ISDA Animal Identification Steering Committee
Meeting
Friday, October 15, 2004
9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
A and B Conference Rooms

Those present:

Shellee Smith Daniels, ISP

Garry Penny, ISP Brand Inspectors

Dr. Marilyn Simunich, ISDA

Toni Meeuf, ISDA

Dr. Marie Bulgin, University of Idaho

Senator Don Burtenshaw

Jim Little

Jeff Heins, DVM, IVMA

Scott Holt, Idaho Cattle Association

Sean Merrill, Merrill's Eggs

Rick Stott, NWPP

Jim England, Caine Veterinary Teaching Center

Julie Morrison, Idaho Cattle Association/NWPP

Michael Coe, Global Animal Management

Amy Van Hoover, ISDA

Larry Hayhurst, ISP Brand Inspectors

Linda DuBose, Caine Veterinary Teaching Center

Danielle Bruno-Favrau, ISDA

Judy Bartlett, Farm Bureau

Dr. Clarence Siroky, ISDA

Dr. Siroky opened the meeting. After everyone introduced themselves, Dr. Siroky explained that animal identification is a large idea and everyone should work together to develop rules. Animal identification will affect all species. He wants someone from all industries. This covers disease management for all species. One size does not fit all. We need final consensus, yet let each species group decide the appropriate methods and address all issues.

Dr. Siroky gave an overview of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). He explained that the NAIS began with efforts to develop the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP). He talked about Idaho's brand department, which currently identifies animals based on ownership. The NAIS, however, is based on animal location. Brands and animal identification are not the same. Idaho has data on animals due to brucellosis tag information collection and other existing programs.

Dr. Siroky told the group about an incident where ISDA responded to an animal health problem. Outbreaks are costly to industry and the longer it takes to complete epidemiological investigations and animal trace backs, the greater the impact to industry. He talked about terrorism implications and showed a PowerPoint slide showing how far and scattered animals go from a sale. He gave reasons why animal identification is critically needed. It is about animal health, not industry. There is a need for 48-hour traceback. In the event of a Foot and Mouth Disease case, USDA would shut down all nationwide movement for 72 hours, but in that 72-hour timeframe, it would be impossible to locate all exposed animals. 48-hour traceback would reduce the economic impact.

Dr. Siroky described Idaho's recent $1.16 million grant from USDA. He discussed the NAIS development and standards. The standards are producer driven, consisting of four elements: 1. a uniform premises identification system, 2. Group/lot identification, 3. individual animal identification, and 4. nonproducer participants. He talked about commingling and when group/lot identification is feasible. Dr. Siroky explained that there are political pressures from tag, technology companies and producer interests attempting to influence the NAIS concept to get uniformity, which would constrain government size while providing the least regulation for producers.

Key information is necessary to contain diseases. Dr. Siroky explained data needs and the methods for individual animal tracking from premises to premises. As NAIS is implemented, reporting will actually be limited to a voluntary basis. The last National Steering Committee has decided that animal identification will be unilaterally in place by July of 2007 and beginning in January of 2008 the program will likely be mandatory.

Dr. Siroky told the group that the Animal Identification Steering Committee members will provide input on future funding issues. Dr. Siroky thinks USDA will maintain the premises allocator and animal identification database and pay for setting up the infrastructure. There is an estimate of $10.00 per premises to set up the program for each state. States will pay for the database to work with USDA's system. There will likely be a high cost to the state for brand inspectors and data maintenance. Producers will need to pay for their identification tags.

Senator Burtenshaw asked about tags and their prices. Dr. Siroky replied that they ran between $2.00 and $2.50 each. Michael Coe passed around a tag example. Scott Holt told everyone there was information on his company's website about tags. Dr. Siroky talked about the high number of grants for the Division of Animal Industries and introduced Toni Meeuf, the Division's Grant Officer. Toni will ensure that all grant requirements are met. She will continue researching new grant opportunities.

Toni Meeuf introduced herself as new to agriculture. She came in at the end of this grant process. Amy Van Hoover did a large amount of the ground work for this grant. The animal identification grant pays for three positions. There is $180,000.00 for supplies and $20,000 for equipment. $665,000 of the grant is set aside for the Northwest Pilot Project (NWPP), Duck Valley Indian Reservation and others to work on animal identification projects. Funding would be available around November 1st.

