

# The National Animal Identification System (NAIS)

The USDA is in the process of implementing the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) through the States. The government's goal is to be able to track all animal movements within 48 hours. The USDA government has *not* conducted any scientific studies to analyze the design or effectiveness of the NAIS, and its cost-benefit analysis is fundamentally flawed.

The NAIS is to be implemented in three stages:

1. **Premises registration:** Every person who owns a livestock or poultry animal would have to register the property where the livestock is kept. This includes anyone with even one chicken, horse, cow, pig, sheep, goat, llama, alpaca, or other livestock or poultry animal.
2. **Animal identification:** Most animals would be required to be individually identified, and then implanted with a microchip, tagged with a radio frequency identification device (RFID), or otherwise physically identified. For at least some species, RFIDs would be required.

Group or lot identification could be used where groups of animals are managed together from birth to death and not commingled with other animals. **In practice, only large factory farms of poultry and swine would be able to use group identification.**

3. **Animal tracking:** Every time a tag is applied, a tag is lost or an animal needs to be re-tagged, an animal is killed or dies, or an animal is missing, the event would have to be reported to the government within 24 hours. "Commingling events" will have to be reported, including both public and private sales, regional shows and exhibitions.

The NAIS was developed by large Agri-Businesses, technology companies, and government bureaucracies, all of whom stand to profit from the program. But it is the taxpayers and the hundreds of thousands of people who own livestock animals who will have to bear the costs. The NAIS will cause a variety of problems:

- **Massive intrusion into people's lives:** Individuals will have to provide detailed information about their property and their own movements to government and private databases;
- **High costs:** Registration, tagging, and reporting all carry costs in both time and money;
- **Loss of small farmers and ranchers:** Many will be unable to afford the program, or unwilling to accept the government intrusion;
- **Reduced availability of local, organic, and grass-fed foods;**
- **Violation of many Americans' religious beliefs;**
- **NAIS will not make food safer:** most food-borne illnesses, such as e. coli and salmonella, are due to food processing and handling practices, not live animals.

## FOR MORE INFO:

**Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance**  
**Judith McGeary**  
8308 Sassman Rd  
Austin, TX 78747  
512-243-9404  
Info@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org  
[www.FarmAndRanchFreedom.org](http://www.FarmAndRanchFreedom.org)

## What You Can Do

- Go to a USDA hearing! Locations are listed at: <http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/feebdback.shtml>
- Submit written comments. Online at: <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=APHIS-2009-0027> **Or mail to:** ATTN NAIS, Surveillance and Identification Programs, National Center for Animal Health Programs, VS, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 200, Riverdale, MD 20737.

→ turn over for a sample letter on the back

SAMPLE LETTER – Personalize for the greatest effect!

**Re: Docket No. APHIS-2009-0027**

I urge the USDA to **stop** implementation of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). I am a

---

*[state who you are – a farmer, consumer, or horse owner -- and why you care about this issue]*

The NAIS is fundamentally flawed for multiple reasons:

- 1) No significant benefits: USDA’s assertions that NAIS will provide benefits for animal health are not supported, and actually contradict basic scientific principles. Disease must be addressed on a species-specific basis, with an understanding of the causes of the different diseases and the ways the diseases are transmitted. A one-size-fits-all program is useless.
- 2) Damage to food safety efforts: NAIS will not prevent foodborne illnesses, such as e. coli or salmonella contamination, because the tracking ends at the time of slaughter. Food safety is better served by focusing on programs such as increased testing for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or Mad Cow), improved oversight of slaughterhouses and food processing facilities, and increased inspections of imported foods. Programs such as NAIS that burden small, sustainable farmers will hurt efforts to develop safer, decentralized local food systems.
- 3) High costs for animal owners and taxpayers: These costs include: (1) the development, maintenance, and update of massive databases; (2) the costs of tags, most of which will contain microchips; (3) the labor burdens for tagging every animal; (4) the paperwork burdens of reporting routine movements; and (5) the costs of enforcement on millions of individuals. The USDA’s recently released cost-benefit analysis severely underestimated the costs to small farmers, homesteaders, and pet owners. Even so, the study acknowledged that the cost to people with just a few animals would be significantly higher than the costs to large producers. This is an inherently unfair program that will favor factory farms over family farms.
- 4) Unworkable and intrusive: The databases to register the properties, identify each animal, and record billions of “events” will dwarf any system currently in existence. Moreover, requiring individuals to submit information about their homes, property, and movements to a database makes each person vulnerable to accidental release of the information, hackers, and misuse by commercial interests.
- 5) Diverts resources from better alternatives. Instead of NAIS, I encourage USDA focus on disease prevention through vaccination and improved animal husbandry practices, and disease detection in currently uninspected livestock imports.

For all of these reasons, I urge the USDA to stop implementation of the NAIS.

Sincerely,

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Comments: