



# The United States Animal Identification Plan

January, 2004

The US Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) is needed to maintain the economic viability of American animal agriculture. This national animal identification and tracking plan will enhance disease preparedness by rapidly identifying animals exposed to disease, thus allowing quick detection, containment, and elimination of disease threats. This is essential to preserve the domestic and international marketability of our nation's animals and animal products. The USAIP will promote continued confidence in livestock products and will protect the health status of the nation's herds and flocks.

## A cooperative effort of industry and government

The USAIP has evolved from early 2002, when the National Institute for Animal Agriculture organized a national identification task force to provide leadership for the preparation of the initial report, the National Identification Work Plan. This report was presented at the 2002 US Animal Health Association (USAHA) meeting, which resolved to ask USDA APHIS to establish a joint state, federal, and industry group to further advance the work plan.

Throughout 2003, the resulting National Identification Development Team (NIDT) composed of approximately 100 animal and livestock industry professionals representing more than 70 associations, organizations, and government agencies, advanced the work plan to produce the initial draft of the USAIP.

The USAIP 2003 draft was presented at the USAHA meeting in October 2003. There, a resolution was passed that accepted the plan as a work in progress, encouraged its further refinement and implementation, and requested APHIS to recognize the standards in the plan as official.

The NIDT steering committee is receiving comments through January 31, 2004. This feedback and the results of the Species Working Groups will be considered as the details of the plan are finalized.

More information is available at [www.usaip.info](http://www.usaip.info).

The single case of BSE in the United States announced December 23, 2003, reinforces the need for a national animal identification program. The USAIP implementation plan by species provides for a timely, phased-in introduction of the national program with practical, flexible, and cost effective solutions.

The plan, when fully operational, will be capable of tracing an animal or group of animals back to the herd or premises that is the most logical source of a disease concern. It will also be able to trace potentially exposed animals that were moved out from that herd or premises. The plan's long-term goal is to establish a system that can complete the traces (back and forward) within 48 hours of discovery of a disease. Such capability is dependent on developing a practical yet comprehensive infrastructure that collects and records the movements of animals. The identification of premises (production points) is the foundation of the system and must be established before animals can be tracked.

- The USAIP defines the standards and framework for implementing and maintaining a national animal identification system for the United States. It includes a premises numbering system, an individual and group/lot animal numbering system, and standards for radio frequency technology used for animal identification. The immediate priority is to have these standards recognized in the Code of Federal Regulations.
- The cattle, sheep, and swine industries have already developed preliminary implementation plans. All other livestock, including goats, cervids, equine, aquaculture, poultry, llamas, and bison, are becoming engaged in the plan. Some features of the plan are common to all species, while others are species specific. Species working groups are meeting to further define their needs and develop transition and implementation plans to include in the USAIP.

- The USAIP timeline calls for the establishment of the National Premises System in 2004. The infrastructure for individual animal identification will be made available as premises become enrolled to provide for the timely introduction of official ID with the new national numbering system, the US Animal Identification Number. Recording the interstate movements of livestock on the national database is the first priority as animal tracking systems are put in place.
- The plan contains no mandatory requirements at this point in its development. Eventually, as the plan is finalized and tested, all livestock and food animals will be able to be tracked through the system. Not all animals, however, will need to be individually identified if they are raised, fed, and harvested as a group. In that case, they can be identified with a group/lot identification number. This process will likely vary among species.
- Confidentiality of identification data remains one of the greatest concerns of producers. The USDA is working on solutions to resolve these concerns.
- While preliminary projections for financial requirements have been made, the plan is still being developed so no specific amounts are yet available.
- Animals entering the United States from other countries will be subject to the same identification and tracking procedures as animals already in the country. The identification devices that are on animals entering the United States will remain on the animals as official devices. The Canadian identification program is compatible with the USAIP.
- Radio Frequency Identification (electronic ID) is currently the preferred identification method for some types of livestock when individual animal ID will be needed. Other technologies (DNA, retinal imaging, etc.) will be integrated into the USAIP as standards and practical applications of the technology are presented to the industry.
- The standards defined in the USAIP allow the opportunity for multiple manufacturers and service providers to participate in the program.

**For more information, visit the US Animal Identification website at [www.usaip.info](http://www.usaip.info).**

Printed copies of the USAIP are available upon request. Contact:

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**ID/INFO EXPO 2004**, a national animal identification conference and trade show, is scheduled for May 18-20, 2004, in Chicago:

Results of the USAIP Species Working Groups and other updates will be presented.

Sponsored by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture.

See [www.animalagriculture.org](http://www.animalagriculture.org) for symposium information as it becomes available.

## USAIP Standards

- **Premises Identification Number**

The National Premises Identification Number provides a nationally unique number for each premises (location) involved in animal agriculture. The format (field specification) for the National Premises Identification Number is defined below.

Field Structure	Type	Example	Comments
7 Character	Alphanumeric	A123R69	Right most character is a check digit

- **US Non-Producer Participant Number**

The USAIP provides for the establishment of Non-Producer Participants who will be involved in the program, but do not manage or hold livestock. Such entities include tag manufacturers, service providers, veterinarians, breed registries, etc. APHIS will establish enrollment/application procedures for Non-Producer Participants and will assign unique Non-Producer Participant Numbers to such entities/individuals. Non-Producer Participant Numbers are necessary for submitting required data to the national database.

The Non-Producer Participant Number is a unique 7-character field as presented in the following chart.

Field Structure	Type	Example	Comments
7	Alphanumeric	H892345	USDA will allocate unique numbers to approved Non-Producer Participants using the same system used for allocating premises identification numbers.