Senator Burtenshaw asked the funding amount for the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Toni Meeuf replied that it was approximately $35,000. Larry Hayhurst asked whether Duck Valley would hire new personnel. Toni Meeuf answered that she wasn't sure. The grant funding was cut back so there wasn't enough money to do everything. Jim Little asked about funding set for other projects. Toni told the group that everyone had the same opportunities to receive supplies. The first year there is no cost from producers for tags. Jim Little asked about tag availability, which Toni said would be around November 1st. Producers can buy tags and other supplies now and ISDA can help in other ways later.

Rick Stott told the group about NWPP's efforts within six states. Producers are being paid 75 cents for each transaction, as an incentive for collecting animal movement data. Most producers will have about 3 to 5 transactions for every animal over the course of the project. Rick said that Jim Little is participating in the NWPP. RFID is one method but other identification types might work for now. Producers don't seem to like a RFID tag mandate. The NWPP is trying a variety of identification methodologies. He agreed with Dr. Siroky that eventually RFID would be dominant, but right now they must provide flexibility as everyone worked toward that goal. NWPP has $360,000 to run the project.

Dr. Siroky said that ISDA and NWPP projects conflicted but everyone would try to find consensus. ISDA has dairy and a livestock market to use for ISDA's part of the project.

Toni Meeuf said there was $350,000 for NWPP, $35,000 for Duck Valley Indian Reservation, $10,000 for the University of Idaho's Caine Veterinary Teaching Center, $5,000 for dairies, $6,000 for cervidae operations, that Biomark had $7,000 and that Global Animal Management had between $235,000 and $240,000 for the database. There was $180,000 for supplies and $24,000 for equipment, although funds can be moved between budget sections. Dr. Siroky asked if there was $180,000 for ISDA personnel and Toni answered that there was $157,000 for the one year but there may be more money because they are paying less than was budgeted.

Rick Stott asked if NWPP could use funding to help the brand departments in Nevada or other states to buy readers or other supplies. Dr. Siroky said that the funding was for Idaho only. Larry Hayhurst said there was no NWPP monies for use by Idaho's brand inspectors. Scott Holt asked if ISDA would work with other states. Dr. Siroky answered that ISDA would coordinate between states.

Rick Stott said that NWPP would be asking Treasure Valley Livestock how NWPP could help producers. NWPP was going to do the same with feed lots. NWPP was planning on working back through the chain in this way. Scott Holt brought up doubling up of producer participants. Toni Meeuf said that ISDA and NWPP need to communicate to ensure producers aren't enrolled in both programs.

Julie Morrison talked about the numbers of producers estimated for NWPP and the numbers of animals per producer. Larry Hayhurst asked if the project was for this section of the state and commented that brand inspector participation is limited by funding. Dr. Siroky gave a data collection example: a dairy producer who could utilize electronic identification and not interfere with the NWPP. Dr. Siroky told everyone that this is the type of project that ISDA wants. If there is one company wanting verifiable source hamburger, he questioned whether voluntary sampling of animals over 30 months of age would satisfy the verifiable source requirements. Producers don't understand this or know the answer to the question. Jim Little asked if Dr. Siroky was referencing Swift. Jim said that Swift approached him the week before, offering $10 per head to do this. Either tags or brands can be used. Swift is fine with this if the information is faxed in. Dr. Siroky replied that this system wouldn't work for dairy. Someone needs to ask why the company wants verifiable source in the first place.

