

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

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ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY:

INDUSTRY FORUM ON THE PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

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PUBLIC MEETING

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TUESDAY,

AUGUST 24, 2010

The public meeting convened at the Red Lion Hotel, 2525 North 20th Avenue, Pasco, Washington at 10:00 a.m., Deborah Millis, moderator, presiding.

PRESENT:

DEBORAH MILLIS

DR. LISA FERGUSON

DR. LEONARD ELDRIDGE

DR. JIM WATSON

DAVE MORRIS

NEIL HAMMERSCHMIDT

CRAIG GREW

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(8:09 a.m.)

MS. MILLIS: I want to welcome everybody. My name is Deborah Millis, and I work for the USDA. My role here is as the moderator and to keep us on track with the meeting agenda. I see some familiar faces here, and I appreciate your traveling this distance to come to this meeting.

The purpose of our meeting today is to review and clarify the new framework for animal traceability and to discuss the approaches to performance-based regulations and to focus on those and hear what the Regulatory Working Group has done about those and have a chance to discuss, in a later part of the meeting, the feasibility of those performance standards and how they might be measured or enforced and that kind of thing.

So first up today, I want to introduce our official from APHIS's Veterinary Service. APHIS is a part of the USDA, and

1 that's Dr. Lisa Ferguson, who will welcome you
2 today, and she'll be followed by Dr. Leonard
3 Eldridge from the State of Washington, and
4 then we'll also hear from Dr. Jim Watson this
5 morning about the progress of the Regulatory
6 Working Group.

7 Dr. Ferguson.

8 DR. FERGUSON: Good morning. I'm
9 glad everybody could come out this morning.
10 I feel like we need to turn the podium one way
11 or the other. This is interesting, we've got
12 everybody on one side, except for a few.
13 Anyway, actually folks on that side of the
14 room, when we put the screens up, I know I was
15 sitting over at one table, it is a bit of a
16 challenge to see, so you may want to move
17 further in to see the slides when we get on
18 the screen, but we'll leave that up to you.

19 Anyway, I'm glad to be here this
20 morning. This is the last in a series of
21 these public meetings that we have held over
22 the past several months. We had meetings

1 across the country, and our goal with these is
2 to build up a collaborative process. We want
3 to hear from producers, livestock market
4 operators, all of those folks that will
5 contribute to our traceability framework.
6 We've set these up to gather that input and
7 really to have a reality check as to what
8 we're developing and to see how that can work.
9 So this is the last one of these, and I'll get
10 into more specifics of the next steps when I
11 go through my presentation.

12 We appreciate everybody's thoughts
13 and helpful comments as we go through this.
14 We have set up a Regulatory Working Group with
15 state, federal and tribal members. I would
16 like to acknowledge folks that are here, Dr.
17 Jim Watson from Mississippi is a Working Group
18 Member and he'll be giving an update on the
19 Working Group. I believe also Brian Thomas,
20 a tribal member, was scheduled to be here.

21 MS. MILLIS: He's here.

22 DR. FERGUSON: Anyway, also, even

1 though Dr. Eldridge is not in the room, we
2 would like to acknowledge him and his help in
3 setting this up. And I was then going to
4 introduce him to do his presentation, but we
5 will --

6 TABLE SPOKESMAN: He's looking for
7 a laser pointer.

8 DR. FERGUSON: And we found a
9 laser pointer, but now we've lost Dr.
10 Eldridge.

11 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Could we start a
12 trace back on Dr. Eldridge?

13 DR. FERGUSON: I was thinking we
14 could do that. We'll see how long it will
15 take. I feel like I should tell a joke, but
16 I'm really bad at jokes, so we'll let that go.
17 If anybody would like to come up here, please
18 feel free.

19 MS. MILLIS: While we're waiting,
20 let me just call your attention to some of the
21 resources that are available for you in your
22 packet.

1 First of all, we have the
2 presentation that Dr. Eldridge will be giving
3 in just a minute, there's slides of that, and
4 then the words that you'll hear from Dr.
5 Ferguson, as well as from the Traceability
6 Working Group, that's in another presentation
7 here.

8 And then a very useful document is
9 the Animal Disease Traceability Framework, and
10 it talks about the current thinking in USDA
11 about that framework and gives you a lot of
12 details about that.

13 And then there's another document
14 that's a resource for you about the official
15 eartags and the criteria and options for
16 those. And one of the documents that you have
17 also has the list of the Working Group Members
18 so that you can have those.

19 So how have we done on locating
20 Dr. Eldridge now?

21 TABLE SPOKESMAN: He's been
22 traced.

1 MS. MILLIS: Excellent. That took
2 just minutes.

3 Dr. Eldridge, I'm going to turn
4 the floor over to you now.

5 DR. ELDRIDGE: Have you been
6 ad-libbing, is that what's been going on?

7 MS. MILLIS: No, I found a
8 microphone that was live, and so I was in my
9 element.

10 DR. ELDRIDGE: Well, good morning,
11 all. I'd like to thank everybody for coming.
12 Especially, I want to thank USDA for coming to
13 our state for the second time. Ya'll listened
14 to what folks throughout the country told you,
15 you changed the ways and you're back.

16 I also want to recognize, I know
17 Dr. Watson is one member here, but the members
18 of the Working Group that spent a lot of time
19 on how this should look, and they're going to
20 present information for you today. And the
21 goal today is to look at the Animal Disease
22 Traceability format, look at the regulatory

1 and the performance standards, and then get
2 ya'll's comments.

3 So when Neil Hammerschmidt asked
4 me to say a few words, I thought, what in the
5 world would I say? And then I got to
6 thinking, you know, there are 50 states, 50
7 state veterinarians, and I've visited with a
8 lot of them, every one has got a little
9 different idea and a little different
10 resources and so forth.

11 So my goal today is, what I'm
12 going to do is -- how do I make this thing
13 advance, there we go -- is to talk about the
14 need for an animal traceability assessment,
15 the cost, and look at our state and other
16 states and other countries. When a system is
17 not available, we look at the electronic
18 database that we've developed and the efforts
19 we've tried to do, recognizing what we need to
20 do for traceability, and then look at the
21 resources needed to do that in this state.

22 And to start with, I'll tell you

1 that the Animal Services Mission is to protect
2 and enhance animal health, human health, and
3 the economic vitality of the state, provide
4 ownership asset protection, which is brand,
5 and we use brand as one of the ways, one of
6 the methods of traceability in this state.

7 And the focus is on zoonotic
8 disease, diseases transferred from animal to
9 man, and rapidly spreading diseases in the
10 animal population, so I would like to go back
11 to when I came here, came to this position.
12 I very quickly realized that there were six
13 animal health events that they were talking
14 about in the United States in 2004, and three
15 of them involved Washington.

16 I went to U.S. Animal Health and I
17 said, well, what's this all about, what's the
18 risk? And I was told to go back to my state
19 and do a risk assessment, to look at the
20 vulnerability. And so we looked, and we found
21 that we're one of few states that have an
22 international border and a thriving seaport,

1 and that seaport receives shipments from all
2 over the world and we ship those shipments all
3 over the United States.

4 And we looked, then, at the cost
5 of adverse animal health events that occurred
6 in other states and other countries and what
7 the negative economic impact was, how it
8 affected the livestock industry, how it
9 affected the economy.

10 We also looked at the
11 ramifications of losing free status. Now
12 there's a change in things today, but at that
13 time, free status was pretty coveted. That
14 meant that I could allow you all and other
15 states and other countries, allow you all
16 movement without a lot of restrictions.

17 And we looked at the fact, and
18 folks told me, we had very good folks, and
19 they said, we're firemen. What does that
20 mean? Well, we wait until an event happens
21 and then we go trace it or do whatever it
22 takes necessary. And it didn't take very long

1 to think about that with what the risk was, we
2 had to change our ways of going. We had to
3 have a proactive approach, rather than a
4 reactive approach. We had to develop a system
5 that would do early identification and quick
6 containment if we were ever to get confidence
7 in our trading partners.

8 Some real world examples are,
9 gosh, folks, a very high percentage of
10 diseases humans get come from animals. And
11 the other thing we looked at, because it
12 occurred in our state, we had the BSE cow, and
13 we looked at the domestic, the impact of the
14 domestic market and the impact on our
15 international markets on just what one cow did
16 to us. And that really, the first five days
17 after that cow was identified in our state, we
18 quickly traced it back to the cow, but the
19 first five days, that market dropped, the
20 cattle market dropped in the United States to
21 14 percent, which translates to about \$31
22 billion.

1 The market came back, but it
2 didn't come back to those folks. Those folks
3 had to sell that product during that time,
4 took less dollars.

5 The other thing that we looked at
6 was the international market. Before that cow
7 was identified, we had about ten percent of
8 our product, these products, shipped
9 internationally. Over the next few months,
10 when our export partners figured out we didn't
11 find all of the cows that ate the same feed in
12 Canada that came into the United States, we
13 didn't find them, our export market dropped
14 below two percent.

15 And, of course, translation in the
16 dollars is they're off to the side that ya'll
17 can read. We fast forward to today, Foot and
18 Mouth Disease, and how it transmitted from
19 China to Korea on worker's clothing and it was
20 in Japan, several in this room called and
21 said, what are you doing about this?

22 And if you look at the negative

1 economic impact of the livestock industry in
2 Japan, it's a pretty significant deal. If you
3 go back and look at what Foot and Mouth
4 Disease did to the United Kingdom in the first
5 part of this decade and the realization that
6 it was only the cost to the industry, the cost
7 to the economy was second only to World War
8 II, it was a pretty significant event, so we
9 looked at some lessons learned from Japan.

10 By the time they diagnosed it,
11 about ten days in, they looked at it and did
12 this and that, and it takes about that long,
13 by the time they got it diagnosed, it had
14 already spread to ten ranches. Folks, we
15 better have a system in place if we're going
16 to do early identification and quick
17 containment.

18 Now this is an old slide, and I'm
19 sure a lot of you have seen it. For those of
20 you that haven't, and those that I need to
21 remind, it's actually a simulated introduction
22 of Foot and Mouth Disease in five places in

1 the swine population in the United States.

2 We tracked it for 30 days on the
3 movements of swine, and if you fast forward 30
4 days, the estimate is that if we do stop
5 movement on day eight of that introduction, we
6 would depopulate 23.6 million animals in the
7 United States.

8 Now you notice that Washington
9 isn't involved there. So I got to thinking,
10 well, what are we doing, what's our movement?
11 So we took our brand program and we took a
12 sale yard in the center part of the state, one
13 day, and the blue dots were the last stop of
14 where the cattle came from into that sale that
15 day; the red dots are where they went in our
16 state, and down at the bottom you see blue
17 trucks and red trucks, those were the
18 out-of-state movements.

19 We went the next day to another
20 sale barn, and the same thing, the blue dots,
21 the red dots, the blue trucks and the red
22 trucks. We very quickly realized we covered

1 the state of Washington and most of the west
2 in two days in animal movements so that the
3 end result and the message was, we're moving
4 animals farther and faster than we ever have
5 before, and we've got to have a proactive
6 approach.

7 One of the things we did is we
8 realized that, you know, if something comes
9 into our state, we might not be able to stop
10 that from coming in, although we set up the
11 requirements every day that's designed to do
12 that, but if we don't get it done, we need to
13 have a system in place so that we can identify
14 it quickly and contain it.

15 One of the things that we set in
16 place was our field veterinarians, when we get
17 a report from one of ya'll, from our
18 veterinarians, private practitioners, we'll be
19 there in four hours to take samples and get it
20 done.

21 Another thing that we did, because
22 I very quickly realized that it was several

1 days before I got the laboratory results that
2 told me whether I had something or not, and
3 that's not a very good thing, to be sitting
4 there trying to sleep at night, wondering if
5 you're doing right or if something is getting
6 away from you.

7 So we contacted the USDA, worked
8 with the USDA, and got the ability to split
9 samples and send them to our laboratory, and
10 I've used this several times. I can tell you,
11 I can get results in eight to twelve hours.
12 Now they're preliminary results and the
13 National Veterinary Services Laboratory will
14 make that result, but I still have information
15 based on science to make decisions with.
16 These are things we put in place since 2004.

17 One of the other things we looked
18 at was how, with our paper-based system, how
19 quick we could retrieve the information. And
20 I'll show you a little bit more about the
21 paper-based system in a minute, but right now
22 if an event happened within the last year, we

1 estimate it would take us two business days to
2 get the information we need. And if it had
3 occurred over a year ago, we're looking at
4 five days, simply because it's archived, and
5 then we've got to sort through the papers.

6 Now then, we've done limited
7 electronic entries and have that information
8 in a limited fashion, and I can tell you, we
9 have demonstrated several times that within 15
10 minutes we know all that information, but it's
11 only as good as the information you put in,
12 the data you put in.

13 And here's an example, and a lot
14 of you know about this, but in 2008, two
15 heifers were diagnosed within a month of one
16 another of being positive for Tuberculosis.
17 We very quickly went and looked at the
18 information that we had entered and traced it
19 back to Canada, where it came across and where
20 it went.

21 We went to that feed yard and they
22 had excellent records. We were able to show,

1 not only USDA but other states and our trading
2 partners, that those two animals never
3 commingled with Washington cattle. It's a big
4 deal because had they have done that, we would
5 have been looking in Washington and maybe they
6 spread the disease and got it from our
7 Washington cattle. We were able to prove
8 that, and it went back to Canada and, of
9 course, they're still doing epidemiological
10 investigations of where it happened, where it
11 came from.

12 I told you that we wanted to do
13 the four-hour response, and we've done this,
14 and I work with our USDA partners where we
15 stationed four animal disease dietitians
16 throughout the state and we're able to
17 respond. And I'm so pleased to be able to
18 work with Dr. Huntley and the response that
19 he's done with us, we're just a team, USDA and
20 NWCA.

21 So things have changed. When I
22 first told you we talked about free status,

1 that's not the way it's going to happen in the
2 future. What's going to happen in the future
3 is other states, USDA, and other countries are
4 going to come in and look, if we have an
5 event, an animal health event, and they're
6 going to look at us and say, can you tell us
7 where that disease came from and where it went
8 and can you contain it?

9 If we can do those things and have
10 it in a small area, the rest of your animals
11 in this state will be able to move with no
12 movement restrictions. If we cannot, quite
13 likely there will be movement restrictions put
14 on the whole state.

15 So what does it cost to have
16 movement restrictions put on? Other states
17 and ranchers from other events tell us this --
18 it's somewhere around ten cents in the market.
19 That ends up being about \$50 of a 500-pound
20 calf profit, a lot of years. The ranchers
21 tell us it's \$8 to \$10 every time they run an
22 animal through a chute to test it, and we have

1 multiple tests, TB and those others. And the
2 other states and the USDA tell us that the
3 cost is somewhere, to the state and federal
4 costs, depending upon the event, somewhere
5 between \$5 million and \$55 million dollars.

6 The estimate in Washington, and
7 it's purely an estimate, somewhere around \$6.4
8 million dollars if we get a negative adverse
9 animal health event. If we find TB, where
10 we're looking to testing 45,000 head of
11 cattle.

12 So we looked at what we were
13 doing. These are 2009 numbers in the state of
14 Washington, but we handle about 60,000
15 import/export documents in a year, about
16 30,000 vaccination documents, and test records
17 on top of that. We import just a little under
18 a half a million cattle, and we determine all
19 of this by the permitting system that we set
20 entry requirements designed to do disease
21 control, keep disease out of the state.

22 Another thing we looked at is how

1 many cattle do our brand inspectors look at a
2 year, and it varies, depending upon how the
3 cattle cycles and things, but between 500,000
4 and 650,000 inspections a year that our folks
5 on the ground will see.

6 So we go through the manual
7 documents and what that takes. We looked at
8 this, and today we have a limited electronic
9 information that we've put into place, and
10 very shortly, we will have a database that's
11 in the final stages of development that we
12 will be able to enter information in and
13 retrieve information out. I'll go over that
14 a little bit with you.

15 But here's what goes on. Here's
16 why I wanted the pointer. There's the permit,
17 entry permit from my office, that's recorded
18 on a health certificate, individual animal
19 identification is recorded on that health
20 certificate and, of course, this is an
21 international move, so we have a border
22 document.

1 Now then, those two, and I'm not
2 real proud of this, but I wanted to show it to
3 you because it illustrates a lot of things.
4 First off, this is the Certificate of
5 Veterinary Inspection that I issued for some
6 cattle coming into Washington in 2003. It has
7 the entry permit from the state, it has the
8 Brand Inspection Certificate, it has where it
9 came from, where it went, has individual
10 animal identification, back tag and silver
11 eartag, vaccination status, the age of the
12 animal, the breed and the sex, so there's a
13 lot of information there.

