premises ID number, issuing veterinarian, and Animal IDs.

In July 2005, GVL updated the system to allow electronic identification devices (EIDs) to be electronically uploaded directly onto a CVI, thereby decreasing the chance of data entry errors with the 15 character AIN numbers.

A screen shot of the veterinarian's entry point for owners was displayed. The veterinarians click the 'Upload EIDs from File' and navigate around on their computer to find the text file (which can be derived from a spreadsheet).

The sample eEIA certificate indicates where you'll see the premises ID and animal IDs highlighted. You will notice the results at the bottom were applied by the diagnostic laboratory. The most striking difference from the paper forms that practitioners are using today, and the feature that many of our practices enjoy the most - the digital photos of the animals. There is no need to sketch the horse anymore.

The swine CVI example demonstrates moving pigs from IA to NE. You will notice the highlighted fields are the Premises ID of both the origin and destination of the animals and the EIDs that were uploaded by the practitioner. We also allow DVMs to select from an extensive list of remarks so that all required certification statements that a destination state wishes – is applied to the CVI.

For any further questions about GVL or if any additional members of your state staff would like to be trained on how to retrieve electronic CVIs and eEIAs, please contact GlobalVetLink.

Dr. Bret Marsh, President, USAHA provided a report on the directive provided to USAHA by actions of the membership at the 2005 Annual Meeting:

At the 2005 USAHA Annual Meeting in Hershey, PA, the Committee on Livestock Identification held an extra day-long session to continue to provide a forum for

discussion relative to animal identification. A resolution forwarded by the Committee was passed by the USAHA membership calling upon the President to meet with the Secretary of Agriculture and encourage him to implement the animal tracking database for disease surveillance and monitoring as initially outlined in the NAIS.

Rather than simply deliver the message of the Association, the USAHA Executive Committee proposed to jointly host with USDA a meeting of selected stakeholders to establish a common direction for the NAIS program. The participants of the meeting would represent a specific stakeholder group, would number only three per group and would be selected by their peers in the stakeholder group.

This proposal was offered to Secretary Johanns on January 17th, 2006 during a meeting with Dr. Bob Hillman, Committee on Livestock Identification, and myself. The Secretary later agreed to such a meeting provided it wasn't an initiative to take the animal tracking database back to what was proposed in the NAIS. Instead, the Secretary asked that we use the meeting to propose specific actions to move the program forward. The ID Expo meeting in Kansas City, Missouri in August 2006 and this meeting in Minneapolis will form the foundation for this special forum. We appreciate the Secretary's careful consideration of the proposal, and we look forward to planning this effort and the opportunity to accelerate the implementation of the NAIS.

Dr. Marsh asked for and received a number of comments relative to the proposal for the animal identification summit to be hosted by the USAHA. The input received will be utilized in determining the most appropriate actions.

The Committee mission statement was reviewed and will remain the same for the coming year.

Chair Hillman reviewed the four resolutions from the 2005 meeting and noted that USDA had responded promptly to each resolution, and provided an updated response in the week before the annual meeting. Chair Hillman reported that no further action appeared necessary relative to the 2005 Resolutions.

Two recommendations were considered by the Committee. The following recommendation was approved by the Committee.

That USDA-APHIS-VS with input from the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials (NASAHO), promulgate an interim rule that establishes a list of Consistent States for Cattle Identification. The rule would provide for restriction of interstate movements other than direct to slaughter from non-consistent states. The rule would specify that consistent states have established by law, rule, order, or other means requirements that all breeding age cattle be officially identified by means of official tag or registration brand or tattoo at each change of ownership, other than movements direct to slaughter, or movements through one approved market and then direct to slaughter. Further, that consistent states have import requirements that all such cattle be officially identified prior to import or at first point of concentration. Consistent states may grant waivers for such requirements for interstate movements which are part of normal operating business with no change of ownership and for seasonal grazing/feeding as agreed to by the state and federal animal health officials of the states involved. Further, that this interim rule be promulgated prior to July 1, 2007. In addition, the Committee recommends that a follow-up rule be promulgated prior to July 1, 2008, that establishes consistent states as those that have in place similar requirements for breeding aged cattle upon change of ownership for feeding or grazing.

Three resolutions were considered and approved by the Committee. The three Resolutions were forwarded to the Committee on Nominations and Resolutions for consideration by the membership.