After break, Julie Morrison talked about outreach. She said that Rick Stott would give presentations and host breakfasts to sign people up at NWPP meetings held within each state. There are MOUs between NWPP and many people and organizations in the region. Each cattle association gave NWPP an outreach plan. NWPP and ICA have a MOU to allow Julie to do her job for the animal identification program on a full time basis. AgriBeef has a MOU for NWPP's database so it can operate until the national system is operational. Over the next few weeks NWPP would sign people up. Scott Holt and Julie would go to feed lots. Within one year, they hope to have a high amount of data. She gave a handout with NWPP information. The website is www.northwestpilot.org

Dr. Simunich asked if NWPP would use data for cattle from Hawaii and Canada. Scott Holt replied that they were looking at it right now. Rick Stott said there are concerns regarding this region. The reason NWPP is a regional project is because cattle move across state borders as if the borders don't exist. NWPP's Board represents almost all industry segments, including sheep and buffalo. If allotments border two states, NWPP doesn't want to create a large amount of paperwork because the animals go back and forth on the allotment, crossing state lines. The primary goal is to coordinate efforts in states so the definitions for movements are consistent. They want to follow animals regionally for 48-hour trace back using GIS and other methods. The pilot program will be helpful for real-time uses for producers. Rick said that Hawaiian cattle go through British Columbia, although the destination is Washington State. Cattle stay in British Columbia for 3 weeks. NWPP will address trying to track through the foreign country when they are technically U.S. cattle.

Larry Hayhurst asked how many state brand departments NWPP had approached. He commented that he didn't know who's in charge in their states. He discussed various states' situations. Rick Stott said NWPP had varying levels of commitment from every state. Larry Hayhurst said that when producers enroll, the brand inspectors want to know if they are involved in NWPP. Rick Stott said producer participants agree to disclosure of participants on NWPP's website. Rick Stott said participation was tied to brand. They have high numbers of cattle committed. NWPP assumes approximately 50,000 enrolled, although they wanted 27,000. NWPP won't pay for all cattle for producers if they have a lot of animals. Within 3 months NWPP wants 15,000 enrolled. Within 6 months the goal is a full meeting of the participants. NWPP is getting good participation from the Congressional Delegation. The Delegation requests and are provided with updates. Julie does this full time. Scott Holt is on NWPP's Board representing ICA.

Larry Hayhurst asked about cervidae. Dr. Siroky said cervidae producers are enrolled but there are actually more rules for them to follow. For example, intrastate movement certificates are a requirement. This is not the case with sheep, goats, and other species.

Scott Holt said that Don Hansen is working on the definition of "premises" for NWPP so it is the same for all participants. Gary Penny asked if NWPP had money ear tagged for outreach. Julie Morrison answered that $70,000 was the amount. Dr. Siroky said that ISDA's outreach dollars will be spent for primarily for premises registration purposes. ISDA's and NWPP's outreach programs each have a different focus. Rick Stott said he wants to get NWPP's information out and use influencers to share the information with friends and neighbors. They can sell the idea

for USDA, ISDA, and cattle associations. Larry Hayhurst asked if NWPP was talking with the dairymen. The NWPP would be at the dairymen's convention in November and this was 40% of the beef industry. Scott Holt said that most dairy cattle went out of the region. The challenge was to get the ones that will stay in the northwest. Larry Hayhurst said the dairy cattle come from all over the nation. Scott Holt added that small operation may have 5 or 10 head from dairies. The NWPP might not be able to address it this time but they would try. Rick Stott said there is a dairy representative on NWPP's board.

Senator Buretenshaw asked whether premises numbers were a state or national number. Dr. Siroky explained that although administered by the state, the criterion for the number is national. Senator Burtenshaw said the identification number must be national.

Michael Coe said that the Division of Animal Industries' 18 databases would be combined into one main database. Most of ISDA's current systems are antiquated. The data will be integrated for access by all ISDA personnel. Field inspectors would need to check data. Health certificates coming in will go into the database with disease information that ISDA is already required to send to federal systems.

Rick Stott asked whether Utah or Nevada would use the data integration system. Michael Coe answered that Utah already receiving funding for cervidae from the animal identification grant. Nevada didn't get funding but USDA found $3 million to give to the states that were denied. Dr. Siroky said that each state had common reporting deficiencies. Michael Coe said that Utah and Nevada were the next states, then most states can use the system and only pay for the actual hours to hook up their state. Senator Burtenshaw asked the rate. Michael Coe answered that it was $100.00 per hour. He gave an overview of how the system operated between the national system of the security assessment that USDA conducted six weeks prior. USDA's system was almost ready to go, although USDA had been trying to launch the federal system for the last year. He gave info on the Wisconsin Livestock Identification System (WLIS) process. He explained the protocols. He said the USDA's system is only set up to register 911 addresses. In the future, GPS coordinates could be used to verify the address. Rick Stott asked whether GPS coordinates could be used at all. Michael Coe answered that it only worked for exceptions. Politics kept USDA's information technology from being implemented in a timely manner. There are 27,000 brands registered, although 7,500 are inactive. The State may or may not need a separate premises number for multiple brands. The State assumes that 5,200 don't have a 911 address. 13,000 have a valid address, but some may be duplicates. Wisconsin currently has 2,000 premises registered for their $480,000 project. Idaho's going to get 5,000 or 6,000 using GAM's system.