14 This is what I wanted to point out
15 to you, and I remember this really, you notice
16 these are longhorn cattle, they got big long
17 horns and don't go through the chute very
18 easy. And when I'm signing this document, all
19 of a sudden I look, holy gosh, this is
20 82VEH-1427 -- oops, this is 82VHE. Have we
21 transposed numbers?

22 Folks, that happens every day in

1 this system. The noise of the chutes, the
2 cattle bawling, people moving, this and that,
3 do we get it written down right every time,
4 no. So we went and got this cow back, about
5 10:30 at night and, indeed, it was that. This
6 was 82VEH and this was 82VHE, is it a V or D?
7 We got it right that time, but with this
8 system, expect us to make some mistakes.
9 Folks transpose numbers, maybe you don't hear
10 right, is it D or V, you know, all of those
11 things are downsides of what we're trying to
12 do today.

13 Now I've got to tell you, I've
14 been doing this for 20 years, I've been
15 getting this information, but it's in files
16 someplace.

17 So another thing in Washington is
18 in 2006, the legislature established a
19 20-member advisory committee to tell us how
20 Animal Disease Traceability was going to look
21 like in the state of Washington.

22 Twenty members across the cattle

1 industry, because the focus is on cattle, they
2 recognize that was high risk and they said,
3 start out there. Twenty members, like herding
4 cattle, and they appointed me chairman, and we
5 met for about a year and a half. We didn't
6 agree on a lot of things, but we agreed on a
7 few things, at least the majority of the folks
8 did.

9 They recommended that we establish
10 a separate state database, that we kept our
11 information secure in the state of Washington
12 and shared it only when there needed to be an
13 investigation or a trace.

14 They also said, use the existing
15 information you have today, including that,
16 and then, as technology comes along to make it
17 cost effective, being able to use it.

18 They said a funding mechanism
19 should be transaction-based across the
20 industry, that 50 percent of it should be
21 borne by the state general fund and 50 percent
22 should be borne by the industry.

1 So here's the schematic drawing of
2 what we have in the final stages of
3 development today. We have information, like
4 individual animal information; contact
5 information; animal movement information; the
6 entry permits; producers; we have health
7 certificates; we have test results; and we
8 have brand inspections.

9 To give you an idea, a brand
10 inspector, with this system, that would be
11 able to reach out, and if there's electronic
12 identification there, read that with a reader
13 and immediately records it on that Brand
14 Inspection Certificate so we know that
15 individual animal was there.

16 But a system like this is only as
17 good as the information that's in it. So I
18 want to be clear, our focus has been, and in
19 the past, folks talk about individual animal
20 identification, how are we going to do that?
21 That's a tool used in Animal Disease
22 Traceability, but it's not the whole animal,

1 but it's a tool to be used and we need to keep
2 that in mind.

3 The traceability really is where
4 it came from and where it went. That's really
5 the question that folks ask me and I want to
6 know, when we find, we've got to do trace
7 backs and, folks, we do this every day. We
8 get reports from slaughter or from other
9 states. You might have got this. We've spent
10 a huge amount of time today doing what would
11 be a lot easier if we had credible, accurate
12 information.

13 One of the things that folks ask
14 me, because I'm out there, I won't have the
15 money with these harsh economic times and
16 money going away, we've got to figure out a
17 way to put the information in. Data entry,
18 database maintenance, tag dispenser all cost
19 money we don't have today, and the industry
20 folks come back and say, where is the cost
21 benefit?

22 And my answer would be, go look at

1 what's happened when we don't have a system in
2 place. There's a huge economic impact, not
3 only for the livestock industry, but to the
4 economy. And, really, to me, you would be
5 thinking about this would be like an insurance
6 premium, let's do this so we don't end up with
7 catastrophic events.

8 As we go forward with the system,
9 it's got to be all diseases and it's got to be
10 all species. Folks, the diseases we deal
11 with, Foot and Mouth Disease, that's one,
12 sheep, hogs, whatever, it's horses, we need to
13 be able to have the ability to find out where
14 a disease came from, where it went so we could
15 do early identification and quick containment.

16 The cost benefit, the best answer
17 I have is if we can provide other states, the
18 USDA, and other countries the confidence that
19 we have an event, we can contain it, and we
20 won't be shipping them infected animals, we'll
21 be able to move freely.

22 So at the end of the day, our deal

1 is to protect animal health, human health, and
2 the economic vitality of this state and this
3 country. It comes home hard to me when you
4 look at the costs associated with World War
5 II.

6 So that's kind of my message to
7 start this off. This says a lot right here.
8 This says we can all share in the cheese, but
9 we can all be under the mouse trap. And I
10 would tell you this -- if one part of this,
11 you're all in this together, if one part of
12 this industry decides it isn't going to affect
13 me, we're all going to be in trouble, and
14 that's pretty much what I've got to say. I'll
15 be glad to answer any questions if you have
16 any.

17 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, Dr.
18 Eldridge. And now I will turn the floor back
19 to Lisa Ferguson and she's going to talk about
20 the Animal Traceability Framework.

21 MS. FERGUSON: Thanks, Dr.
22 Eldridge, I appreciate all that information.

1 I would like to go through and just really get
2 to kind of the meat of what we're talking
3 about here and give you an update and current
4 thinking on the proposed rule. I'll start off
5 with this presentation, and then Dr. Watson,
6 a Working Group Member, will give the report
7 from the Working Group with a few more
8 specifics.

9 So let's start off and go back a
10 bit and just review the principles of the new
11 framework. This is based on the secretary's
12 announcement back in February of this year.
13 And when the secretary made this announcement,
14 this responds to the concerns that we heard
15 through the listening sessions, through all of
16 our efforts over the past couple of years. We
17 heard those concerns, and what we've come up
18 with, hopefully, will pave the way forward to
19 support and respect the work of all the
20 farmers and ranchers and producers out there.

21 Through this framework we hope to
22 implement a flexible yet coordinated approach.

1 We want this approach to embrace the strengths
2 and expertise of those folks at the local
3 levels -- states, tribes, and most
4 importantly, producers.

5 One important point there, and
6 what we heard repeatedly, we would like to
7 emphasize that key to this approach,
8 producers' data will be controlled at the
9 discretion of the state or tribe. I would
10 also like to emphasize that this framework
11 applies only to animals moving interstate. It
12 will apply to all farm-raised livestock and
13 poultry, with some exemptions, but if folks
14 are only raising animals locally, they're not
15 moving across state lines, it doesn't apply.

16 Our priority at this time in the
17 framework is the cattle sector. This is where
18 we have a significant void. We recognize that
19 vertically-integrated industries -- poultry
20 independent industry, the major component of
21 the commercial swine industry -- these folks
22 have traceability down, but our cattle sector,

1 we do have, that's where we need to work.

2 We've had successful traceability
3 through the ID methods that we've used in
4 disease eradication programs, tuberculosis and
5 TB program. We heard from everybody that they
6 support the solutions using those previous
7 efforts, so we're going to reestablish the use
8 of some of those basic methods that we used
9 through those programs. Those are proven to
10 be successful and are widely accepted.

11 Again, I know this is going to
12 seem like we're focusing on the cattle
13 industry, but I think most of you guys are
14 actually cattle folks here. Actually, let me
15 just ask a question while we're here. Do we
16 have anybody that's interested in sheep and
17 goats here? One. Yeah. How about swine?
18 Poultry, okay, we very rarely get poultry
19 folks coming to these meetings anyway. We'll
20 focus on cattle.

21 Anyway, to ensure that we have the
22 greatest acceptance through this program,

1 we're going to build on real basic ID methods,
2 the brite tags, those little nine character
3 alphanumeric silver tags will help provide the
4 solution.

5 We need to get more cattle
6 identified as timely as possible and in a most
7 cost effective manner, and those brite tags
8 can help us get there. So we need to get
9 those tags in cow's ears and we need to record
10 those.

11 You guys heard Dr. Eldridge say ID
12 is not traceability, and that's an important
13 point. You can have tags in every animal's
14 ear, but if you don't have a way to correlate
15 that with where the animal has been, it really
16 doesn't do us a whole lot of good. We
17 recognize that these brite tags are a pretty
18 basic approach.

19 Some have advocated a greater
20 level of traceability, even full traceability,
21 we understand that. We hope that this
22 approach will allow for the use of advancing

1 technology, get us to that point. So
2 producers that wish to use RF ID tags for
3 official ID may continue to have that option,
4 but we want to get the more basic options out
5 there.

6 We emphasize what our commitments
7 are, and the secretary has emphasized many of
8 these in his statements since last February.
9 We recognize that states, tribes, industry
10 groups, producers all invested heavily in the
11 national animal ID system, worked hard to make
12 that succeed. As we transition to this new
13 framework, we want to capitalize on that
14 progress and determine what, out of that, we
15 can use in this new framework to support our
16 new approach.

17 One big component of that will be
18 some of the information systems, so we plan to
19 maintain all of our current systems and make
20 those available to states and tribes that wish
21 to use them as they develop and administer
22 their own local traceability plans.

1 Establishing, publishing, and
2 using standards are critical to the long-term
3 success, so we plan on supporting the
4 development, publication of data standards so
5 that we can define those data elements to
6 ensure compatibility of information systems.
7 We also plan on more clearly defining official
8 identification and the Interstate Certificate
9 of Veterinary Inspection or an ICVI.

10 We are committed to the
11 advancement of this framework through a
12 collaborative process. We've demonstrated
13 this through the public meetings that we have
14 held with ongoing dialogue with all
15 components, with our Working Group. We've had
16 conference calls with industries, have reached
17 out to those folks. We know that our state
18 counterparts are reaching out to local
19 producers also.

20 We are establishing, actually have
21 established the new Revised Secretary's
22 Advisory Committee on Animal Health. This

1 committee will have representatives from a
2 broad range of commodity organizations and of
3 communities and they'll help us in evaluating
4 and offering input on these efforts.

5 Finally, and perhaps most
6 importantly, we are committed to helping fund
7 the implementation of this framework. The
8 secretary has made a very strong commitment
9 that this would not be an unfunded mandate.

10 Let me briefly digress a bit and
11 talk about the relationship of this framework
12 with our veterinary services in 2015
13 initiative.

14 This 2015 represents VS, our
15 long-term strategic vision. We are attempting
16 to adopt the mission and role of the
17 veterinary services to meet the animal health
18 challenges of the 21st century, and we're also
19 adapting our programs, including Animal
20 Disease Traceability, in line with that
21 mission.

22 There's lots of things that are

1 driving this need for change -- changes within
2 the industry, technology, the speed of
3 business, emerging diseases, food safety
4 issues that we continue to see all over the
5 news, expansion of international trade,
6 additional requests for certification, and
7 increasing requests for certification, and
8 then last but not least, our budgets, which
9 often are becoming flat line budgets.

10 The expertise and core
11 capabilities of the VS position organization
12 are not only to meet these challenges but also
13 to become the national veterinary authority of
14 the U.S. We recognize that strong
15 partnerships are a crucial component of our
16 success over the past several years. They're
17 also a key component of our 2015 initiative
18 and we plan on continuing that partnership
19 with state and tribal animal health officials,
20 producers, veterinary organizations, research
21 organizations, anybody involved in the animal
22 agriculture community.

1 So let's get down to a few more
2 specifics about the rule-making and get down
3 to where we really would like your input.

4 Most of the principles of this new
5 framework will be codified through rule making
6 and they will be included in a new section of
7 the Code of Federal Regulations, or the CFR,
8 containing the requirements for the interstate
9 movement of livestock.

10 This traceability regulation will
11 be outcome-based. If folks are familiar with
12 our regulations in the past, they've been very
13 specific, telling you exactly this is what you
14 have to do. We're changing that a bit and we
15 want these regs to reflect the outcomes and
16 not as much the specifics.

17 So the outcomes are being
18 developed and defined as traceability
19 performance standards. The performance
20 standards will align well with and support our
21 outcome-based objective. Developing these
22 standards is what we have asked the Regulatory

1 Working Group to really help us with.

2 Let me emphasize again that the
3 regs will apply only to certain animals moving
4 interstate. We acknowledge that some animals
5 and some interstate movements warrant
6 exemption from the ID and the ICVI
7 requirements. Dr. Watson, when he gives the
8 report of the Working Group, will really
9 outline what the Working Group has considered
10 regarding those exemptions.

11 We do plan on maintaining our
12 disease program regulations, those that
13 include requirements for ID. Our Scrapie
14 program is a key example of that, where the ID
15 for sheep and goats has been a key component
16 of that program. We plan on maintaining that.
17 As appropriate, we may consolidate those
18 individual program regs in this new section.
19 We may just link to those. Any ID regulations
20 that are embodied in those programs will
21 supersede the new ID section regs.

22 Additionally, we will maintain

1 import regulations for livestock entering the
2 U.S. related to ID and traceability. More
3 specifically, all animals imported will
4 continue to be officially identified with the
5 animal's ID properly documented on import
6 certificates.

7 We have taken, and continue to
8 take, transparent steps to establish this
9 framework. We remain committed to public
10 engagement as we develop this regulation. The
11 Traceability Regulation Working Group has been
12 working on this since March, and we really
13 appreciate the efforts that they have done.
14 It's taken a lot of time, a lot of thought.
15 I think the group has somewhat struggled with
16 how to approach this, but they've done an
17 excellent job.

18 We have held these public
19 meetings, as I've mentioned, I believe we've
20 held seven of these to date, and they have
21 been very useful in obtaining input and
22 feedback.

1 We've also held conference calls
2 with industry sectors -- the cattle, swine,
3 poultry, sheep, and goats -- in those
4 conference calls, we've updated folks on the
5 progress of the framework and we've listened
6 to their concerns and suggestions as we try to
7 collectively move this forward.

8 The Working Group has reviewed and
9 considered all of this feedback as they've
10 made recommendations to us on content of the
11 proposed rule. In addition, members of the
12 Working Group, as here today, have attended
13 all of the public meetings and have been right
14 with us as we've gone through this process.

15 As I mentioned earlier, we have
16 reestablished the Secretary'S Advisory
17 Committee on Animal Health. On June 17th we
18 published a notice announcing the
19 establishment of that committee and seeking
20 nominations. We've gotten, actually the
21 nominations period closed on August 2nd, and
22 we have gotten more than a hundred nominations

1 for that committee, as well as numerous
2 inquiries from interested parties.

3 We are working with the
4 secretary's office in evaluating those
5 nominations and we will be making selections
6 to that committee here in the near future.

7 We plan on the advisory committee
8 appointing a subcommittee on traceability to
9 review the traceability activities and the
10 details of the framework. Industry, along
11 with state and tribal representatives, will be
12 members of this subcommittee, as they will be
13 members also of the main committee, and they
14 will give their feedback to the full advisory
15 committee.

16 So where are we going from here?
17 Actually, looking at this slide, this was good
18 for the first in this last round because this
19 says three more public meetings but, no, this
20 is the last public meeting. There is an
21 NIAA/USAHA Traceability Forum next Monday and
22 Tuesday in Denver. This is the Joint Strategy

1 Forum on Animal Disease Traceability. This
2 will be, hopefully, an excellent venue to
3 really share and discuss the content of this
4 rule, now that we've gotten enough specifics
5 around it to have everybody have a focused
6 discussion, and we look forward to
7 participating in this meeting.

8 We also plan on holding tribal
9 consultations over the next few months to
10 ensure that the tribes have a clear
11 understanding of what we're considering and to
12 get their feedback.

13 After all of these meetings, we'll
14 finalize the recommendations on the proposed
15 rule and then we will formally draft that
16 regulation.

17 This will be published in the CFR
18 as a proposal, possibly by April, 2011, that's
19 our target date at this point in time, but let
20 me emphasize that once we start a rule making
21 process, oftentimes there's much of that
22 process that's out of our control, so we can

1 set a target, but if it's not within our
2 direct control, there's not a whole lot we can
3 do.

4 We do have a commitment up through
5 the department and we're hoping to get this
6 out fairly quickly. We plan on having a 60 to
7 90-day comment period on that proposal so,
8 again, everybody will have a chance to submit
9 their thoughts and another opportunity to get
10 everybody's input.

11 Before I turn this over to Dr.
12 Watson, let me just reiterate that the
13 development of this regulation really has
14 evolved through public dialogue, and that
15 remains our objective in this meeting. We
16 really do want to hear everybody's input and
17 thoughts on where we are. We recognize that
18 as many eyes that have looked at this, there
19 might be things that we have missed or
20 additional suggestions that folks may have.

21 The report today will offer an
22 update on the efforts of the Working Group, a

1 summary of our current thinking on what should
2 be included in the content of the reg. We
3 need your input as we continue to develop this
4 regulation.

