

US PORK INDUSTRY IMPLEMENTATION OF ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION: SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND WHAT'S YET TO COME

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The introduction of a foreign animal disease, such as Classical Swine Fever or Foot and Mouth Disease, into the U.S. swine herd would have an immediate and drastic effect on the commerce of live pigs, pork and pork products. Exports currently account for approximately 25% of U.S. pork production. Nationally, aggressive disease control measures enacted by animal health authorities to prevent further spread of the disease will affect the movement of live pigs, fresh pork and pork products locally and interstate. According to USDA, the entry of a serious foreign animal disease could cause estimated U.S. economy-wide losses of up to 40 to 60 billion dollars due to the destruction of animals and the loss of exports until our export markets reopen.

USDA defines retrieval of animal traceback data to their last premises of holding within a 48-hour window as optimal for efficient, effective disease containment. The National Animal Identification System (NAIS) developed in partnership with the animal agriculture production industry, State animal health authorities, and USDA, provides the common data standards required to close traceability gaps.

NAIS is comprised of three components: 1. Premises registration of locations that manage livestock or poultry (farms, feedlots, veterinary clinics, and livestock markets); 2. Animal identification (either individually or as groups) using an approved method prior to their commingling with animals from other premises; and 3. Animal tracing or recording animal movements from one premises to another in private and State animal tracking databases using standard data fields and data transfer.

In 2006 and 2008 the U.S. swine industry entered into cooperative agreements with USDA to help fund the industry's effort to fully implement premises registration. As of January 2009, USDA estimates that there are 1,438,280 animal premises in the U.S. and 501,428 or 34.9% of them are registered. For the U.S. pork industry, there are an estimated 67,280 swine premises with 52,747 or 78.4% of them registered.

The pork industry has had a functional, mandatory swine identification system in place since 1988. This system requires that all swine in interstate commerce must be identified and records concerning these movements be reported to federal and state databases.

In July 2005, the U.S. swine industry developed a consensus document outlining standards by which the swine industry intends to implement a national swine identification system. The swine industry's proposal focuses on adapting the existing federal identification regulations as a model for a national swine identification system.

The U.S. swine industry is a stakeholder in developing a successful plan for enhancing current animal movement record requirements. The goals include retention of data necessary for a 48 hour trace-back for animal health issues and accessibility by state and federal animal health officials.

Premises registration and the Swine ID Plan enables the industry to be effective in pre-planning efforts for the introduction of foreign animal or emerging animal disease and to rapidly contain and appropriately respond to the introduction of foreign animal or emerging animal disease into the U.S. should that happen.

Key words: National Animal Identification System (NAIS) – USDA – Foreign animal disease.