Marie Bulgin asked about the sheep number system and Michael Coe answered that it will go away but it will be tied to the national number after data integration. He said the same applies to the current dairy information.

Dr. Siroky told everyone that ISDA wants to prevent someone from hacking or killing the system. Registering premises that don't exist could be used to overload the system. He gave the example of someone registering non-producer addresses out of the phone book. A fee would deter fraudulent registrations. A credit card could be used to validate identities. The fee could

pay for maintenance too. He explained that premises registrations are now done internally at ISDA. If the system went on the internet for self-registrations, a fee would be needed to deter fraud. Rick Stott commented that it was a good idea for the system to be available on the web. He added that a fee might be a good idea. Michael Coe told everyone that fees could be used for premises number renewals.

Larry Hayhurst asked whether a premises number would become a private right once a fee was paid. He said that this would be good for Idaho State Police purposes.

Jim Little asked which address would be used to register a premises: the office, ranch, or a post office box. Michael Coe answered that the office number might work if it was a 911 address. Rick Stott commented that in the event of a disease outbreak, a 5-mile radius would be set from the office, rather than a disease location. Dr. Siroky said GPS locations could be added later on.

Judy Bartlett asked whether confidentiality was protected. Dr. Siroky answered that he had heard that APHIS had legislation attached to the Animal Health Act, in order to keep information confidential. USDA backs confidentiality of the information. Rick Stott asked whether the legislation had been written. Dr. Siroky said that the bill was now the "National Animal Health Protection Act". It's been in the works for the last 5 months. Rick Stott said there was debate at NCBA about whether or not confidentiality of information would hold up in court. He said there may even be opposition from producers. Dr. Siroky discussed the privacy issue and the recent Idaho ruling on ISDA nutrient management plans. Confidentiality is of the highest priority.

Dr. Simunich gave an overview of Idaho's eight different projects. Jim Little asked whether the feed lot project was separate from the NWPP. Dr. Siroky said that it was. Dr. Simunich said the project was broken into sectors.

The group discussed steering committee organizational structure and the potential need for subgroups. Steering committee member names were listed and the group decided that someone should represent the transportation sector of the livestock industry. Dr. Siroky said he wanted the steering committee to go across all segments as it approaches the process of developing rules and he requested suggestions for additional segments. Rick Stott suggested transportation and Larry Hayhurst suggested that Stan Boyd be included. Dr. Siroky invited everyone to show up as often as possible as issues would vary between meetings.

Scott Holt asked what he should tell producers regarding Idaho's premises registration system. Michael Coe said that the brand database was first. ISDA would get the word out through outreach to get information from producers directly. He said the 911 address is important. ISDA may need to ask for GPS information. Scott Holt asked if the database was ready for projects. Michael Coe said that it would be ready soon. Dr. Siroky said premises numbers are randomly generated by USDA. If there is a valid 911 address, the premises can be registered.

Michael Coe said ISDA would generate a smart card for premises numbers. Dr. Siroky said that ISDA isn't exclusively using companies or technologies, although there are companies named in the project plan. These companies were available for the project.

Judy Bartlett asked if information would be private when the system was activated. Dr. Siroky said that if the program was voluntary, the information would indeed remain private. Michael Coe said that this was under a state statute and the state was using a private company. Dr. Simunich said that Idaho's law was passed last year.

There was a discussion regarding the number of digits and the size of databases. Michael Coe said the federal government wants to require information retention for 20 years after the premises is retired.

The next steering committee meeting was set for the first part of December, with definitions, funding, and rules as topics of discussion.