



USDA Outlines Next Steps for Advancing Animal Disease Traceability

Greg Ibach, Under Secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Marketing and Regulatory Programs, announced USDA’s four goals for advancing animal disease traceability to protect the long-term health, marketability and economic viability of the U.S. livestock industry.

“The landscape surrounding animal disease traceability has changed dramatically in the past decade, and producers across the nation recognize that a comprehensive system is the best protection against a devastating disease outbreak like foot-and-mouth disease” Ibach said. “We have a responsibility to these producers and American agriculture as a whole to make animal disease traceability what it should be—a modern system that tracks animals from birth to slaughter using affordable technology that allows USDA to quickly trace sick and exposed animals to stop disease spread.”

USDA will begin implementing these ADT goals starting in fiscal year 2019 and hopes to move to an electronic identification system for cattle official ID by 2021.

USDA’s four goals for increasing traceability are:

- Advance the electronic sharing of data among federal and state animal health officials, veterinarians and industry; including sharing basic animal disease traceability data with the USDA Animal Health Events Repository (AHER)
- Use electronic ID tags for animals requiring individual identification in order to make the transmission of data more efficient
- Enhance the ability to track animals from birth to slaughter through a system that allows tracking data points
- Elevate the discussion with States and industry to work toward a system where animal health certificates are electronically transmitted from private veterinarians to state animal health officials
- USDA will not dictate the use of a specific tag technology--low frequency vs. ultra high frequency)
- USDA will end the free metal ear tags and instead will offer a cost-share for electronic ear tags

According to Secretary Ibach “If an outbreak occurs, we can quickly find the information we need to locate and identify potentially diseased or at-risk animals. This helps avoid unnecessary quarantines that could impact producers’ livelihoods. And by linking to that information instead of housing it ourselves, we maintain our stakeholders’ privacy.”