



Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

March 4, 2014

Office of the  
Administrator

1400 Independence  
Avenue SW  
Washington, DC  
20250

Dear Stakeholders:

When I started my role as APHIS' Administrator, I shared with you my belief that one of the Agency's most important jobs is to help ensure the health and profitability of your industries. We know responding quickly to a disease outbreak and lessening its impact is an essential part of protecting those markets and your profitability, and that was a driving force behind our finalization of the Animal Disease Traceability program in March 2013.

A fully functioning traceability system is also critical to providing the information and assurances trading partners expect. Over the last several months, meeting with many livestock industries, I've heard repeatedly how essential exports are to the success of livestock industries, and to U.S. agriculture as a whole. Even if a producer raises animals only for local and domestic markets, for them to get the best price and return on their investment, they need other producers to be able to export animals and their products. Traceability will only become more important in the future to all of us invested in the health of livestock in our country.

This is why we are building the system to ensure long-term success. To have a system that truly works, we know there has to be flexibility in how States and industry can meet the agreed upon standards and that we must work collaboratively across all sectors. This is how ADT was developed, and it continues to be the way we are working collaboratively with States, Tribes, livestock producers and many others to implement and build the program today.

Our efforts are ensuring a solid foundation for this program that will help protect livestock health for years to come. I'm pleased to write that we've seen much progress over the last year that is now making it easier for producers to participate. The number of authorized tag distributors has expanded, there is a far greater variety of official identification devices on the market, and several States are working to make health certificates more mobile for use in the field.

Now, we are beginning the next phases of implementation, including exercising and testing the system. As part of these steps, we will begin making sure that all animals moved interstate have the proper identification. While obviously a critical piece to achieving our traceability goals, this doesn't mean that enforcement begins tomorrow. Rather, it means we have much education and communication to do alongside all of you to make sure producers and shippers are knowledgeable about all of the program requirements that, taken together, ensure traceability. Here's what we will be doing: In March, as we identify issues with identification of livestock moved interstate, we will begin identifying

individuals that, for one reason or another, aren't meeting the program's requirements. When we do so, our local Veterinary Services Area District Director will contact them in writing to help guide them through the process for meeting the program requirements, including providing them with details on how to obtain the necessary official identification devices or movement documentation. The letters will provide contact information should the producer, livestock market, slaughter plant or accredited veterinarian have questions or concerns about the information and our field personnel are always available to answer questions or provide more information.

We know that sometimes taking enforcement action is necessary to make sure a system as important as ADT is successful. When and where necessary, we will take that action. As a standard practice, we will continue to notify first time offenders when they do not meet the regulatory requirements to ensure they understand the regulation and what they need to do to comply. Additionally, we will now pursue appropriate penalties in situations where an individual repeatedly fails to comply with the regulatory requirements.

Thanks to all of these efforts, and your hard work and support, the first major milestone for the ADT program is on the horizon. In the very near future we will be able to trace livestock moved interstate back to the location where the animal was first officially identified. This will be a huge accomplishment; over time, we will build upon it to more advanced levels of traceability. I look forward to achieving these goals together with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Shea".

Kevin Shea  
APHIS Administrator