

Often asked questions and answers about the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

- **Why do we need an identification system?** Animal identification is not new. We have identified animals in all of our regulatory programs since at least 1927 when the tuberculosis eradication effort began. Premises registration is not new. All feedlots, livestock markets and livestock dealers are currently registered in Kansas. All premises that have sheep in the U.S. are currently required to be registered by individual states. Most swine premises are registered in Kansas. All swine and sheep must be identified for interstate transport. All breeding cattle must be identified for interstate transport. Horses in interstate commerce must be identified by description.
- **What is the advantage of the NAIS?** NAIS is for disease tracking. The goal is to be able to trace an individual animal, throughout its life, in 48 hours. Today's system requires days and months and often the search ends at a dead end.
- **How difficult is it to register a premises?** If you know your address, type of operation and legal description, it will take 5-10 minutes of your time. The key to a successful application is a post office recognized physical address. On legal descriptions, use west or east with township and north or south with range (2 W – 20 N – 23).
- **What constitutes a premises?** An identifiable geographic location under common ownership or management used for the purpose of feeding, grazing and/or other activity where the animals are not interchanged or commingled with animals from outside the Premises. The key words are ownership or management - where commingling does not occur.
- **How many “premises” should I register?** One or more, depending whether you commingle the animals. If, for example, you have two herds – one commercial and one registered -that are never co-mingled you would probably want to register both premises. If there is a disease outbreak and you have registered only one premise, both herds will be quarantined. If you have registered two premises and there is no co-mingling, it is possible (depending on the circumstances) that only one herd will be quarantined.
- **Why can't I use my scapie program premises number?** Scapie programs are state programs. The animal identification system is a national program.
- **Why not use the brucellosis tags?** The U.S. is nearly free of brucellosis so many heifers are not officially calfhood vaccinated. Only OCV'd heifers and adult tested cattle are tagged. In addition, they are not electronic; they must be read and recorded by hand.

- **Why won't a brand work?** Brands are only good in the jurisdiction that they are issued in and only identify the premises, not individual animals. A Kansas brand does not mean anything in Colorado. In Texas, where brand registration is on a county basis, 140 individuals could have the same brand. Brands are sometimes hard to read due to improper technique or the reader's lack of knowledge of the brand alphabet.
- **I rent pasture (grass, wheat, stock fields), do I have to make a record of movement to these pastures?** Those pastures can be part of a single operation; you do not need to make a record unless commingling occurs with animals from another premises. The premises should be registered in the land owners name, with you listed as the contact person. List the rented land as "additional premises information" on the registration form.
- **I own some land, but I also rent additional pasture, how should I register a premises?** Register your own land in your name and list the rented pasture in the section of the application that asks for additional premises information. Also have your renter register his/her premises but list you as the contact person.
- **Won't the NAIS cost producers a lot of money?** A disease outbreak costs producers and the government a tremendous amount of money. With a highly contagious disease, such as foot and mouth, both the industry and individual producers will suffer financially. The animal identification tracking system is the quickest way to find and eliminate an infectious and contagious disease.
- **Does the cow/calf producer bear all the costs?** The cow/calf producer has the responsibility to purchase tags and apply them. The receiver and subsequent receivers (including slaughter plants) must record the individual animal numbers and report the transaction (movement) to Topeka.
- **Do I have to have a (radio frequency) reader?** It is the responsibility of the seller is to apply an electronic tag. It is the responsibility of the receiver to document and report the transaction. If you buy cattle you will have to record the numbers. This can be done electronically or by simply writing down the numbers.
- **Do I have to record individual numbers when I change pastures?** If you are changing pastures within your operation, the answer is no. If you move animals to a premise that is not part of your operation you need to record the movement.
- **Do I have to report the movement of my cattle when I sell them?** It is the buyer's responsibility to report the new location of the cattle.
- **Can I get my calves tagged at the market?** It is possible that markets will provide that service, but will charge a fee in addition to the cost of the tag.

- **How do you know if the animal is from the U.S.?** The official 15 digit tag will have the first three numbers indicating the country of origin. The official number for the U.S. is 840.
- **Is there a cost to registering premises?** Not at this time. The USDA has provided funding for premises registration to Kansas and other states who utilize the federal registration system. Whether or not there will eventually be a cost is unknown at this time.
- **What if I receive animals with lost tags?** You should replace the lost tags with your own. Report the lost tag to the Kansas Animal Health Dept. Your records should reflect that the cow did not have a tag when it arrived and it was tagged with number xxx.
- **What if a cow or calf dies?** Report the death and ID number to the state office and make note in your own records.
- **Is this identification system part of “COOL”?** The National Animal Identification System is for disease control purposes. It is not met to replace Country of Origin Labeling or “COOL”. It can be a tool to use in a labeling program because the official devices will have a country of origin code built into the number.
- **Will everybody have access to information gathered by the government?** Kansas law requires the state Animal Health Department to keep information confidential. Unless you share the information with others, only state and federal animal health officials will have access to the information. Premises numbers will not be part of the ear tag; they will only be used to identify to land owner/manager. Individual animal numbers will not give any indication as to the origin of the animal, except that it is from the USA or another country.
- **What about my production and management records?** Animal health officials are only interested in the birth herd and where the animal stopped during its life. We do not need or want performance/management records.
- **When will recordings be made of livestock movement?** Change of ownership, change of premises, interstate movement and slaughter.
- **Can these tags be used a second time?** No, these tags will have individual numbers that will not be duplicated for at least 20 years. They are not to be used a second time. All tags received at the slaughter house will be destroyed.

- **Who will I get tags from?** There are several companies that will meet the standards to manufacture tags for this program. You will be able to get various tags from official NAIS tag distributors (approved manufactures or venders).