



**AMERICAN HORSE COUNCIL**  
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## AHC WASHINGTON UPDATE

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### USDA Announces New Framework for Animal Disease Traceability

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will revise its proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS), in effect starting over in the planning process. This announcement follows the USDA's national listening tour which prompted USDA to offer this new approach.

USDA appears to be scaling back its approach, but the Department is just at the beginning of the new process. Rather than attempting to identify every animal, every premise and every animal movement to achieve traceback within 48 hours of a disease outbreak, the new USDA approach appears to be aimed at designing a simpler program to achieve basic traceability with simpler identification means, including branding, to respond to a disease outbreak.

The NAIS was not fully embraced by the livestock community (the USDA spent \$120 million on NAIS with only 36% of producer participation) and generated numerous concerns surrounding confidentiality, liability, cost, privacy, and religion. In response to these concerns, the new USDA program will narrow its approach. The USDA stated the new animal disease traceability program will:

- Only apply to animals involved in interstate commerce;
- Be administered by the States and Tribal Nations, with Federal support, to provide more flexibility;
- Allow for maximum flexibility for States, Tribal Nations, and producers to find identification solutions that meet their needs;
- Encourage the use of lower-cost technology;
- Ensure traceability data is owned and maintained by the States and Tribal Nations; and

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- Be implemented through federal regulations and the full rulemaking process.

In response to the suggestions and criticisms voiced by many in the livestock community, the USDA will modify the prior animal identification program to achieve animal disease traceback.

First, the USDA will convene a forum with animal health leaders from States, Tribal Nations, and producer groups to discuss how best to achieve a coordinated approach to animal disease traceability. The USDA has scheduled an initial meeting with State and Tribal animal health officials next month (March 18th and 19th) in Kansas City, MO. Also, the USDA has directed the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health to concentrate on specific issues, such as confidentiality and liability.

USDA indicated it will share the costs of the new program with States. The Department expects to publish a new animal disease traceability section in its regulations in about one year.

Please see the below sites for additional information on the USDA Framework for Animal Disease Traceability and Questions & Answers regarding the new framework. We will provide further information once it becomes available.

NEW FRAMEWORK FOR ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/)

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS: NEW ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY FRAMEWORK:

[www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal\\_health/content/printable\\_version/faq\\_traceability.pdf](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/faq_traceability.pdf)

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