5 I believe, as Deb has noted, a
6 list of Working Group Members is included in
7 your packet, and we'd really like to recognize
8 the Working Group's accomplishments, all the
9 time and effort they have put forward, they've
10 been well received, done an excellent job.

11 So let me turn this over to Dr.
12 Watson to give the Working Group report, and
13 when he is done, then I'll do a few wrap-up
14 remarks at the end.

15 TABLE SPOKESPERSON: You want us
16 to wait until this section is done in terms of
17 a question on your presentation?

18 DR. FERGUSON: Yes, wait until the
19 end.

20 DR. WATSON: Thank you, Dr.
21 Ferguson.

22 As she mentioned, I'm Jim Watson,

1 I'm a state veterinarian in Mississippi, and
2 one of I think seven state veterinarians that
3 are part of the Working Group. There were
4 state veterinarians, representatives from
5 tribes, and then other USDA special, I guess,
6 expert subject matter kind of folks, so it's
7 a fairly large Working Group. We've spent a
8 lot of time, weekly conference calls, a couple
9 of face-to-face meetings, and then trying to
10 make as many of these public hearing sessions
11 as possible.

12 So I think it's been good that,
13 from my perspective, as a state veterinarian,
14 as Dr. Eldridge has mentioned, we as state
15 veterinarians very strongly support the idea
16 of the need of traceability, recognizing
17 though, that each of our states operate from
18 the commodity standpoint a little bit
19 differently than the way ya'll operate your
20 cattle operations out here a little different
21 than we do in the southeast, so as we work
22 through the process in trying to develop a

1 process that's going to work across the
2 country, I hope it's been valuable to get our
3 input as well as the others.

4 From a Working Group standpoint,
5 the primary objectives were to give input on
6 these issues of performance standards, how do
7 you evaluate your tracing capability, and then
8 one we still continue to kind of struggle with
9 are the consequences for noncompliance. You
10 know, if you can't meet these standards as we
11 move forward, the regulation is supposed to be
12 performance-based, so if we can't meet those
13 performance standards as a state, how is that
14 going to impact you as an industry within that
15 state, as well as giving some other additional
16 input into specifics on animal ID and
17 movements of animals.

18 As we've stated, the regulation
19 will address that all livestock moved
20 interstate must be accompanied by an ICVI or
21 health certificate. I think it has also been
22 mentioned, primarily though, we're going to

1 focus on cattle. I think many of the other
2 groups, the issues are already fairly well
3 worked out. Most of these requirements, what
4 we're going to be talking about here are going
5 to be specific for the cattle industry.

6 So we're going to, the regulation
7 will require identification, official eartag.
8 There will be exceptions for a group or a lot
9 ID. I think because of the definition of a
10 group or a lot ID being that a set of animals
11 that stay together all the way through their
12 production life cycle and are not commingled
13 probably won't impact the cattle folks, it
14 won't be used as much as the swine and poultry
15 industry.

16 And we'll talk about official
17 eartags, what is it, an identification tag
18 that's an official approved. You see some
19 things here, the National Uniform Eartagging
20 System, the Animal Identification number can
21 be a premises or a flock-based number system.

22 And I think we've already talked

1 about the rule hopefully will be published in
2 April, and then the final rule, 12 to 15
3 months later, after a comments period. So
4 what we anticipate happening will be a
5 two-phase process of bringing the rule
6 on-line. Step I, basically because we've, if
7 you remember, the rule would say that all
8 animals need to be identified, but Step I
9 would delay the inclusion of feeder cattle and
10 bring in an educational period, try to get
11 everybody on-line.

12 With regards to backtags, you can
13 see here that the rule did not include
14 backtags as official ID. I think we all
15 recognize the importance of backtags. We use
16 them, there will be, in the Step I, for direct
17 to slaughter animals, backtags will be able to
18 be used, and then in Step II, there will be
19 still some exemptions for ID, but the feeder
20 cattle exclusion will go away.

21 And then at that point, in the
22 Step II, official ID will be needed for direct

1 to slaughter animals. I think we recognized
2 that, as I mentioned, the backtags are
3 important. They do work well where they work,
4 but because of their ability to come off
5 easily, you know, we struggle and run into
6 issues with them if we rely on them completely
7 as an identification, as the sole official ID.

8 So here you see the requirements
9 under Step I, sexually intact cattle, actually
10 cattle greater than 18 months of age, all
11 dairy cattle, cattle used for rodeos or
12 recreation, cattle moving to shows or
13 exhibitions. So the exemptions would be
14 steers and spayed heifers, with the exception
15 that we mentioned -- the rodeo, recreation --
16 then cattle moved directly to slaughter,
17 cattle moved to custom slaughter facilities,
18 commuter herds -- we don't really use these in
19 the southeast, you all are much more familiar.

20 A lot of folks in our part of the
21 country were a little bit unfamiliar with
22 this, so if you've got a herd, have a herd and

1 property on, in two states, the ability to,
2 with a commuter herd agreement, being able to
3 move your animals between your properties,
4 across the state line.

5 Cattle may be moved interstate
6 between any two tribes, as agreed upon, so
7 there would be some flexibility here built in
8 that animal health officials, state animal
9 health officials or tribes can work out
10 between any two groups, an official ID method.

11 And then, if you're, for example,
12 I know in our state, we have some spots in
13 Mississippi where you go through Louisiana or
14 sometimes Alabama to get back into the state,
15 so if you're just transiting through another
16 state but coming back into your original
17 state, then that would not be considered
18 interstate movement with the requirement for
19 official ID.

20 And so we see here, then, once we
21 move to Step II, then you can see there you
22 lose the exemption for the steers and spayed

1 heifers and the direct to slaughter animals
2 being exempt from official ID, so basically
3 what we see listed below then would be the
4 remaining exemptions for not needing official
5 animal ID to move interstate.

6 So a custom slaughter facility,
7 where your animals are being carried across
8 the state line to a slaughter facility,
9 they're for your consumption, commuter herds
10 again, and then that moving interstate where
11 there are, where two state officials have
12 agreed on another means of ID between
13 themselves.

14 I think in your packet, you were
15 given a handout as well that talks about
16 animal ID tags, and that's a good resource to
17 look at and talk about some of the different
18 tags and things when you get a chance to look
19 at that, I just thought I would mention that
20 here.

21 So with regard to official ID
22 tags, I think we all recognize that we need

1 some sort of uniformity standardization so
2 that when we see a tag, we can validate that
3 it is an official tag. So here, the
4 requirements that have been outlined, they
5 need to have a U.S. shield, and the VS, as you
6 see here, will be primarily, as has already
7 been mentioned, using the brite tags, the
8 Brucellosis tags.

9 And up until this point, producers
10 haven't really been able to get those
11 directly. The source of those tags currently
12 is either from your accredited veterinarian or
13 from a state or federal animal health
14 official. But under these new regulations,
15 there would be an option for a producer to get
16 those tags themselves through the channels and
17 be able to put those in themselves. So,
18 again, the ability, then, to make sure that
19 the tags that we're looking at are official
20 tags.

21 And one of the other, the bottom
22 bullet there is an important piece, in that it

1 prohibits multiple official ID tags. And
2 where a tag already exists in on animal, it's
3 easier to put a new tag on than to fill out
4 that health certificate for an animal to move.

5 Oftentimes, one, two, or, you
6 know, more tags are put in an animal's ear
7 just to comply with the requirement that a
8 state may have. You've got an official ID tag
9 in there, but in reality you've got two or
10 three tags in there, and that makes tracing
11 that animal very difficult if all three of
12 those tags aren't always listed on the health
13 certificate or whatever other document is
14 being used.

15 All right, the second phase of
16 this, as we move from the identification
17 requirements, is that these animals moving
18 interstate are also going to have to have a
19 health certificate, an ICVI, that would not
20 have a phase-in requirement, although I think,
21 I can't think, really, of too many instances
22 where this would be much of a change.

1 Everybody is currently having to have a ICVI
2 to move cattle interstate anyway, so I don't
3 think this will be a real change from what
4 practically happens now on a day-to-day basis.

5 The main thing would be the middle
6 bullet, if there is a class of animal exempt
7 from official ID, then that ICVI, the
8 veterinarian would need to reference that.

9 For example, in the case of the feeder cattle
10 or direct to slaughter, you would just note on
11 there that this class of animal is exempt at
12 this time for individual animal ID.

13 And I think it's important, this
14 last bullet, once Step II comes into effect
15 and there is no more exemption for the tagging
16 of feeder cattle, the intent is that there
17 would not be a requirement to actually record
18 those eartags of feeder cattle.

19 Now for the other classes of
20 cattle, they would all need to be individually
21 listed on that health certificate. For feeder
22 cattle, that would not be required, they would

1 just have to, the certificate would just have
2 to note that all of those animals did have
3 official ID.

4 So here are the exemptions for
5 certificates. Directly to slaughter or moved
6 to a livestock facility that handles slaughter
7 only animals, in which case, owner-shipper
8 statements are required and the individual ID
9 wouldn't need to be recorded on the
10 certificate or on that owner-shipper
11 statement.

12 The other exemption would be, I
13 know in our state, we've got four or five sale
14 barns that are owned right on the state line.
15 For example, we're in Mississippi and a
16 producer wants to bring his cattle from
17 Alabama to the stock yard in Mississippi, you
18 wouldn't have to have a health certificate to
19 move your animals into the stock yard, but in
20 order for them to leave the stock yard and go
21 into interstate movement, then they would need
22 to be issued an ICVI, so it wouldn't put an

1 extra burden on a producer just to get a
2 health certificate to load his cattle up to
3 take it to a stock yard across the state line
4 that may be ten miles from his farm.

5 And then exemptions, if you're
6 moving from your farm to a veterinary facility
7 and then moving them back, that would also not
8 require a certificate of veterinarian
9 inspection.

10 Commuter herds, we mentioned that
11 under the ID portion, a commuter herd would
12 not be required to have an ICVI, but you would
13 have to have a copy of the commuter herd
14 agreement. And then again, some flexibility
15 is built in the system, as with the animal ID,
16 where two states could have an agreement on
17 alternate forms of ID and then two state
18 health animal officials or state and tribes
19 could have an agreement as to an alternate
20 form of identification, other than an ICVI.

21 So we kind of moved, that's kind
22 of just the framework of the regulation in

1 terms of what has to happen, and so now we get
2 to the performance standards here and begin to
3 talk about how we'll be measured and what are
4 the outcomes expected for a state to
5 accomplish the regulation, and so as it's
6 mentioned here, an outcome-based regulation.

7 The regulation doesn't tell us how
8 to do it, but it just gives the desired
9 outcome and evaluates all of our, each state
10 will need to, or tribe, will need to come up
11 with a traceability plan, and so evaluating
12 those equally and focusing on tracing animals,
13 not a specific disease, because most of the
14 time, you know, we're not, we don't, aren't
15 after a particular disease unless we have an
16 outbreak going on at that time.

17 So you'll see here, we have an
18 activity, the measurement, and then the
19 performance standard. We start with the
20 traceability unit. Each state will need to
21 define, or tribe, a traceability unit. As you
22 see there in the second bullet, that is just

1 the geographic location that a state or tribe
2 determines that they will do, whether that's
3 actually all the way down to the farm or a
4 sub-unit of a farm or whether it's as broad as
5 just the state or a tribe.

6 So we're going to all have to
7 determine how narrowly focused we're going to
8 make our definition of that traceability unit.

9 And so the bottom bullet there,
10 then, says that the USDA would then use that
11 definition a state chooses as potentially
12 that's how they would initially quarantine, in
13 the event of a disease outbreak. So if a
14 state chose to only use its state, the whole
15 state as its traceability unit, then
16 potentially the whole state would initially be
17 quarantined until the nature of the outbreak
18 could be determined, as opposed to if a state
19 chose to use a farm or a sub-unit of a farm as
20 its traceability unit, then only that small
21 section would be initially quarantined and
22 would not impact the rest of the state.

1 So the ability of a state to I
2 think, you know, you want to define the
3 smallest unit possible as your traceability
4 unit, but that puts a lot more pressure on us,
5 as state animal health officials, to determine
6 that we could indeed trace that animal back to
7 that more defined traceability unit.

8 This is where the fun starts.
9 This is kind of a busy slide and it just
10 outlines, I think, without spending a lot of
11 time on this because we have other slides that
12 will help explain it, but basically on the
13 left-hand side are the four performance
14 standards. It kind of goes through who is
15 going to do them, it talks a little bit about
16 it. On the right is the standard that you
17 will be held to. As you see there, 95 percent
18 notification within one business day.

19 Performance Standard No. 2 is
20 broken down into Phase 1 and 2 because it's a
21 little more difficult to accomplish and
22 currently many of us can't do it quickly. Dr.

1 Eldridge talked about, in his presentation,
2 the boxes of health certificates and having to
3 go to the state archives where we store old
4 records because we don't have a very large
5 office, so we have to give them a three or
6 five-day notice that we need boxes that are
7 within certain years.

8 In Mississippi, and in most
9 states, we don't currently have an electronic
10 base like you all are fortunate to have.
11 Everything is paper-based. It's going to take
12 us a pretty good amount of time to go back
13 anymore than six months and identify a health
14 certificate that may contain an animal that
15 we're trying to find and figure out how it got
16 into our state.

17 So, hopefully, over time, we'll be
18 able to move that from a paper base into an
19 electronic data phase so we can, in Phase 2,
20 be able to meet that standard within two
21 business days rather than taking five, seven,
22 ten or however long it takes us now to go find

1 those old scraps of health certificates and
2 veterinarians that may have records that could
3 be four, five, six years old, and have them go
4 back and try to help us sort it out.

5 Phase 3 is a little bit easier,
6 and then, so, anyway, we're going to go
7 through these. Here's an example, I think,
8 that will explain in better detail that chart.

9 So we're looking at an animal that
10 went from Wisconsin to Texas to California,
11 and so this kind of explains how those
12 performance standards worked. So you see, No.
13 1, the cow wound up in California, and at a
14 slaughter plant or on a TB test or whatever
15 the case may be, that animal showed up having
16 some disease, say TB.

17 So what happens then, in No. 1,
18 California reads the eartag on that animal and
19 either queries a database, or by looking at
20 it, determines that that animal is really a
21 Wisconsin animal, not a California animal, so
22 Performance Standard No. 1 is just to notify

1 Wisconsin that we have an animal that came
2 from your state that has a disease.

3 Then Performance Standard No. 2,
4 Wisconsin has the responsibility to determine
5 where that tag was applied. And so they were
6 given an eartag from California, and they need
7 to go find out who the tag was issued to, what
8 veterinarian or which one of their people, and
9 then was issued the tag and then was it put in
10 at a stock yard, was it vaccinated on the
11 farm, whatever the case may be. And then
12 while that's going on, California is also
13 trying to figure out how that Wisconsin animal
14 got into California.

15 Well, as it turns out they were
16 able to notified Texas that the animal came
17 from Texas into California, so that's
18 Performance Standard No. 3. And then it's the
19 responsibility of Texas to determine, once
20 they were given that information, where was
21 that animal shipped from in Texas to
22 California and link that to a Certificate of

1 Inspection.

2 So that kind of, in a little bit
3 of a picture format, gives you an
4 understanding of the different performance
5 standards and then the timelines that we have
6 to be able to accomplish that, so you can see
7 how important it is to not only just have
8 animals identified but to have that linked to
9 our Certificates of Inspection that will allow
10 us to figure out how it got into our state,
11 left our state, and where it originally came
12 from.

13 So this is just talking about how
14 you evaluate that. We were given the
15 regulation that tells us what we have to do,
16 outline the performance standards, and then
17 somehow the states have to be evaluated in
18 determining whether they can accomplish what
19 they said they could accomplish in their
20 traceability plan.

21 So what has been looked at and
22 proposed at this point is that a state, there

1 would be three traces. Each state would be
2 issued a traceability status of I, II, or III.
3 The species will be looked at separately.

4 Traceability Status I means you
5 were able to accomplish all of those four
6 aspects in the timeframe with which you were
7 given. Status II would be that you didn't
8 meet all of the performance standards but you
9 were able to do most of them, and so there's
10 going to be a time period that each year
11 you'll be evaluated and you would be given up
12 to three years to correct your deficiency.
13 Depending on which one of those performance
14 standards you weren't able to meet, it would
15 change what a state needed to do to make
16 changes.

17 And then, after year three, if you
18 still could not meet all of those performance
19 standards, then you would drop to a Status
20 III. And then that's where you get into the
21 noncompliance and the impact on the industry
22 to be able to freely move would be impacted.

1 And I don't know that all of these
2 are completely outlined yet, but examples
3 would be that, for the exemptions that are
4 there, those exemptions could be removed. For
5 example, we've said that feeder cattle have to
6 be identified but don't have to be listed on
7 a Certificate of Inspection.