- **US Animal Identification Numbering System**

The national numbering system for individual animals, referred to as the US Animal Identification Numbering (USAIN) System, will follow the ISO code structure standard for radio frequency identification of animals. The USAIN will permit a single animal to be identified with a lifetime number that can be printed on a visual tag, encoded on an RFID transponder, or a combination of both. The format (field specifications) of the USAIN is defined below.

Field Structure	Type	Example	Comments
3	Numeric	840	ISO 3166 Country code for USA
12	Numeric	123456789012	Start number > 002,000,000,000

*Note: Other identification numbering systems defined in the Code of Federal Regulations remain official through a transition period.*

- **Group/Lot Identification Number**

Group/Lot ID will consist of the National Premises Identification Number of the location where the group was established and a six digit numerical number reflecting the date the group was created. This format will result in a unique number, for example: A234567100302.

Field Structure	Type	Example	Comments
7	Alphanumeric	A234567	First 7 characters is the entity's US Premises ID Number
6	Date (MMDDYY)	100302	

Group/Lot ID is an option for any species in which animals move as a group through the production chain.

- **Radio Frequency Identification Technology**

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology is the most common form of electronic identification used in animal agriculture today. Other technologies, including bar codes and 2-D symbology, if used, must have appropriate standards established. Other biometrics that store measures in digital formats will require standardization as they mature and enter the marketplace. At this time, the primary focus is to foster the adoption of national standards for the use of RFID devices in animals.

The following table explains the technology standards for radio frequency identification required when used for official animal identification. Abbreviated versions of ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 are contained in the USAIP Technical and Reference Supplement.

Issue	Standard	Comments
Code Structure	ISO 11784 Radio Frequency Identification of Animals	The entire code structure is a 64 bit number, of which bits 16-26 are the country code and bits 27-64 are the animal number
Technical Concepts	ISO 11785 Radio Frequency Identification of Animals	

Note: ISO Standards do not designate any minimum performance standards; i.e., read distance.

- **Official Identification Devices**

The official identification of an individual animal will require the attachment of a device to the animal with the appropriate identification number printed on it and electronically encoded in the chip. While uniform methods will be preferred within a species, it is realized that various methods of identification will need to be provided across species. Devices currently defined in the Code of Federal Regulations will remain official methods of identification unless noted otherwise. Official identification devices or procedures for various species will need to be supported by the representative industry and approved by appropriate animal health officials.

**Organizations and Government Agencies Participating in the Development of the USAIP  
2002 National ID Task Force/ 2003 National ID Development Team**

AgInfoLink	Idaho Department of Agriculture	PigCHAMP, Inc.
AgriTech Analytics	Illinois Department of Agriculture	Premier Sheep Supplies, Ltd.
Allflex USA, Inc.	Indiana State Board of Animal Health	Producers Livestock Marketing Association
American Angus Association	International Livestock Identification Association	QC Data
American Association of Bovine Practitioners	Iowa Department of Agriculture	R-CALF USA
American Association of Swine Veterinarians	Iowa Pork Producers Association	Seaboard Farms, Inc.
American Dairy Goat Association	Iowa State University	Smithfield Premium Genetics Group
American Farm Bureau Federation	Kansas Animal Health Department	South Dakota Department of Agriculture
American Sheep Industry Association	Kansas State University	Swift & Company
American Veal Association	Livestock Identification Services, Ltd.	Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
American Veterinary Medical Association	Livestock Marketing Association	Texas Animal Health Commission
Antlers International	Louisiana Department of Agriculture	
APEIS / Cattle Trax	MFA, Inc.	
Association of Equipment Manufacturers	Minnesota DHIA	Tyson Foods
Auburn University	Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory	United Producers, Inc.
BEEF Magazine	Missouri Department of Agriculture	United States Animal Health Association
California Animal Health and Food Safety Laboratory	Montana State University	University of Arkansas
California Department of Food and Agriculture	National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials	University of California, School of Veterinary Medicine
Canadian Cattle Identification Agency	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture	University of California-Davis
Cargill Pork	National Association of Animal Breeders	University of Illinois, Department of Animal Sciences
Cattle Buyers Weekly	National Beef Packing Co.	University of Minnesota
Cattle-Fax	National Cattlemen's Beef Association	USDA, AMS, Livestock and Seed Program
Computer Sciences Corporation	National Dairy Herd Improvement Association	USDA, AMS, LS Program, Standardization Branch
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Services	National Elk Breeders Association	USDA, APHIS, Veterinary Services
Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding	National Institute for Animal Agriculture	USDA, APHIS, VS, CEAH
CowTek, Inc.	National Livestock Producers Association	USDA, APHIS, VS, NVSL
DHI Computing Services, Inc.	National Milk Producers Federation	USDA, CSREES
Digital Angel, Inc.	National Pedigreed Livestock Council	USDA, FSIS
Drovers Journal	National Pork Board	West Virginia Department of Agriculture
eMerge Interactive	National Pork Producers Council	Western Livestock Journal
Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association	National Renderers Association	Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Excel Corporation	Nebraska Brand Committee	Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium
Farnam Companies, Inc.	Nebraska Department of Agriculture	World-Wide Sires
FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine	New Mexico Livestock Board	
Federation of Animal Science Societies	North American Deer Farmers Association	
Global Animal Management	North American Meat Processors	
GlobalVetLink, L.C.	North Carolina Department of Agriculture	
Holstein Association	Optibrand Ltd., LLC	
	Oregon Department of Agriculture	
	Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	