

Position Statement Opposing the National Animal Identification System

The signatories of this position statement oppose the implementation, both on the state and federal level, of a mandatory national animal identification system (NAIS). The NAIS would apply to every person who owns even one livestock animal or poultry, including horses, chickens, cows, goats, sheep, swine, turkeys, bison, elk, and deer. Each person would be required to:

- register their property with the state;
- identify each animal with an internationally-unique 15 digit number; and
- track “events” and report them to a government-accessible database within 24 hours.

The sole official purpose of this program is to provide 48-hour traceback of all animal movements in case of disease outbreak. Additionally, the government and industry organizations have urged the program as a means to improve the export market.

While the USDA states that the program is currently voluntary at the federal level, it has been providing funds to the States to implement the program. With the encouragement of this federal funding, several States have implemented, or proposed implementing, mandatory programs. Moreover, several States have registered individuals in the program without their consent, or by using coercive measures, while claiming that the program remains voluntary.

The signatories oppose this program because:

1. The NAIS will not improve animal health. Any effective animal health program must take into consideration the specific species of animal and the specific disease, including its cause, prevention, transmission, and treatment options.
2. The government and industry already have established systems for tracking animals.
3. The NAIS will infringe upon the property and private affairs of individuals, in direct violation of our Constitutional rights, including the right to due process of law, equal protection, religious freedom, and freedom from unreasonable search and seizure.
4. The USDA is implementing the program without explicit Congressional authority or oversight.
5. The NAIS will create significant costs, in both time and money, for farmers and ranchers. These costs will drive many out of business and ultimately raise the cost of food for everyone.
6. The NAIS will increase the size of the government bureaucracy.
7. The USDA has not performed a cost analysis, nor a cost-benefit analysis, of the NAIS
8. There are many technological and practical barriers to implementing NAIS, including concerns about the security of electronic identification and databases and the sheer magnitude of the program.
9. The NAIS is likely to have serious, unintended consequences on everyone who owns even one animal, including small farms and thousands of private citizens who own animals for companionship, recreation, and subsistence. This in turn will impact related businesses, such as feed stores, auction barns, livestock supply stores, and the real estate market.
10. As a result, the NAIS could have a significant negative impact on the entire rural economy of the state and the country.
11. The market issues can, and should, be addressed through voluntary, participant-funded, market-driven programs.

Congress and the State legislatures should halt the implementation of the NAIS and investigate more effective and non-intrusive means of addressing animal health. At a minimum, the NAIS should be limited to a truly voluntary program, with no direct or indirect penalties for failing to participate, full disclosure and the right to withdraw from the program, and no government funding.

For more information about the NAIS, go to www.farmandranchfreedom.org or www.libertyark.net, or call 866-687-6452.

Signed

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