8 Well, if a state says Traceability
9 Status III, one of the options might be that
10 you might have to identify all of the feeder
11 cattle on the Certificate of Inspection
12 because the states that your animals are going
13 to can't rely on your state to trace animals
14 if there is a disease exemption.

15 It's going to require a
16 partnership between industry and the state
17 animal health official within the state to be
18 able to support and to be able to meet the
19 performance standards so that our states don't
20 fall to this Traceability Status III.

21 And it's still being worked out,
22 the process of how the evaluation would occur,

1 who would do the evaluations, what the various
2 recommendations would be to correct your state
3 back to Status I.

4 So, basically, it's outcome-based,
5 and it's going to rely a lot on complete and
6 accurate ICVIs. You can read these. As I
7 said, I think that bottom one is working
8 collectively because the cattle industry is
9 going to be the one most negatively impacted
10 if the state can't maintain a Status I Level.

11 And so I think, in our state, it's
12 going to require the industry working together
13 with my agency, trying to get support from the
14 legislature for budgets, working with the USDA
15 to get, because most of this, you know, a lot
16 of this is going to rely on dollars to get
17 things done, whether it's to help get the
18 animals tagged, whether it's for the state to
19 be able to accurately input the data in our
20 case.

21 We had a little test exercise
22 among the states that were in the Working

1 Group, just to see how this would work, and
2 our state failed miserably because we were
3 just given a list of five or six eartags that
4 said, okay, these cows came, these are
5 Mississippi animals that wound up in Oklahoma
6 or Montana. You need to tell us how they got
7 there, and we had no other information.

8 So we had, some of these eartags
9 were vaccination tags of animals that are nine
10 and ten years old, so we had to try to go
11 back through nine years of records manually,
12 and we didn't know for sure if the animal went
13 straight from Mississippi to Montana -- it
14 could have gone to Texas and then Montana.

15 So in a paper-based system, it's
16 going to be very, very difficult to meet these
17 performance standards and we're going to have
18 to be able to input these things into an
19 electronic format where you can query that
20 number and figure out how that animal either
21 left your state, got into your state, so I see
22 from our standpoint in Mississippi, ya'll are

1 miles ahead of us. You already have a system
2 in place that you can begin using here in
3 Washington.

4 So compliance, see there, it's got
5 to track here.

6 Oh, I did get into your section
7 here? I wasn't paying attention.

8 DR. FERGUSON: You're probably
9 doing better than I could, so I wasn't going
10 to interrupt you. Anyway, compliance factors,
11 actually, is a critical component here. These
12 could include several items, such as
13 evaluating the proper administration of
14 official ID devices by animal health
15 officials, as well as industry, so we need to
16 maintain a complete and accurate record of any
17 official tag distributions. Those tags need
18 to be recognized at official items to maintain
19 those appropriate records.

20 With regard to 840 tags, if folks
21 are interested, we're going to continue with
22 the policy of entering those distribution

1 records into our Animal Identification
2 Management System. States or tribes would
3 need to maintain the distribution records for
4 those brite tags. We do plan on modifying the
5 Animal Identification Management System to
6 support that distribution of any ID devices,
7 and then states and tribes are welcome to use
8 that system as they so choose or they can come
9 up with their own system.

10 Meeting the requirement for
11 official ID is a key component here and a
12 priority, and that will require documenting
13 the percentage of livestock, officially ID,
14 that require official ID, when moving
15 interstate. Having enforcement protocols and
16 adequate resources clearly is crucial to this
17 and we want to work with all of our partners
18 in developing those protocols.

19 One key component that we've heard
20 repeatedly is concern in ensuring that
21 official identification is collected at
22 slaughter. We plan on working with our

1 colleagues in the Food Safety Inspection
2 Service on this issue. APHIS Veterinary
3 Services may be more actively engaged at the
4 plant to ensure the ID is collected. We're
5 also considering an interagency task force to
6 really look at that a bit more closely.

7 Additionally, we also need to more
8 closely oversee these ICVIs for shipments and
9 the completeness of information on the
10 certificates, including this requirement in
11 the regulations, in addition to our recently
12 revised National Veterinary Accreditation
13 Program. It gives us more of an opportunity
14 to take corrective action and do oversight as
15 necessary with accredited veterinarians.

16 Cooperative agreements, I know, is
17 a crucial component here. This is our method
18 of getting funding to the states to help
19 support their efforts. What we envision is
20 that each cooperator would have an
21 APHIS-Approved Animal Disease Traceability
22 Plan. This plan would describe the local

1 objectives, including the traceability unit.

2 The traceability unit, as Dr.
3 Watson described, defines that level of
4 traceability, could be down to an individual
5 herd, a single unit or it could be a county,
6 a township, the entire state. Federal funding
7 will be provided through those cooperative
8 agreements and we'll detail implementation
9 strategies that support that traceability
10 plan.

11 It's important to note that we
12 anticipate that those levels will be
13 proportionate with the projected cost of those
14 activities defined in the agreement. And a
15 crucial point here would align with achieving
16 and maintaining the defined traceability unit.
17 I think we all recognize that it takes far
18 more effort and far more resources to get that
19 traceability unit down to a smaller level and,
20 therefore, more funding would be provided
21 there, if that's what the cooperator's plan
22 is. If the cooperator's plan is to have the

1 traceability unit be very broad, then less
2 funding would be required to do that.

3 Just a few additional CFR issues,
4 additional things that will be in the regs to
5 clarify. We do plan on including a sunset
6 date in the proposed rule to transition away
7 from the use of manufacturer codes, and the
8 USA prefix within the animal ID numbering
9 system, so that means that on the effective
10 date of the rule, only the animal ID number
11 with the 840 prefix would be used for animals
12 not previously identified if those animals
13 required ID to move to another state.

14 The sunset date would avoid having
15 to retag animals, the ID number is a
16 manufacturer code and the USA prefix. We will
17 also add our own requirement for collection of
18 ID tags at slaughter. This is part of SSIS
19 regulations, but counsel has advised us that
20 we can always include it in our reg and have
21 more input into how that happens and how to
22 ensure that it does happen.

1 We plan to eliminate the reg that
2 disallows the use of the 840 tags on imported
3 livestock, while we recognize that the intent
4 of the reg, reidentifying those animals
5 oftentimes really is not practical, especially
6 if a producer or the animal health officials
7 want to identify those animals with an RF ID
8 tag.

9 Last, but definitely not least, we
10 will maintain the regulation that prohibits
11 the removal of official ID tags, except at
12 slaughter and look for ways to improve our
13 enforcement of this regulation. And that is
14 a summary of where we are at this point in
15 time.

16 Let me also take this opportunity
17 to draw your attention to a couple of things
18 in your packet. As Dr. Watson mentioned,
19 there's a handout that describes different
20 types of official IDs and our thinking on that
21 at this point in time. There's also a handout
22 that's in a more summary fashion and goes

1 through the traceability performance standards
2 and what would be in the regs, so if you don't
3 want to flip through piles of slides, you can
4 look at that handout to see what our thinking
5 is presented in a slightly different fashion.

6 And I believe actually if there's
7 an opportunity, if there's some questions to
8 help clarify what we've presented here, I'd be
9 glad to do so at this point.

10 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Thank you for
11 coming to Pasco and listening. I don't know
12 if you're familiar, if Dr. Eldridge has had an
13 opportunity to explain his database or the
14 process in detail, but given what you heard
15 from Dr. Eldridge's presentation earlier, is
16 it realistic for the industry here in
17 Washington State to expect some type of
18 cooperative agreement that will help fund the
19 data entry and maintenance of a Washington
20 State database that's going to deliver all of
21 the outcomes in a timely fashion like USDA is
22 looking for?

1 DR. FERGUSON: That's a very good
2 question. We're considering various things
3 that may or may not be covered in cooperative
4 agreements over the next few years. We're
5 also looking at developing data standards. I
6 could actually very easily see that that could
7 be included as long as there is that
8 capability for communication.

9 Actually, let's see if Neil wants
10 to add anything to that response.

11 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Certainly that
12 type of activity warrants inclusion in our
13 cooperative agreement funding because it
14 certainly supports having that information
15 retrievable, as Dr. Eldridge has stated. So
16 it's certainly very keen on having an
17 expenditure that would be then covered in our
18 agreement funding that would be allowable.
19 It's the state's decision on how to use those
20 funds.

21 MR. MORRIS: I'm Dave Morris, I
22 work on the traceability staff along with

1 Neil. Jack, when you asked about data entry,
2 for at least the past two years, that has been
3 approved and has been approved for expenditure
4 for providing support for infrastructure to
5 enter that data, so that's been going on for
6 at least two years.

7 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Is it safe to
8 assume that industry could, in our planning
9 efforts, look towards some federal support and
10 data entry on the CVI data that has been
11 talked about here where we've got the
12 individual IDs, whether it's a brite tag or
13 other official ID, if that's a component of
14 our system for an interstate movement?

15 MR. MORRIS: I agree with Lisa and
16 Neil and continue on, and that's certainly
17 something we can entertain.

18 TABLE SPOKESMAN: I have a couple
19 more questions. The second one, I'm trying to
20 be as quick as I can. There was discussion on
21 the prohibition of multiple tags, I guess
22 what's considered maybe a Christmas tree cow

1 where it's easier just to stick another tag in
2 the ear instead of documenting.

3 I was on one of the earlier
4 industry conference calls, and I do not recall
5 who the USDA official was, but at that time,
6 there was comment that there wasn't an issue
7 in USDA's mind at that time about multiple ID
8 tags, they thought the more the merrier.

9 The question that I have is, is
10 this prohibition or the comment, was this
11 something that came out of a subcommittee or
12 was this the USDA's opinion that one tag and
13 only one tag because industry has heard
14 differently from USDA spokespeople through the
15 process, and I understand we're not finalized
16 yet, but is there any type of a concrete
17 position there?

18 DR. FERGUSON: I think what you're
19 seeing is that as we take input throughout
20 this whole process, we give that input back to
21 the Working Group and they look at those and
22 then they make changes to their

1 recommendations, so what you've heard today is
2 the recommendation from the Working Group at
3 this point in time.

4 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Okay, the next
5 two are a lot quicker, and you touched a
6 little bit on it.

7 Has FSIS and APHIS had an
8 opportunity to talk on the labor component of
9 providing the manpower or the technology to
10 retire these tags at our packing plants or is
11 this a requirement that will fall on the state
12 Department of Agriculture in which these
13 federally-accredited plants reside?

14 DR. FERGUSON: We have not had
15 substantive discussions with our FSIS
16 colleagues. We recognize that they may
17 definitely have an issue with that. We plan
18 on having those discussions. In addition, I
19 noticed that if we include those in our regs,
20 that brings some more of the responsibility to
21 us, so we're looking at various ways to
22 approach that.

1 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One last
2 question, is the USDA considering allowing a
3 state code on these official ID tags like we
4 have with our Brucellosis tags to aid animal
5 health officials on a quick visual
6 identification of at least the application of
7 the device?

8 DR. FERGUSON: Yes.

9 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir. And
10 now what I'm going to suggest we do is take a
11 break. And I want to call to your attention
12 the question list on each of your tables
13 because I think that you may have other
14 questions in your mind and we will have an
15 opportunity specifically set aside in this
16 meeting to address those questions.

17 So I would like you to be adding
18 those and I see in first table has, and I
19 appreciate that. So let's take a 20-minute
20 break and come back here.

21 And what we're going to do, when
22 we come back, you may want to think about this

1 because you may want to move your things to a
2 different area, we want to break out into
3 several groups to have a meaningful discussion
4 around the tables about these traceability
5 standards that you've heard talk about this
6 morning. And so when we come back, I think it
7 will be 10 o'clock, we'll have that discussion
8 around our tables.

9 At each table, there will be
10 someone from USDA taking note of the
11 discussion there and we'll ask each table to
12 select a spokesperson from the table to just
13 report on what the general themes of the
14 discussions are, and we'll record those and
15 they'll be recorded by our court reporter
16 following those break-out discussions, and so
17 we'll see you back here at 10 o'clock, and be
18 sure to note your questions and be ready to
19 discuss those topics. Thanks.

20 MS. MILLIS: Welcome back. In
21 this next session, we're going to divide into
22 groups to discuss the questions that you see

1 up here. We're going to hear a little bit of
2 background on them from Dr. David Morris, and
3 what we'll do is, as we break out into our
4 discussion groups, because we have the whole
5 room to work with, we maybe will move
6 different groups to different ends here so
7 that we can hear each other. We found in one
8 of our sessions everybody clustered in one
9 area, and it was impossible to hear.

10 Dave, I'm going to turn the floor
11 over to you.

12 MR. MORRIS: Thanks, very much.

13 Yes, Willard.

14 TABLE SPOKESMAN: We have a few
15 more questions from the crowd, several guys
16 have come to me, they would like the whole
17 audience to hear it. We have a few more
18 questions.

19 MR. MORRIS: I'll let our
20 moderator --

21 MS. MILLIS: Questions about the
22 presentations from this morning, is that what

1 you're asking?

2 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Yes, ma'am.

3 MS. MILLIS: We can take a couple
4 questions, and then we want to have sufficient
5 time to discuss the performance standards at
6 length, so let me get over to you with a
7 microphone.

8 TABLE SPOKESMAN: My question is,
9 in the tags, I happen to be in animal health
10 distribution, and so how are we going to
11 handle traditional distribution on tags?

12 MR. MORRIS: Deb, I think what
13 I'll do here is Neil Hammerschmidt is familiar
14 with that and folks know that Neil is on the
15 traceability staff. Dr. Ferguson is here as
16 well, so we'll kind of tag team the original
17 presenters in terms of answering those
18 questions.

19 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Very good, and
20 if I miss your question, get me on track.

21 So we've got various tag, official
22 tags that we're looking at in that document.

1 We call it the National Uniform Eartagging
2 System, i.e., the brite tag. Those have
3 traditionally been handled through the
4 accredited veterinarian, for the most part,
5 and there's a protocol for that.

6 We are changing the protocol that
7 will enable the state to put in place a way of
8 having those tags distributed directly to a
9 producer. It'll be their call and it will be
10 at their direction how that process and
11 protocol is put in place, if in fact they want
12 to go there.

13 The 840 tag, the distribution will
14 be the same through our AIN managers that
15 we've used for the last several years. That
16 will be unchanged. Scrapie tags, unchanged.

17 Hit the mark?

18 TABLE SPOKESMAN: You answered it.

19 MS. MILLIS: Sir, you had a
20 question?

21 TABLE SPOKESMAN: It was mentioned
22 that, again, thank you guys for coming out, we

1 appreciate that.

2 When you talked about the Working
3 Group, what's the criteria for the Working
4 Group and is there, is it going to be across
5 the country as far as states, in other words,
6 will the state of Washington or Idaho or
7 Oregon, kind of our marketing district, will
8 there be some of those people selected and
9 kind of what your criteria for selection is,
10 who is going to be on the Working Group.

11 DR. FERGUSON: Do you mean the
12 Working Group or Secretary's Advisory
13 Committee?

14 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Either/or.

15 DR. FERGUSON: Okay, just to
16 clarify, the Regulatory Working Group, the
17 folks that are advising us, Jim Watson and
18 Brian Thomas are a member of now, the
19 membership in that group is, at this point in
20 time it's only state, tribal, and federal
21 folks, and that is in line with Federal
22 Advisory Committee Regulations.

1 And to get membership on that
2 committee, or that Working Group, excuse me,
3 we went through the National Assembly of
4 Animal Health Officials and asked that group
5 for recommendations with an appropriate
6 representation from a wide variety of states
7 with different types of animal populations.

8 Same thing, we asked the tribal
9 groups for representation, so we were asking
10 those groups for the representation.

11 On the Secretary'S Advisory
12 Committee, that is, that's actually the formal
13 way for industry then to try to promote
14 consensus and provide us formal advice on a
15 regulation before we publish it. And in the
16 announcement, and I don't know if I brought a
17 copy of that, but we listed about ten
18 different groups or something that we wanted
19 representation in.

20 Really, what we want is
21 representation from all the industry groups,
22 from other components, from under-served

1 communities, state officials, tribal
2 officials, so we're looking for a broad
3 representation but to still have a workable
4 size advisory committee. And then a
5 subcommittee can be separate from that --
6 well, it will be separate folks, they answer
7 to the advisory committee.

8 And, actually, I don't know that
9 we've gone so far yet as to define how we can
10 get membership on the subcommittee. We need
11 to get the main committee first. Did that
12 answer what you're looking for?

