

Do You Know What USAIP Stands For?

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The choir is singing about animal identification and data collection. The tune, USAIP, stands for United States Animal Identification Plan.

In reviewing the current “work in progress” document, dated Dec. 23, 2003, protecting American animal agriculture is key, however, the task is not simple. According to the executive summary, “fundamental to controlling any disease threat, foreign or domestic, to the nation’s animal resources is to have a system that can identify individual animals or groups, the premises where they are located, and the date of entry to that premises.” The goal of the plan is “to achieve a trace-back system that can identify all animals and premises potentially exposed to an animal with a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) within 48 hours after discovery.”

Although full consensus is always difficult to achieve, there’s a widespread sense within the industry that a system like this is needed. The Feb. 6, 2004, National Cattleman’s Beef Association News reported that at the recent National Cattleman’s Beef Association annual meeting, “significant effort by NCBA, its volunteer leaders, and state affiliates have played a significant role in the development of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP).”

The story further noted, “NCBA recognizes the need for an animal identification plan that is an effective disease surveillance and monitoring tool which serves the needs of its producer members. NCBA members voted to support adoption of the USAIP as the national animal identification program. NCBA recommends other components of the plan such as identification device distribution, hardware and system certification, and others be managed by the private sector, with decisions regarding animal data management for disease surveillance purposes be resolved on a state-by-state basis.”

In reviewing the R-Calf United Stock Growers of America Web site, comments are being sought, as noted by the South Dakota Stock Growers Association, on the plan. “The site notes the most recent draft of the U.S. Animal Identification Plan (USAIP) is available at <http://www.usaip.info/>. The plan consists of 74 pages. If you cannot access it and would like a copy, or if you have any other questions, contact Scott Stuart, USAIP Communication Sub-

committee Co-Chair, (719) 538-8843, or email at Communication@USAIP.info.”

Obviously, a numbering system needs to be implemented, and will be. But if you have data, you have power. Trend lines, progress, lack of progress, directional change, etc., are all outcomes of data analysis.

The power of data has sparked another discussion in the coffee shops around the country. As the discussion about a national identification system for livestock surfaces, two questions crop up often: Does the data control the industry? Or does the industry control the data? The risk that critical data could be leaked and impact subsequent individual financial positions, is the source of more than one legal disagreement. Throughout this debate, beef producers across the nation are intently listening to the identification comments and subsequent data questions.

As we consider a national ID system, the opportunities for industry advancement in the area of overall herd health, cattle performance and documenting the general well-being of the cattle within the industry are great. The flip side of the coin is the producer’s concern regarding privacy.

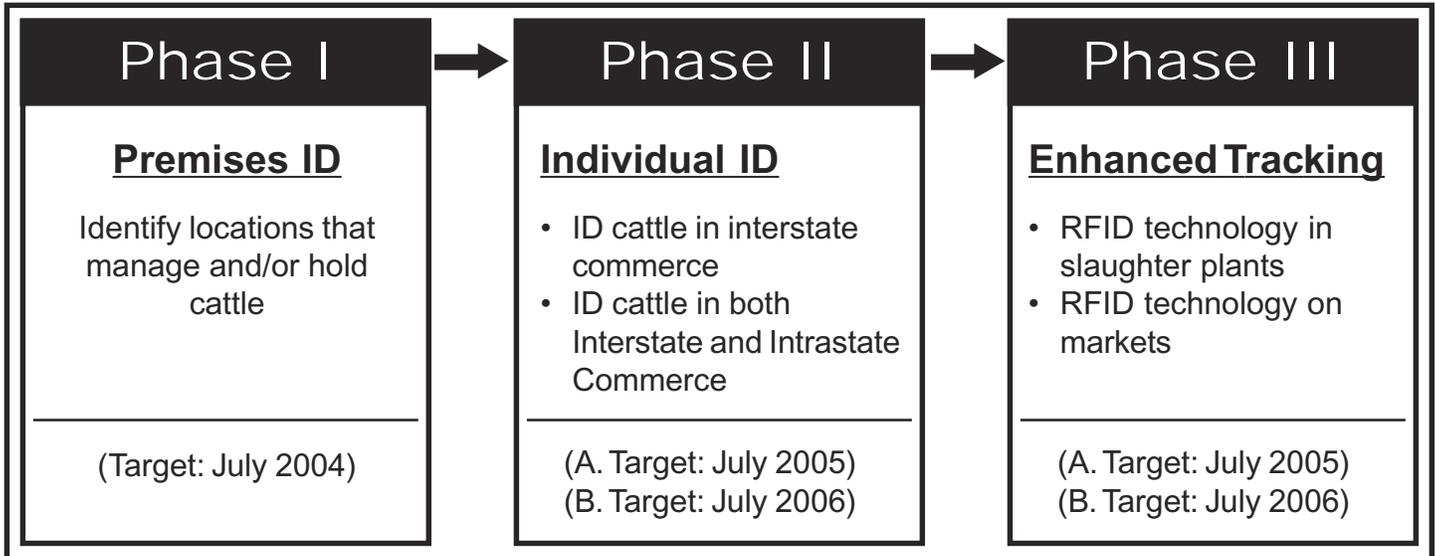
Cattle producers have a long-standing love of the land and the cattle that are produced on that land. The North Dakota Stockmen’s Association has taken a policy stand regarding producer rights, noting that to “own and enjoy the use of private property is the cornerstone to a free society and firmly opposes any infringement of its lawful use and any effort that results in diminishing value or returns should be considered a taking and just compensation provided.”

Do you know what USAIP stands for? If not, now would be a good time to ask.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at www.BeefTalk.com. For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to www.CHAPS2000.com on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0182.

Implementing the U.S. Animal Identification Plan



Source: US Animal Identification Plan