13 TABLE SPOKESMAN: So how far down
14 the chain from the producer are you going to
15 go, as far as members on the advisory? Are
16 you going to go to, say, the grocery store or
17 you going to go through distribution or how
18 far are we taking this or are we going to stop
19 at the packer level?

20 DR. FERGUSON: Actually, for
21 membership on the committee, I mean, we left
22 it up, we put out a call for nominations and

1 folks were welcome to nominate whatever and
2 whomever they wanted. I know there are
3 several producers that were nominated,
4 representatives of various, different groups.

5 I don't know that we had any
6 nominations from either the packing end
7 processors and definitely not the retail food
8 distribution chains.

9 MS. MILLIS: You, sir?

10 TABLE SPOKESMAN: These
11 requirements that you're suggesting now are
12 strictly for U.S. cattle producers, and what
13 I would like to know is, here in Washington
14 State, we've had problems with, recently with
15 TB, we've had BSE, all from imported cattle.

16 Are the same requirements going to
17 be required for any cattle that is imported
18 into the United States with a trace back
19 equivalent to what you're expecting here in
20 the United States or is this strictly for U.S.
21 cattle and cattle producers and other
22 countries can ignore it all?

1 DR. FERGUSON: Everybody is
2 pointing at me, great. No, that's just as
3 easy. Actually, yes, these same requirements
4 for identification and for ICVIs actually
5 already apply to imported animals.

6 For the Canadian animals
7 specifically, the regs actually state
8 identification that is traceable to the birth
9 premises, so that's already required for those
10 Canadian animals.

11 In addition, there's a requirement
12 for, other than for immediate slaughter, for
13 AIN, tattoo or brand. On the Mexican side,
14 again, also with individual identification
15 required. They have to have the tags which
16 are related to their TB and Brucellosis
17 program.

18 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Why are these
19 cattle not inspected at the border, rather
20 than allowed to come into Washington State and
21 be distributed all over heck when they should
22 be inspected at the border?

1 DR. FERGUSON: Animals for, that
2 are coming in for immediate slaughter --

3 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Either/or.

4 DR. FERGUSON: Let me just
5 clarify, animals coming in for immediate
6 slaughter are not required to be off-loaded
7 and inspected at the border. We are counting
8 on that inspection at the slaughter plant,
9 essentially, as the inspection for entry.

10 For feeder cattle, we do have the
11 authority and some of those loads are
12 off-loaded and are inspected; some of them are
13 not. We leave that up to our port folks to do
14 that appropriately and to make those
15 selections as to which ones need to be
16 individually inspected.

17 TABLE SPOKESMAN: As a cattle
18 producer, will I have the ability to decide if
19 my cattle should be tagged or should not be
20 tagged? We're leaving a lot of discretion up
21 to different people. As a producer, we should
22 have that discretion as well.

1 DR. FERGUSON: What we're talking
2 about here are the regs would apply to animals
3 that are moved interstate, so if animals are
4 moved interstate, our proposal at this point
5 in time is that those animals need to be
6 identified, unless they meet one of the
7 exemptions that has been described here.

8 I might ask if one of our state
9 colleagues wants to add anything to that
10 answer. If they don't, no big deal.

11 DR. ELDRIDGE: Well, we'll
12 participate when they do cross the state line
13 and make sure they're individually identified,
14 if they leave our state, because that's what
15 is required.

16 I would address the lad here just
17 a minute ago, he was talking about the tag
18 distribution. We, at present, know every tag,
19 we are a tag distributor, we know every
20 Brucellosis tag and every silver eartag that
21 is distributed to veterinarians, we have the
22 name, address and so forth of where those tags

1 are distributed to.

2 I need to do that. I don't care,
3 and I really don't want to house all those
4 tags, but I need that information, I need to
5 be able to put that in a database to protect
6 these all.

7 As far as when animals move within
8 our state, I think we've got to figure out a
9 way to be able to use the existing information
10 we have today, plus, if no certificates are
11 written so that we can determine if it went
12 two or three places within a state, otherwise,
13 we're not going to make the performance
14 standards that's going to allow you all to
15 move without restrictions, and I'm willing to
16 work with all of you to do that.

17 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Dr. Ferguson, in
18 recent years, all of our health incidents here
19 in Washington State have been from imported
20 cattle. You had one slide that said maintain
21 import regulations. I think they should be
22 strengthened. Can you address that?

1 DR. FERGUSON: Actually, I would
2 encourage you, if you have specific
3 recommendations along that line, you're more
4 than welcome to submit those as written
5 comments, and be specific about disease risk
6 and what you're looking for and we can take
7 those under consideration.

8 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One other
9 question. As far as, Dr. Eldridge, the
10 slaughter cattle right now, my understanding
11 is you're not getting the IDs. It says in
12 here that you're going to, excuse me, the
13 slide, that you're going to pass on the IDs at
14 slaughter. Is that going to, excuse me,
15 you're going to record that then, so is that
16 going to be passed onto the states?

17 DR. FERGUSON: Okay, our interest,
18 and this is evolved throughout this, is to
19 obtain those IDs at slaughter. The major
20 issue there is when you have a trace back, a
21 TB trace back where you have 20 different
22 animals and we can't confirm that, yes, they

1 were slaughtered. So the intent is to
2 maintain, to collect those IDs and then enter
3 them into whatever records so we know that,
4 yes, that animal was slaughtered on that this
5 date and we can close out those traces.

6 Dr. Eldridge, do you want to add
7 something?

8 DR. ELDRIDGE: And that is the
9 issue. I could give you a recent traceback
10 where, at slaughter, there was 990-some
11 animals, and that animal didn't have a
12 backtag, she had an eartag. So we was able to
13 go back, she had a vaccinated tag, we knew
14 where she was vaccinated, and we were able to
15 trace her to an old yard I worked in, but
16 where she went from there took a lot of work
17 because we didn't have the information.

18 All of the information needs to be
19 collected at the slaughter. We're only
20 interested in those when there's a traceback
21 or a problem. I don't need all the
22 information from every one that went to

1 slaughter, but I certainly am interested in
2 anything where there's a disease event where
3 I need to do traceability, and that's what
4 they're talking about. We need them to
5 collect all the information on that.

6 At slaughter, no, that's a
7 terminal deal, I'm not worried about tracing
8 that animal any further. The ones I'm
9 interested in tracing is out there that's
10 moved throughout the production chain and what
11 the exposure might have been to other animals.
12 That's where I'm interested.

13 At slaughter, that's terminal, I'm
14 only interested in the ones where there is a
15 problem.

16 TABLE SPOKESMAN: When the cattle
17 come in and you add those IDs, don't you want
18 to book them in and close them out?

19 DR. ELDRIDGE: Yeah, if we ever
20 get there. That would be a goal down the line
21 but, absolutely, if we get something in the
22 system and we know it went to slaughter and

1 close that out, that is an interest.

2 MR. MORRIS: Deb, you have another
3 question, and there's also one over here as
4 well.

5 98.3 percent of all U.S. cattle
6 are processed in federally-inspected plants,
7 and your point to the book-in information
8 system is clearly an important progression as
9 we in advancing an animal's traceability. And
10 your point is, again, well taken because there
11 have been focus discussions on how to do just
12 that for the value of the retirement and
13 reconciliation of a number or tag officially
14 identified and/or assigned that the opposite
15 book-end so we can progress to doing trace
16 forward as well as trace back, so your point
17 is well taken.

18 TABLE SPOKESMAN: We all know that
19 youth of our organization, our industry are
20 our future, and I've been a 4-H leader for
21 over 30 years in Eastern Washington, and my
22 question is, as far as the 4-H and FFA youth,

1 with their animals at a common facility,
2 what's going to be required of these kids that
3 live in town, live in an apartment, share
4 single parent living, what's going to happen,
5 what do they have to do and what's it going to
6 cost and who is going to cover it?

7 MR. MORRIS: I think that's an
8 excellent question, but because it's within
9 the state boundaries, most likely, we'll let
10 Larry answer that question.

11 DR. ELDRIDGE: Thanks a lot.
12 Actually, what I foresee is they put a silver
13 eartag in there, that silver eartag doesn't
14 cost anything. You can o get it from this lad
15 or from my office. There is a little expense
16 in shipment and so forth in maintaining that
17 information. I want that information back in
18 a database so I know it was put in, but beyond
19 that, it's not going to cost anything, it's
20 just going to go through the chain so it's
21 identified.

22 TABLE SPOKESMAN: So we've got 20

1 kids at the ranch that have animals there and
2 each kid is going to have his name on that
3 tag, and if they want this premise thing, what
4 if the people with the ranch don't agree with
5 the premise program. There's a lot of issues
6 here that aren't being answered and the last
7 thing we want to do is condemn the 4-H and FFA
8 programs because they're getting smaller all
9 along, and so are the producers our age.

10 DR. ELDRIDGE: Well, I would tell
11 you, each of those animals are brand
12 inspected, so we know every one of them. We
13 know where it came from, where they purchased
14 it, and we know it's theirs today and we know
15 it's going on there. That could be, our
16 system will allow this. That tag could be put
17 on that Brand Inspection Certificate, and
18 that's all that's necessary.

19 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Are lambs and
20 goats coming from out-of-state?

21 DR. ELDRIDGE: Well, that's a
22 Scrapie-type deal and we're not really, you

1 know, Scrapie, the sheep and goat program is
2 well underway today, and it really is
3 different than what we're talking about as far
4 as cattle go.

5 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Yeah, what's the
6 time table from the transition from Phase 1 to
7 Phase 2 of what we talked about earlier?

8 MR. MORRIS: Neil, if you could
9 help us out with that, Neil has been
10 summarizing many of the recommendations of the
11 Working Group to date.

12 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: There's
13 probably some confusion the way we presented
14 the material. We talked about Step I and Step
15 II, and then Phase 1 and Phase 2, and that's
16 created some overlap.

17 Phase 1 and Phase 2, as far as the
18 graduation or the more stringent performance
19 standards, no date, time has been established
20 for that because we still want to more
21 thoroughly evaluate, when we do this how much
22 longer and we're not in a big hurry to put

1 that specific timeline in. It's more of an
2 indication that, as we move forward into this,
3 our capabilities will improve.

4 We need to think through, a lot of
5 people have talked about older animals being
6 in the system. Well, you're not going to go,
7 none of this is retroactive, so you're going
8 to have to mature into the system, whether
9 that Phase 1 is over a two-year period or
10 three-year period, undetermined, but the Step
11 I and Step II at this point in time is a
12 one-year transition to where all cattle would
13 be included in the ID requirement.

14 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One other
15 question, too. Once all of this gets in place
16 and is set up, are individual states going to
17 be allowed to make their own specific import
18 regulation on what type of device, of animal
19 ID device. Say Washington says you have to
20 have RF ID to come in here, Nevada is
21 something different.

22 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: There's been

1 questions about a federal preemption, I think
2 is the issue that you're questioning, and
3 we've had the opportunity for Dr. Clifford,
4 Lisa, and others to talk to the state animal
5 health officials to provide some ideas that
6 what we think is appropriate in this regards.

7 So, number one, if you look at the
8 recognition of official ID as maybe the
9 starting point, the ID is that for cattle
10 there's different numbering systems, any of
11 those identification devices with that
12 official numbering system should be recognized
13 by all states. So if I tag my calves with
14 this tag, I know it's good to go anyplace in
15 the country.

16 Specific to your question, can a
17 state like Michigan, who already requires RF
18 ID for cattle, for moving cattle into
19 Michigan, the thought is that they could not
20 make that a requirement for the interstate
21 movement of cattle into their state, but once
22 those cattle are there, they could apply that

1 requirement for intrastate movement.

2 MS. MILLIS: All right, I want to
3 get to the next point in our agenda. I
4 understand that there may be more questions
5 that come up for you or more issues that
6 arise.

7 I'm going to call your attention
8 back to the sheets on the table, and if you
9 need others, I have extras, and we would like
10 you to write those down, if you could, and we
11 will have further time later in the afternoon,
12 after we have our small break-outs, to discuss
13 any further questions that have come up for
14 you or that you need further clarification on.

15 So I want to turn the floor over
16 to you, Dave, to talk about the questions at
17 hand and we'll give Neil a chance to bring
18 that up.

19 Our goal here is to give your
20 feedback and input on what you see as the
21 issues related to the traceability framework
22 that's being put in place and also to the

1 performance standards that are being proposed.

2 MR. MORRIS: Thanks, Deb.

3 For those of you that are
4 concerned about federal security, please note
5 that we had to use the pass word to get out of
6 the screen saver.

7 I appreciate you being here, I've
8 enjoyed coming to Washington now. Thanks to
9 Dr. Eldridge and Dr. Huntley for inviting us
10 here. This is my fourth trip into the state
11 of Washington and it's always been enjoyable.

12 Okay, before I move too much into
13 the question, while we're doing some
14 preliminary things and just to aggravate my
15 friend and moderator who sometimes is
16 threatening but her smile belittles that
17 threatening nature, Deb, how do you want to
18 distribute state and federal resources to the
19 tables relative to the issue of developing
20 responses to the questions at hand?

21 MS. MILLIS: Well, I would like
22 you to move about the tables as a resource,

1 but most important are the folks here who have
2 come who are in the industry and who are
3 producers, and we would like you to move about
4 tables so that we have enough room and the
5 groups are small enough that we can discuss
6 things.

7 If the folks that are here from
8 USDA could distribute themselves to those
9 tables so that we have somebody there to help
10 record the discussion and to kind of keep
11 things moving.

12 We have a set of questions that
13 we've passed around, they're the ones that
14 Dave has up here, so I'm going to suggest,
15 because the room is so big that we kind of get
16 up and move to the opposite ends of it.

17 And I wanted to clarify, did we
18 have a group that wants to talk about sheep
19 and goat kind of issues as they relate to this
20 traceability standard? I saw some hands go up
21 earlier. Did we still have those folks here,
22 because we could have a table just for that

1 species if we want. So if we could have you
2 just group around the particular species that
3 you're interested in, then we'll move our USDA
4 and state folks around so that they can have
5 the benefit of your input.

6 MR. MORRIS: Thanks, Deb.

7 What we wanted to do at this stage
8 of the game, we've had some questions here
9 that have focused on the new framework and we
10 hope that the initial presentations this
11 morning were able to, earlier this morning,
12 were able to provide you a concept and a gist
13 of what the new framework is about, but at
14 this stage of the game we would like to focus
15 your direction here on the questions that have
16 been provided to you, and we're going to do
17 this in a separate group, the first group of
18 questions, and then we'll report out on that
19 and then, subsequently, we'll move into a
20 second session.

21 What we're hoping to do at this
22 point is, with your understanding and

1 increasing familiarity with the new framework,
2 is to, in all aspects, place yourself in Dr.
3 Eldridge's shoes and his staff in terms of the
4 responsibility associated with providing
5 Animal Disease Traceability information.

6 And so as you think in terms of
7 safeguarding the animal health issues
8 associated with the state of Washington, with
9 Dr. Huntley and Dr. Eldridge, we are looking
10 at the proposed guidelines, will the
11 traceability regulations specifically address
12 the gaps and traceability or support
13 compliment ones that already exist for the
14 species being discussed?

15 Perhaps there may be some
16 questions relative to the species issue here,
17 but we're looking at traceability for cattle,
18 we're looking also at traceability for other
19 food animal species -- sheep and goats --
20 traceability for equine species, but the
21 livestock and food animal species are the ones
22 we're looking at each of them specifically.

1 Dr. Eldridge just recently
2 mentioned here in issue of the sheep and goat
3 and the Scrapie program, and many of you are
4 familiar with the effectiveness of that
5 particular program, both state and federal,
6 relative to enhancing the traceability
7 associated with that particular disease
8 program.

9 Additionally, as you think of the
10 proposed regulations that are requiring,
11 again, as Dr. Watson well stated, official ID
12 and interstate movement and the health
13 certificates, is that approach meritorious?
14 Will that additional information provided to
15 state and federal animal health officials
16 advance Animal Disease Traceability?

17 I think it's important to note
18 that it's not that we're going from nothing to
19 something, through the diligence of our state
20 and local partners have had animal disease
21 tracing capability. The issue here is how can
22 we better advance, more officially advance

1 animal disease traceability and, additionally
2 here, what are the concerns relative to the
3 implementation.

4 So if we do have a strategy,
5 clearly we have to implement that strategy.
6 Are there concerns relative to what you now
7 know, at least at this part with the new
8 proposed framework, will it advance here,
9 traceability, how difficult might it be to
10 implement.

11 And, further, although there have
12 been some questions here, and if you need some
13 clarification relative to the timelines, we
14 certainly have several folks here from the
15 Working Group and others quite familiar with
16 the summer reports to date, are these
17 timelines realistic?

18 So, again, we would like for you
19 to try and position yourself as being
20 responsible for Animal Disease Traceability in
21 the state of Washington, or wherever the state
22 may be, and as you look and assess the current

1 framework and recommendations, are they
2 realistic? Are they specific? Are they of
3 merit?

4 Deb.

5 MS. MILLIS: Thanks, Dave.

6 So let's have a group of folks
7 that want to talk about cattle come over into
8 this area of the room, and then we'll have
9 another group that's interested in cattle over
10 in this area of the room. And if we need a
11 third group, maybe back towards the back, and
12 then perhaps our sheep and goat folks could
13 meet over in that area, right over there,
14 okay. We want you to be able to hear each
15 other and share your input with us around
16 those questions. And begin.

17 (Off the record discussion.)

18 MS. MILLIS: I'll ask the table
19 host to bring everyone at their table back to
20 order, please. Okay, we'll start with this
21 table here.

22 TABLE SPOKESMAN: In looking

1 through, on the first question, will
2 traceability regulations specifically address
3 the gaps and traceability or
4 support/compliment ones that already exist,
5 what we had talked about was the, in terms of
6 the application, the question on technology,
7 the labor in recording, accurately recording
8 and reading, being labor intensive, and
9 potentially costing producers an uncertain
10 amount of money there, on reading and
11 recording.

12 The second, are regulations
13 requiring official ID and Interstate
14 Certificates of Veterinary Inspection as
15 presented of merit with the Animal Disease
16 Traceability?

17 One of the things we had discussed
18 earlier and talked about was the need to
19 incorporate electronic health certificates for
20 state animal health officials to aid them in
21 their data entry and recording to also allow
22 quicker, more efficient querying of health

1 permits or documents on cattle that are being
2 imported and exported out of the state.

3 That would also, in our eyes, we
4 thought, would help eliminate some of the
5 human errors that had been talked about
6 earlier. And we thought that these
7 regulations would probably work closely in
8 Washington State, that we have, we currently
9 require a number of these regulations in terms
10 of individual identification on imported
11 animals, and other things in terms of specific
12 diseases, so this would probably mirror what
13 is currently happening with breeding cattle.

14 Question on our, what are the
15 concerns relative to their implementation? We
16 had a question, somewhat to USDA, being how
17 will these regulations get us where we want to
18 go in terms of the existing system and state
19 programs that are in place? How will these
20 benefit, somewhat of a bigger question,
21 wondering, across the board, are some states
22 at a significantly higher level in terms of

1 data that's currently collected and the
2 ability to trace cattle compared to other
3 states that may not have information as
4 readily available.

5 Questions on timelines, if they
6 are realistic, we had hoped that USDA could be
7 a little more specific in its timelines.
8 There were questions, wondering about the
9 technology level and if it was moving in the
10 right direction.

11 We also wanted to be sure that
12 USDA was able to incorporate the brand
13 inspections that we have in the brand states
14 here, especially in Washington, and the fact
15 that we have requirements for that brand
16 inspection on all interstate movements, as
17 well as a change of ownership, to be sure that
18 we incorporate our existing brand systems and
19 regulations that our industry has currently
20 been working with. I think that gets us, and
21 then we also had question marks on cost.

22 MS. MILLIS: Thank you. And

1 before we move on, were there any additional
2 comments that came from that table that anyone
3 would want to share?

4 All right. We'll go over to this
5 table at this end of the room. There we go.

6 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Hello, we
7 primarily focused on the tag issue. I think
8 we got off onto that, raised the concern right
9 away about whether the brite tags and the
10 accountability as far as the Brucellosis, TB
11 tag, the veterinarian assigns a range of
12 numbers, that can be traced.

13 There's also some concern from our
14 brand inspectors that maybe those numbers
15 weren't being fed back from the veterinarians
16 to the state veterinary office, that the brand
17 inspectors could read a TB tag but they
18 couldn't maybe necessarily, or Brucellosis
19 tag, couldn't trace that back, so there was
20 concern there.

21 But the bulk of our discussion
22 really focused around the identification

1 system, getting those tags, accountability for
2 that. We understood where the veterinarian
3 controlled the Scrapie tag, the Brucellosis
4 tag, the TB tag, but the brite tag as a
5 producer, was just getting those, what was the
6 accountability for that? How could we track
7 those numbers? Was that being recorded
8 anywhere? If so, how was it being recorded?
9 How could those numbers be traced in the
10 future?

11 Most of our conversation revolved
12 around that system of how that would be
13 distributed, who would be accountable, how
14 would it be accountable.

15 And then we looked into a question
16 from one of our producers, what happens to the
17 25 percent of the animals who lost their tags
18 and how did he account for those. Some of
19 them he finds, they're laying in the
20 floorboard of his pickup; a lot he doesn't,
21 maybe the neighbor finds them. How do we
22 account for that? How do we further identify,

1 if we put new tags in, is there any way to tie
2 those back, especially if you couldn't
3 identify those tags, so that was an issue from
4 one of our producers.

5 There was also, from the brand
6 folks, the question about whether we
7 veterinarians were properly recording tag
8 numbers back to the state office so that they
9 could be accounted for.

10 And then we focused on the
11 commuter herd issue of cattle being, going
12 across lines in these commuter herds, and one
13 of the real concerns that came up in our group
14 was commingled commuter herds.

15 In other words, a herd of cattle
16 may be moved, as an example, to an Indian
17 reservation in Montana where four or five
18 ranchers will have a shared allotment, so even
19 though you move your herd of cows over there,
20 it winds up going onto an open range
21 commingled with four or five or six others,
22 how do you know, when those cattle come back,

1 that they haven't picked up Trichomoniasis
2 when they were out during that open range, so
3 that pretty much summarized what we talked
4 about.

5 MS. MILLIS: Thank you. RJ will
6 take your notes and the mike there.

7 Before we move on, was there any
8 other comment or concern at that table that
9 anyone would care to share?

10 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: I want to
11 apologize for not stepping far enough out of
12 the room to take my phone call.

13 MS. MILLIS: We appreciate when
14 you stepped out. Thank you.

15 And you had a comment, sir?

16 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One that we
17 didn't get to touch on, because we were
18 talking about the other things, was the true
19 cost to implement this program.

20 I work for a livestock marketing
21 association, so the marketing, we've asked
22 about the cost before and they've said, well,

1 we're going to supply the silver brite tags,
2 but that's not the true cost.

3 You talk about the labor, work
4 comp, livestock, shrink, and all those things
5 start adding up, who is going to pay for that,
6 and that's a true cost, the producer to the
7 market, and it goes all the way down, so we
8 didn't really get to talk about it, but the
9 true cost is a big concern.

10 Also on our end on the timeline of
11 going from Step I to Step II, from the feeder
12 cow being exempt to them being required to
13 have ID, it is a concern of ours that it's
14 going to be able to educate and implement that
15 in a year, that maybe the timeline needs to be
16 spread out a little longer.

17 MS. MILLIS: Thank you. Any other
18 comments from that table?

19 All right. Let's go back to this
20 one over here, Lisa. Thanks.

21 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Okay,
22 surprisingly we had a lot of the same answers

1 coming up. One of the discussion points we
2 had were cattle that were being imported into
3 this state and this country. We had a huge
4 question that we discussed as far as for what
5 is the definition of a group lot. going to
6 be, not only to the producer, but the costs
7 that are going to be incurred by the state in
8 having to distribute and track tags through
9 the system.

10 MS. MILLIS: Were there any other
11 additional comments from that table?

12 TABLE SPOKESMAN: I think we've
13 heard some comments from other people that
14 pretty well covered some of the things that we
15 visited with and, again, we'll go back to the
16 group lot situation. When you get into the
17 group lot situation, I think there's going to
18 have to be some real definition applied to
19 that, what qualifies for group lot, how they
20 have to be handled, and I think that has to be
21 more thoroughly identified and a good
22 definition of what a group lot really is.

1 The other thing that, and, again,
2 how they're going to be handled once they
3 arrive at a situation from a standpoint of a
4 group shipment.

5 Again, I think one of the
6 discussions was that the livestock marketing
7 area, reiterating what was just said, was that
8 I'm sure a lot of the markets are going to
9 have to have, to receive untagged calves and
10 they're going to have to build a separate
11 facility so that those calves can be tagged
12 once they arrive at the market at another
13 facility since they can't be commingled until
14 they're tagged.

15 I think this is, there's going to
16 be a huge cost to a lot of smaller producers
17 if they do not tag their calves at the ranch,
18 and we know a lot of them will not. Maybe
19 they'll get the message as we go down the line
20 but, again, there's always going to be those,
21 and each and every state is different.

22 Again, I think that it needs to be

1 reemphasized, regardless of where we import
2 cattle from, another state or whatever, we
3 realize that Dr. Eldridge has done a
4 tremendous job here in the state from a
5 standpoint of setting up a system and our
6 system is working pretty good, with brands and
7 other identifications.

8 But when we go talking about
9 cattle coming in from Mexico and Canada and
10 maybe even some pure bred cattle from some
11 other countries, as they meet quarantine
12 requirements or whatever, I just think we need
13 a higher level of inspection and what we would
14 say visual, physical inspection of those
15 cattle that are arriving into the state
16 because I think that's our highest risk of
17 introducing a foreign disease.

18 And then one other thought that
19 probably wasn't discussed here but I'm going
20 to bring it up, as you know, with the FMD in
21 Japan and Korea, this state receives a
22 considerable number of visitors from those

1 countries, and they like to go to our farms
2 and ranches or feed lots and packing houses,
3 and I think maybe we might need a little bit
4 of ID on some of those people because if
5 they've been on farms and ranches in those
6 countries and they come here and commingle
7 with our farms and ranches and our cattle and
8 our facilities, we've got a good chance of
9 that being brought in by shoes and clothing or
10 whatever it might be. So it's not only cattle
11 that we're talking about here, when it comes
12 to identifying how a disease might enter into
13 our country, we may all think about the people
14 side.

15 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir. Any
16 other comments from that table?

17 You can gather people's notes, if
18 we can, and we'll go back to this table here,
19 RJ.

20 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Thank you.

21 Well, you'll hear more of the same
22 from this table. We had several talks come

1 up, but I think the emphasis is all wrong on
2 this ADT. Animal Disease Traceability should
3 be a result of an effective disease
4 prevention, and that means preventing the
5 disease from entering our country.

6 Right now the border inspections
7 are lacking and, again, all the recent animal
8 health events that have come into our state
9 have come from Canada, and when they, again,
10 they need to strengthen those import
11 protocols, not just simply maintain them.

12 The USDA needs to come up with
13 reliable funding to help Dr. Eldridge and
14 these other state databases. So far, we don't
15 see anything that really is targeted towards
16 the databases.

17 The other thing that came up is we
18 saw in one of the slides earlier that the
19 feeder cattle were going to be ID'd, but it
20 was not going to be recorded.

21 Given the example that some feeder
22 heifers could leave the state of Washington

1 and be transported to the midwest and those
2 cattle, they didn't have the IDs recorded, the
3 IDs come out, a good set of feeder heifers and
4 all of a sudden replacement heifers are turned
5 out, so I think the feeder cattle need to have
6 those IDs recorded.

7 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir.

8 Were there any other comments from
9 your table? RJ, if they have notes they would
10 like to share with us from that table.

11 And then we'll go to the back
12 table there. I think we have one more table
13 that hasn't had the opportunity.

14 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Our table
15 discussed sheep and goat issues, and the first
16 thing that came out was sheep ID was working
17 pretty well, not much of a problem there.

18 But the big problem is with the
19 goats, there's no unified industry. It's not
20 generally the livelihood of the goat producer,
21 but these goats are still shipping and moving
22 and they do pose a risk.

1 And then moving onto premises ID,
2 the question is, does the premises ID belong
3 to an owner or piece of ground, and then from
4 that we jumped onto what is the premises
5 versus property, and the producers would like
6 to have their property back, so it's a
7 terminology.

8 And then also, a question or
9 concern came up about standardization between
10 species on premises ID, identification, being
11 able to have one premises ID, property ID for
12 all the species.

13 Oh, on the microchips or on the
14 high tech tags, the change in technology
15 allowing one reader to be used and not have
16 electronic ID and then the person that
17 actually had the reader take off to the next
18 county and then you don't have anything to
19 read the tags. Tattoos are hard to read.

20 Oh, and then the discussion
21 surrounded alternative markets, going down to
22 a parking lot and bringing in sheep or goats,

1 and then they go out of that market, what's
2 the traceability through those more simplistic
3 markets?

4 Many issues that occur at the
5 fairs, bringing animals in, whether they have
6 ICVIs or where they've been and what's going
7 to happen to the animals as they leave the
8 fairs and how were they housed at the fair.

9 And then a lot of discussion
10 around 4-H, FFA students and how are the
11 records maintained and how knowledgeable are
12 the students on maintaining those records and
13 where did the sheep or goats come from and
14 where did they go, did they go to slaughter
15 markets, did they go to where they were
16 initially intended?

17 One comment about cool and how it
18 has allowed to place more emphasis on some of
19 these new requirements and how it adds market
20 incentives.

21 We talked a lot about ICVIs and
22 how to make them work and how do you deal with

1 them on the weekends and how to allow for the
2 spuda conference and the ever changing market,
3 market opportunity on the weekend, and all of
4 a sudden not able to move the animals, either
5 due to not being able to get a CDI or state
6 veterinarian, get ahold for a permit.

7 And then finally, on the
8 traceability states, just compliance issues
9 between states that must be worked on. And
10 then it was brought up, most of the time the
11 receiving states set the requirement and it's
12 not necessarily mandated by the feds. That's
13 it for this table, unless there's other
14 comments.

15 MS. MILLIS: Thank you. Were
16 there any other comments from that table?

17 Well, I appreciate everybody's
18 discussion during that time and those of you
19 who reported out, thank you.

20 And for the next hour, we're going
21 to be breaking. By my watch, it's, well, it's
22 20 minutes to 12, so we'll be back here in

1 approximately an hour or about a quarter to 1,
2 and just let me tell you a little bit about
3 what the hotel has available for us.

4 They have a prime rib buffet for
5 \$13.95, which includes a vegetable, salad and
6 dessert. They also have a soup and salad,
7 which is \$11, and they have a soup and
8 sandwich, which starts at about \$8. I think
9 soup and sandwich special, that's what it is,
10 starting at about \$8.

11 So lunch is on your own here at
12 the hotel or wherever you feel comfortable
13 eating, and we'll be back here at a quarter to
14 1.

15 What we'll do when we return is
16 we'll go through that second set of questions.
17 And I want to remind you that on your tables,
18 you do have an additional opportunity to
19 record any questions that may have come up for
20 you or things that remain unanswered in your
21 mind and we'll have an opportunity to address
22 those in the afternoon, so we'll see you back

1 here in about an hour. Thank you.

2 (Lunch recess from 11:43 a.m.
3 until 12:58 p.m.)

4 MR. MORRIS: Good afternoon.

5 Thanks, and hope you had an enjoyable lunch.

6 We're all settled back in to address the

7 second question here in which we'll go

8 forward. We're okay on the transcriber, Deb?

9 MS. MILLIS: We're okay.

10 MR. MORRIS: Good, thank you.

11 Before we do get started, I was
12 looking for Brian Thomas, I wanted to draw
13 your attention to Brian because he is from the
14 Paiute Tribe in Idaho and a member of the
15 Working Group, and I just wanted you to know
16 the seriousness by which some of those Working
17 Group Members have taken their assignment and
18 willingness to participate in the Working
19 Group.

20 That was 431 miles that young man
21 drove across the country just to be here with
22 us today and I wanted to draw your attention

1 to that, but Brian is not in the room right
2 here, but for those of you that might know
3 him, we certainly appreciate those kind of
4 efforts.

5 We got through the first set of
6 questions, and you have before you some
7 additional questions here with regard to
8 determining and evaluating tracing capability,
9 and certainly that's going to be a challenge
10 and one in which we're attempting at the
11 federal level and the state level to measure
12 tracing capability. Those four performance
13 measures are an opportunity and a method that
14 has been offered to assess that tracing
15 capability.

16 Dr. Watson definitely indicated
17 there are some challenges with those four
18 criteria, but we have identified those seven
19 states in a little bit of a recent test
20 exercise to see if indeed those measures are
21 meaningful, if indeed those measures are
22 achievable, and to a large extent, how

1 valuable might they be in assessing tracing
2 capability.

3 So for this next session, what we
4 would ask you to do as your group is convened
5 here to discuss the traceability status
6 designations as a potential good process,
7 maybe not so good a process for communicating
8 to states and tribes tracing capabilities in
9 the comparison to the standards.

10 In the presentation this morning,
11 we spoke of a tiered approach to measuring the
12 traceability status to try to review some of
13 that very quickly here. Level I would mean
14 that the state or tribe can meet those four
15 performance criteria, and in so doing, would
16 pretty much be business as usual.

17 Level II is, and maybe I should
18 jump to Level III, Level III would be a level
19 by which the state and/or tribes have been
20 found deficient. And if indeed there is a
21 category in between, partially yes, partially
22 no, that would be Level II.

1 Brian, in your absence, we took it
2 upon ourselves to note your contribution to
3 the Working Group. Brian Thomas is here in
4 the back in the purple shirt, and we noted how
5 impressed we were in your commitment to the
6 Working Group, having driven 431 miles, one
7 way, and having to drive back, so that kind of
8 time and interest commitment is unique. So
9 for those of you who don't know Brian, that's
10 him right here, straight away in the back.

11 The next question here, as we come
12 up with the idea again of a tiered approach,
13 Level I, II, III, and the impact that that
14 might have relative to that state's
15 designation for achieving tracing capability.

16 More importantly here, perhaps, is
17 the industry contributions to states and
18 tribes meeting those performance standards
19 because we all recognize the partnership
20 between the states, industry, and federal as
21 the triumvirate, so to speak, of the
22 partnership for animal disease traceability,

1 answering and addressing the issue, how can
2 industry come to the table and contribute to
3 the states and tribes in meeting those
4 performance standards because, as intended,
5 Level I and II and III does impact producers.

6 And, lastly here, what additional
7 requirements for the interstate movement of
8 animals for Level III traceability status are
9 appropriate.

10 What, essentially, the Working
11 Group has offered today is the removal of some
12 of the exemptions that, if you're in Level I,
13 you would be allowed to be exempt from some
14 interstate or official ID recording and
15 reporting requirements.

16 If we use the lack of exemptions
17 as the compromise for being in Level II and
18 Level III, that's largely where it's at at
19 this present time. What can you offer as
20 additional ideas, are those exemptions and
21 removal appropriate for the traceability
22 status as its impact on producers.

1 As you think through the process
2 here, what can motivate states, industry, and
3 federal partners here to optimize our tracing
4 capabilities.

5 So without any further comments
6 here, that's the general outline for our
7 assignment for this next session.

8 Deb, we're good?

9 MS. MILLIS: We are good. So we
10 will proceed in the same manner that we did.
11 Thank you, Dr. Morris.

12 And let me remind you again, on
13 many of the tables we have these blank sheets
14 with questions, so if there are questions that
15 come up that are not germane to the discussion
16 or still outstanding in your mind and you
17 haven't already recorded them, please take the
18 opportunity to do so, and after this session,
19 then we'll have them responded to.

20 And I still have a couple copies
21 of that up here on the table, so feel free to
22 grab them.

1 And begin.

2 (Discussion held off the record.)

3 MS. MILLIS: All right, if we
4 could start back as a group. All right, and
5 we're going to proceed in the same way as we
6 did before. And this time, we're going to
7 start at the group that was focusing on sheep
8 and goat kinds of issues, and if we could hear
9 from that table.

10 TABLE SPOKESMAN: A lot of our
11 time was spent discussing exactly what has
12 been about the traceability standards as they
13 relate to the statuses, in fact a considerable
14 amount of time was spent doing that. But
15 after that, we discussed how, for different
16 states, it will take industry to help drive
17 the establishment and the ability to perform
18 the standards to get to the statuses that need
19 to be achieved to allow free movement of the
20 animals.

21 The thought that three levels are
22 definitely better than two, so having that

1 middle status in order to have the opportunity
2 to do better. Perhaps for those states that
3 are stuck in status Level III require more
4 testing or, as was noted in the notes, that
5 require ID for nonexempt animals.

6 And then the main point that came
7 out for movement is to allow extension to
8 apply for cooperative agreements to help
9 educate the producers and people about the
10 need for animal ID.

11 MS. MILLIS: Thank you. Were
12 there any other comments that anyone else at
13 that table wanted to express? All right.

14 We'll go to the table in the back
15 there.

16 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Thank you.

17 It was difficult to answer the
18 questions that our USDA man asked us, to give
19 any clarity because it's, without having a
20 reliable funding source, it's difficult to
21 agree to these type of standards. We look at
22 these as the state being graded, and if our

1 state were not to receive adequate funding,
2 they can't do the job. And as I see it right
3 now, the USDA is not committed to supporting
4 this with 100 percent funding.

5 Presently, the other thing that
6 was brought up pays to have the health
7 inspections to get the cattle shipped out of
8 the state, but there's no mechanism in place
9 right now for cattle being imported into our
10 state. And our state receives a large amount
11 of imports.

12 There needs to be something in
13 place to where the USDA collects, at the
14 border, at the Canadian border \$35 on the
15 slaughter cattle and \$250 a head on feeder
16 cattle. It only seems appropriate that those
17 fees be, the fees being used, the fees be used
18 to fund our state database.

19 That's all I have.

20 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir. Is
21 there anyone else that would like to comment
22 at that table?

1 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Yes, Craig Grew.

2 As we mentioned, this is a grading
3 system, and to me, it looks like the packers
4 wrote this whole section because if the USDA
5 puts any type of movement restrictions on
6 cattle in Washington State, basically the
7 packers control our industry anyway, and if
8 they were, if the USDA were to restrict the
9 movement of cattle, either out of state, the
10 price of our cattle would go to nothing. They
11 wouldn't have to pay anything because you
12 can't keep all your cattle for years, you
13 can't do it, you would have to sell them at
14 any price, and to me all it is a funding for
15 the packers. And this is primarily what I see
16 with this traceability, you know, on your
17 different statuses.

18 The USDA wants to try to do
19 something, they could work with us, but if
20 they're going to put a penalty on us in cattle
21 movement, all you're doing is funding the
22 packers, and that's how I see it.

1 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir.

2 Any other comments from your
3 table?

4 Let's go over to this table then.

5 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Okay, again,
6 looking at the status levels, that first
7 question, status Level I, II, III, performance
8 standards, there's set standards there you've
9 got to meet within one day or seven days or
10 whatever, so from that standpoint, I think
11 after we finally discussed it and got it
12 somewhat clear, I think that is fairly clear,
13 but the problem is really in the details.

14 If one state's traceability unit
15 is the whole state and another state's
16 traceability unit is down at the county level
17 or some smaller subdivision, then is that
18 state with the smaller subdivision,
19 theoretically a better system, willing to
20 accept another state that may be Status Level
21 I because they meet those guidelines, but
22 they're meeting it, say Texas meets it at the

1 Texas level, whereas, Washington meets it at
2 the county level, so the devil's really in the
3 details there. A status I state may not
4 necessarily be the same in all 50 states, and
5 so are we willing to accept another state.

6 And then the other question on
7 that or point to that was internationals,
8 coming back to, we keep alluding to bringing
9 in cattle from foreign countries. Are they
10 meeting those same levels and are we willing
11 to accept their status similar to ours.

12 And then the next thing that's
13 kind of coming back somewhat to what he just
14 alluded to, wouldn't status be tied to
15 marketability of our animals? If you're a
16 Status III and another state says we're not
17 going to accept it, then order buyers show up
18 at your sale barn to buy because they can't
19 ship statewide, and all of a sudden prices of
20 cattle goes down, so there's certainly a
21 potential for a real negative impact at the
22 producer level on that.

1 Again, another part was the
2 economical funding, economic funding, some
3 sort of a consistent, dependable funding
4 source to enforce those requirements, and if
5 you're not going to provide the funding to
6 enforce them, then why make the requirements.

7 Another issue was, as far as
8 putting in the tags, the larger producers
9 probably are doing a pretty good job of
10 putting in tags. The ones that aren't are the
11 small guy that's got four or five, 20 cows,
12 and he brings his 15 or 20 calves into the
13 sale barn once a year, the only time he ever
14 shows up at the sale barn, he's probably not
15 tagging anything, so when are they going to
16 get captured at the sale barn?

17 Is the sale barn going to be
18 expected to do that, and then are they going
19 to turn around and charge him? If he gets a
20 \$5 per head charge for tagging, at some point,
21 he may just become so disgusted he either gets
22 out of the business or starts trying to sell

1 town the street and avoid the whole system.

2 Oh, as far as the timeline, the
3 question was, do we think we can really
4 educate all the producers within a year of
5 these requirements, and effectively implement
6 them? And, again, we kind of talked about
7 eastern versus western. Western, larger
8 producers, mostly all have the brand laws, so
9 we had some sort of identification. If you
10 get back in the east, and you have a lot of
11 those people that have 15, 20 acres and they
12 work at the local boat factory. And so we
13 think that the eastern states would probably
14 be at a disadvantage and have a lot more
15 problems implementing.

16 Again, another issue we brought up
17 was loss to small producers again. Right now,
18 there's no way to designate that animals
19 designated for slaughter can't be sold for
20 another purpose. In other words, the
21 order-buyer that's sitting there at Hermiston
22 in the sale barn and he's buying a whole bunch

1 of bulls and stuff, and you think that they're
2 going to go to IBP over here to the slaughter
3 house. When he gets them on his truck, he
4 might decide one of those looks like a pretty
5 decent bull and he off-loads that at his place
6 and it eventually winds up back in the
7 country. How can we control that or is there
8 a mechanism for controlling that?

9 We all agreed, we thought that the
10 brite tags should really have the state ID on
11 those. That at least gives you an immediate
12 gate cut. Something happens, you need to
13 identify something at the slaughter house, the
14 sale barn, you can immediately look at that
15 tag and know the state so you don't have to go
16 back and start trying to traffic in the
17 database, you can immediately contact that
18 state's veterinary office and maybe save a few
19 hours. So we thought that if the state ID, as
20 part of that, is important.

21 Oh, the traceability unit should
22 be defined by the government. We're talking

1 about the federal government should define
2 traceability, and it kind of gets us back to
3 the initial point that I talked about, that if
4 you're a Status I state but your traceability
5 unit is the whole state versus another state
6 where your traceability unit is maybe down at
7 the county level, that there's some disparity
8 there and whether or not that county level
9 state is willing to accept that.

10 So we felt that a uniform
11 traceability level would be a better, much
12 more consistent status. I think that pretty
13 much sums it up.

14 MS. MILLIS: Thank you.

15 Were there any other comments from
16 that table? Anyone else wanted to say
17 anything?

18 Let's go back to this table in the
19 center here.

20 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One of the core
21 questions we were asked to look at here was
22 what do we do with the Level III states, what

1 kind of sanction should we impose. And I
2 think it's important that USDA realizes we're
3 talking about non-compliant states, not
4 non-compliant producers. Imposing things like
5 shipping restrictions, extra costs through
6 veterinarian papers, that's going to hurt
7 producers, but it's also going to leave public
8 outcry as the sole method for effecting
9 change.

10 And as one of the few producers in
11 the room that doesn't come from Washington,
12 I'm pretty deeply concerned that public outcry
13 is not going to be sufficient motivation in a
14 lot of these states to push them to improve
15 their programs. I'm pretty concerned that a
16 Level III state may be happy as a Level III
17 state, regardless of extra money producers in
18 those states may be forced to pay.

19 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir.

20 Was there any other comment from
21 anyone at your table?

22 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Yes, thank you.

1 It's kind of covers some of the
2 same things that have been mentioned here, but
3 I think if you were going to get a Level III,
4 like I say, upgrade or be able to market
5 cattle interstate, it looks to me like you're
6 forcing a reduced price for the cattle, as has
7 already been alluded to, if somebody doesn't
8 comply, so I think what you're going to do is
9 you're going to create a group of people that
10 are going to take advantage of the situation.

11 I think probably one way you could
12 do that would be to certify some buyers that
13 will buy cattle that aren't tagged, and
14 naturally they're going to buy them at a
15 discount, but they would be certified to the
16 fact that they would buy ten head from this
17 guy and ten head from this guy and they would
18 have to keep records of where those cattle
19 came from, they would go ahead and tag the
20 cattle and proceed forward with the cattle
21 through the system.

22 And that way, if he did have a

1 problem, you could trace because to him and he
2 would have to produce the records of where he
3 bought these ten head, the next ten head, and
4 that way you could maybe get some of those
5 people to qualify at a little higher rate and
6 give your state a better rating, but you would
7 have to have some certification in there.

8 If you don't do that, all you're
9 going to do is create a bunch of midnight
10 count readers and buy these groups of cattle
11 and tag them themselves and play like the
12 cattle came from them and go into the system
13 and you've got no traceability back to this
14 ten head of cows or this ten head or this ten
15 head of cows that are existing out there, and
16 there goes all the traceability for disease
17 out the window.

18 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir.

19 Any other comments from that
20 table?

21 And we'll go up to this last
22 table, I think.

1 TABLE SPOKESMAN: We had quite a
2 bit of discussion on the traceability status
3 levels, and I think at the end of the
4 discussion, most of us agreed that there
5 needed to be some measuring stick or set of
6 standards developed.

7 We had also agreed that there
8 needed to be a mechanism for assistance to
9 help states and to be sure that there was a
10 very clear process for producers that resided
11 within a Level III state, that they still had
12 a process that they could go through to ensure
13 they could participate in the marketplace, to
14 ensure that this wasn't creating a barrier
15 against interstate commerce.

16 If a state, as a whole, was at a
17 low performance level, still ensuring that
18 individual producers had the opportunity to
19 participate in the marketplace.

20 We also thought that, in the
21 second bullet, where it says, how could the
22 industry contribute, we thought that should

1 be, have the word "market" inserted there in
2 terms of the marketplace driving this.

3 And as everybody has talked about
4 this, I think everyone understands the
5 potential that this system may leave, once
6 it's fully underway, that there could be two
7 grades of cattle identified and unidentified,
8 and realizing that there needs to be a clear
9 pathway for producers to participate and
10 ensure that they're not limited in their
11 ability to market cattle.

12 On the traceability status levels,
13 the I, II, and III, we also believe that state
14 animal health officials need to continue to
15 have the ability to utilize risk assessments
16 with neighboring animal health officials and
17 states or provinces to ensure that if an
18 individual state felt that they needed to do
19 something a little bit differently than what
20 was outlined in the system that they still had
21 the ability to do that to ensure that adequate
22 protections were in place.

1 In terms of additional
2 requirements on interstate movements of
3 animals, back to the idea that there needs to
4 be a mechanism for producers in those Level
5 III areas or regions to be able to participate
6 in the marketplace and be sure that there's
7 adequate outreach and education to get people
8 in compliance and to ensure that we can keep
9 the markets moving.

10 MS. MILLIS: Thank you, sir. And
11 were there additional comments from your
12 table? All right. Let me check in with the
13 group. This is our opportunity to hear back
14 on some of the answers to some of the
15 questions that you've been recording
16 throughout the day. Do you need a little
17 break or do you want to just go into the
18 questions?

19 Anyone needing a break? All
20 right. We're just going to head into the
21 questions then. Neil Hammerschmidt, you can
22 have my microphone.

1 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Hey, thanks,
2 Deb, you're so good.

3 Let's jump into a tough one that's
4 probably a little bit more complicated in the
5 cattle industry than maybe some of the other
6 species. Group lot identification, group lot
7 ID. Glad you came all the way from
8 Mississippi, Joe.

9 You know, when we started the
10 group lot concept quite sometime back, it was
11 certainly a concept that the poultry and swine
12 industry brought forward, really, the U.S.
13 Animal Identification Plan, probably six,
14 seven years ago. However, as discussions
15 continued, it was, and the whole idea of a
16 group lot ID was for a group of animals that
17 moved through the pre-harvest production
18 chain, that's typical of most species,
19 individual ID is not applicable or not
20 feasible and you don't gain anything by
21 identifying every individual in that group
22 from a traceability standpoint.

1 So the concept the swine industry
2 came up with, as well as poultry, was group
3 lot identification with a standard numbering
4 system to identify those animals.

5 The questions came shortly after,
6 is it applicable to the cattle industry? And
7 we had, gosh, one of the meetings, Dave, five
8 years ago, plus, probably half a day spent on
9 group lot ID, and at the end of the
10 discussion, the group as a whole said it's not
11 applicable to the cattle industry, and pros
12 and cons, and that's where it ended.

13 As you look at it from all the
14 perspectives, if in fact there is a group of
15 cattle that moved through the entire
16 production chain as a group, why wouldn't it
17 be applicable? So there was consideration
18 given to say, why not make that an option so
19 that if it is applicable, granted it's not
20 near as typical, obviously, as some of the
21 other species, that it can be supported.

22 Still, the way we move cattle,

1 feed cattle and such, the isolation of that
2 group through the entire production chain,
3 still more movements probably than poultry and
4 swine, it's not as clear-cut. But the intent
5 today is to support group lot ID for cattle
6 that move from the birth premises all the way
7 through the production chain as a group lot
8 ID.

9 That's basically the intent. I
10 think the confusion or the challenge of the
11 interpretation is what do I do with these 100
12 head that go through a feed lot. You can say
13 that they're maintained as a group, but
14 there's still some degree of commingling.

15 I think it's the intent to
16 recognize group lot ID, even if they pass
17 through a feed lot and they go to slaughter
18 from that facility. So maybe the practicality
19 or the scenarios aren't quite that common in
20 the cattle industry, but I think the intent of
21 the traceability framework is to support that
22 concept when it's applicable.

1 Dr. Dave and others have been
2 involved in this, maybe you have other points
3 of clarification or views that you have been
4 discussing this for clarification today, have
5 other questions that you still want to raise
6 on group lot identification. I think it's one
7 of those areas that has been brought to my
8 attention that we need to more clearly define.

9 In one of the documents in your
10 handout, and it's the longer one, in the very
11 back section, there is definitions, and a
12 group lot identification number is defined as
13 a term there, but it basically says a group of
14 livestock moving through the entire production
15 chain. And then for that, the number
16 appropriately used for those number animals
17 are also defined.

18 Dave, anything else, from your
19 perspective?

20 MR. MORRIS: No, that's good,
21 Neil, unless there's further questions.

22 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Anything else

1 from the group lot table?

2 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: No, we're just
3 trying to drive you crazy.

4 MR. MORRIS: You do a good job.

5 Okay, Washington State receives
6 480,000, plus or minus, cattle from Canada a
7 year. What is the USDA comes into the state
8 and how is the USDA going to ensure that they
9 are getting to the destination?

10 And I know there's been comments,
11 questions on imported cattle. Those that work
12 here in Washington from the state level, Dr.
13 Huntley, Dr. Eldridge, Lisa, any comments on
14 the question, comment?

15 DR. ELDRIDGE: Well, I guess, as
16 far as out-of-country cattle, we recognize
17 that as a risk and we want to keep track of
18 the individual animal identification. We
19 participate with USDA, they gave us individual
20 animal ID, and until the first of July this
21 year with funding just prohibits us from doing
22 that anymore.

1 We were putting that into a
2 database, and it allowed us, and I showed you
3 in the demonstration this morning, that we
4 could very quickly trace those animals back by
5 individual animal identification.

6 As far as the process at the
7 border, that's not something I can help you
8 with, but I can, once they get into the state,
9 do my best to keep track and make sure they
10 meet our entry requirements.

11 TABLE SPOKESMAN: The first
12 question is directed at the USDA because
13 that's their border crossing there. And there
14 is no attempt whatsoever, especially up in
15 Idaho, they have no facility to unload those
16 cattle nor do they have a position in which
17 they check that top deck.

18 What are we going to do to be more
19 proactive there at the state level? Dr.
20 Eldridge is handcuffed, but what are we going
21 to do at the border?

22 TABLE SPOKESMAN: They don't have

1 a spot in Idaho to go?

2 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: They unload
3 the cattle across the border in Canada, but
4 not slaughter cattle. Feeders and breeders
5 are unloaded. ID is checked on 10 percent of
6 the cattle.

7 TABLE SPOKESMAN: We've unloaded
8 hundreds of loads of them up in Eastport.

9 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: It's visually
10 checked, but only ten percent of ID are --

11 TABLE SPOKESMAN: There's a corral
12 and squeeze chute and a loading chute.

13 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: On the
14 Canadian side. We do not have an off-loading
15 facility in Eastport, Idaho --

16 TABLE SPOKESMAN: That's the
17 clarification we were asking for.

18 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: -- across the
19 border in Canada, we use their facility.
20 There's pens there and there's a barn.

21 DR. FERGUSON: They're off-loaded
22 in Canada, but the inspection is done by USDA

1 personnel in that facility in Canada, so it is
2 USDA personnel that are doing the inspection
3 in Canada, but it is USDA personnel.

4 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: It's a stone's
5 throw away. It's right there by the border
6 crossing.

7 TABLE SPOKESMAN: It's from here
8 to that window across the line. We borrow
9 their corrals, the USDA borrows the B.C.
10 corrals.

11 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Okay, where
12 did the 18-month age requirement for sexually
13 intact cattle come from? Wasn't it 24 months
14 before?

15 Currently in the CFR, there is a
16 requirement for animals to be moved interstate
17 that are over 24 months of age, sexually
18 intact, to have the equivalent of an ICVI and
19 official identification.

20 I think its intent, Jim and others
21 from the Working Group, is to work with an age
22 that's a little bit lower in recognition that,

1 over time, the intent is to bring all ages and
2 classes into the requirement for interstate
3 commerce, more of a graduated inclusion
4 process.

5 If it's really about traceability,
6 why are we having any exemptions? I think the
7 Working Group has dealt quite well with the
8 issues of exemptions when appropriate and
9 certain movements don't impose a high risk or
10 if those animals are easily traceable to make
11 some exemptions to prepare an ICVI for cattle
12 going direct to slaughter, you know, we can
13 question the value of that. I think in some
14 of the other cases, it's not really considered
15 an exemption, but we might have cattle
16 authorized to move interstate, going to a
17 market where they're tagged.

18 So, in essence, they are exempted,
19 but they're being tagged upon unloading, so I
20 think some of the intentions of the exemption
21 is to make the regulation more user-friendly,
22 more practical, more appropriate, and

1 certainly if we missed exemptions, if the
2 Working Group has gone too far, that's the
3 type of feedback we need from these types of
4 discussions.

5 So unless there's other questions
6 or specific comments, I'll go onto some of the
7 other questions.

8 TABLE SPOKESMAN: One little point
9 to the 18 months. I think the 24 months came
10 from the Brucellosis regulations, and we were
11 looking at all diseases. We would like to
12 have lowered the age even lower, but how do
13 you look at an animal and tell what age, 18
14 months is, from a practical standpoint, about
15 the lowest you can go until you get to all
16 out. 18 months was kind of a compromise
17 because, with TB, we're looking at six, eight,
18 ten-month-old animals, not just looking at the
19 sexually mature animals like Brucellosis was
20 doing.

21 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Thanks.

22 Please explain how the USDA will aid states

1 financially. Will the USDA provide
2 cooperative agreement dollars to states with
3 approved databases? And maybe some of these
4 questions were written before we had some of
5 the Q and As this morning, but I do want to
6 continue to comment that a significant portion
7 of our available funds for traceability goes
8 to the states to support their activities.

9 Again, states, a lot of states are
10 doing things differently. You know,
11 Washington certainly, I think, is setting a
12 good example of being out there. Wisconsin,
13 Michigan, Pennsylvania, Indiana, some of those
14 states, New York, Dr. Huntley is familiar
15 with, have done similar things with databases
16 and have made good headway.

17 When we look at how cooperative
18 agreements can be, dollars can be used in the
19 future, it's certainly going to still be
20 categorized as allowable expenses to have some
21 accountability in how those funds are used,
22 but certainly more broadly and more

1 responsibility at the state level.

2 We're looking more and more at the
3 outcomes, measuring the outcomes, letting the
4 states work with their local industries on
5 determining how to get there. So certainly
6 more flexibility is appropriate in how those
7 dollars are spent.

8 Data entry, you know, whatever the
9 state wants to do to support their approved
10 work plan, putting appropriate dollar
11 estimates towards those activities and
12 certainly those dollars can be used. I think
13 the question, or maybe the challenge will be,
14 are there going to be enough dollars. And I
15 think we look at some of the other questions
16 that are on the chart, yeah, we would like to
17 do, sometimes, a lot more, but it's not any
18 different than your budgets, you prioritize
19 available dollars and you fund, in your
20 operations, the most important ones.

21 A good example is, from our
22 availability of dollars, we think it's

1 justified to consider terminating an animal's
2 official ID number at harvest, slaughter. Is
3 that the top priority to put dollars at, down
4 the middle, or even further down? Certainly
5 not the top priority. We would like to be
6 able to take that number out of the population
7 so our animal health officials are not looking
8 for animals removed from the population if
9 that animal is a potentially exposed animal in
10 a disease investigation.

11 But if we only get half the
12 dollars that we've requested from Congress,
13 that might be an activity that doesn't get put
14 in place because we don't have enough dollars
15 to do all of those kind of things. So I think
16 the same will go true at the state level, Dr.
17 Eldridge might want to do 150 things and he
18 gets adequate funding to do 80 of them, so I
19 assume he'll work with you guys to help
20 determine where the priorities are.

21 We already talked about the group
22 lot ID. Again, another comment about tag

1 retirement, and I think there was some other
2 questions, we are not looking at imposing that
3 burden or responsibility on the state in which
4 the packing plant resides in. And we're not
5 going to dump and run that area of
6 responsibility on the packer for entering the
7 tag number into a database. What we're
8 wanting them to do is to collect the tag for
9 us. We will be responsible for the resources,
10 the manpower, the process to actually see that
11 the number gets entered into a database for
12 retirement if we have those funds available.

13 Is the USDA considering a state
14 code on the tags? Again, obviously, with the
15 silver tag Brucellosis vaccination tag, the
16 state code is part of those tags for the
17 format that's been established, so the
18 question might most likely be, in regards to
19 the 840 series tag, where 840 is the numeric
20 equivalent for USA, Dr. Dave, I'm sorry, for
21 example, Canada and Mexico, they have country
22 codes, Canada is 120.

1 MR. MORRIS: 124, and the next
2 code is 484.

3 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: So the code
4 that's a universal numbering system where all
5 the countries have three digits assigned to
6 them and the 15 character number starts with
7 those three digits for each country. Ours is
8 840. I think the question is, can the next
9 two spaces, for example, be reserved for a
10 state number?

11 We've looked at that several
12 different times and ways, not saying it can't
13 be done, but when we start inventorying tags
14 that are \$2 apiece and we bought, for example,
15 one and a half million tags and inventoried
16 them, that's one huge inventory. To break
17 that up 50 different ways, inventory numbers,
18 with that type of tag, it gets to be a bigger
19 burden, cost-wise and administration-wise.

20 It certainly is something that can
21 be considered if it's essential, but I think
22 for a visual determination, and granted,

1 that's when you're working the cattle or have
2 the cattle constrained, some of the states are
3 putting state abbreviations on the main part
4 of that tag.

5 In California, every tag that they
6 bring into California has CA imprinted on the
7 back, so you almost have the equivalent of the
8 silver tag, granted, it's not part of the
9 number itself, so we'll continue to look and
10 consider that.

11 Dr. Eldridge, I passed you a slip
12 that had quite a few questions for yourself,
13 so I'm going to let you go over those, if you
14 would like.

15 MR. MORRIS: Neil, if I could
16 interrupt just a quick second.

17 Dr. Gaborich had a really good
18 comment relative to the issue of collecting
19 tags at slaughter facilities and is worth
20 sharing.

21 TABLE SPOKESWOMAN: I didn't want
22 to give the false impression that we do not

1 currently collect tags at slaughter, because
2 we do through our Brucellosis program. We do
3 have an MCI program for Brucellosis, which
4 means that any cattle, adult cattle, bulls and
5 cows, two years and over at slaughter plants
6 ID and blood samples are collected for the
7 Brucellosis program.

8 Now do the tags get recorded in a
9 database? I can't speak for all states, and
10 in Idaho, we do write those tags down, but
11 they are on paper, they're not in an
12 electronic database. I don't know what other
13 states do, some states, I assume, probably
14 don't write them down. They run the
15 Brucellosis samples, if they're negative and
16 they just record all of that as negative data
17 and the tags never get retired.

18 Currently, again, those tags
19 should be being collected at slaughter,
20 backtags and the brite tags that we're talking
21 about and other tags as well. We do need to
22 do better, and I think that's the point here.

1 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: That is the
2 point. There is the requirement on the books.
3 Some plants do a better job.

4 DR. ELDRIDGE: I have four
5 questions to answer. As a now Washington
6 producer, your comments and those of Dr.
7 Watson clearly indicate the priority of
8 traceability problem is at the state
9 veterinarian office. You haven't developed an
10 efficient data retrieval system for the
11 information that is already there. Why should
12 producers be subjected to yet another federal
13 regulation when you can't officially access
14 the information we've willingly already given
15 you?

16 And this person is right. We do
17 have a huge amount of information, but as I
18 said this morning, it's in file cabinets, it's
19 paper-based, it's hard to retrieve. And when
20 we don't know, for example, the information
21 about is it a certain date or is it a certain
22 health certificate number or something like

1 that, it's almost inaccessible to us. That
2 needs to be entered into a database, and as I
3 said this morning, we're in the final stages
4 of developing that. The problem is, we don't
5 have the money for data entry, it takes folks
6 to enter that information accurately.

7 So I hope that answers the
8 question. Do we want more information? Yeah,
9 I don't have that individual animal ID that
10 we've been talking about all day, but I do
11 have a certain amount of traceability and
12 that's what we looked at, is using the
13 existing information that we have today and
14 work from there forward.

15 So hopefully that answers that
16 one.

17 The next one, where can we access
18 a written copy of your state plan so we can
19 read the fine print and know what is in it?
20 And to me, that's what we're doing here,
21 folks. I don't have a written plan yet
22 because I'm trying to figure out where we're

1 at. We've been talking about Phase I, Phase
2 II, Phase III, and the different requirements
3 and so forth all day long.

4 I'll plan on taking what
5 information has been gathered at all these
6 kind of meetings next week in Denver. I'm
7 hoping to get something that we can get our
8 teeth into, and then I can go ahead, with your
9 input and your help, develop a system that
10 you're all comfortable with and that we can
11 serve the industry.

12 And so the next one, you mentioned
13 that there are 50 different state vets and 50
14 different ideas or approaches. Isn't that a
15 recipe for disaster for the U.S. cattle
16 industry?

17 Well, I guess, folks, that's
18 reality. We've got different resources, we've
19 got different things to do. At the end of the
20 day, in the areas, and I talk constantly to
21 the state veterinarians in Idaho, Montana,
22 Oregon, Utah, California, we're close enough

1 to do a lot of things the same that we can
2 serve the industry. It's just a deal of
3 getting it done. And, yeah, the Good Lord
4 didn't make us all think the same, but we're
5 doing our best to try to work through the
6 thing.

7 And the last one is, you mentioned
8 new human diseases each year from animals.
9 Are you trying to wipe out the livestock
10 industry by giving activists information?

11 Well, folks, it's reality. I just
12 wanted folks to know what reality is, and it
13 certainly is public, so look at today. We're
14 talking about salmonella in eggs, we talk
15 about E.coli in hamburger, these are things
16 that are reality. I hope that answers these
17 questions and I appreciate the thoughts,
18 because it does give me food for thought.

19
20 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Thank you,
21 appreciate it. You know, we talked about the
22 cattle industry and we probably haven't hardly

1 acknowledged some of the other species. We've
2 had some discussions on the sheep industry at
3 another table.

4 In the longer document that has
5 preliminary content of the proposed rule, and
6 this is, we probably didn't mention this all
7 day, this longer document basically contains
8 everything that the Working Group has
9 discussed and provides recommendations on.
10 It's more than we could actually get through
11 today.

12 I think, again, Dr. Watson most
13 appropriately focused on the cattle industry,
14 but in the middle of that document, on page
15 10, there are some references to some of the
16 other primary species -- swine, poultry,
17 horses, and such -- to kind of at least
18 acknowledge what the thought is in regards to
19 those species and, for the most part, those
20 species will be continued to be addressed from
21 a traceability standpoint through regulations
22 that exist in current disease programs.

1 Scrapie is a good example. The
2 equine industry, for the most part, does not
3 have a specific disease in the disease program
4 identified in the Code of Federal Regulations,
5 but there are a couple under development,
6 which this section of the CFR would refer to
7 but you see referenced to the swine industry
8 and poultry industry in that document, so
9 they're not overlooked, per se. I think for
10 the most part, some of the existing
11 regulations cover those species fairly
12 appropriately.

13 So another question was, in
14 regards to how I think this gentleman said it
15 earlier, a lot of the issues, the details are
16 yet to be determined, but it's certainly the
17 intent to make sure that those evaluations are
18 done cooperatively with the state, but
19 certainly independent from any biases so that
20 they are meaningful and reflect appropriate
21 procedures that are uniform across the entire
22 country.

1 Certainly, the USDA will
2 ultimately be responsible for the protocols
3 for evaluating those, but certainly those will
4 be defined with the animal health officials at
5 the state level. And how often, you know, as
6 you look at the traceability issues, this
7 isn't something that can change overnight, as
8 far as you're good one day and not so good the
9 next day, you have to mature into those
10 practices that you put in at the state level.

11 So we don't look at thorough
12 evaluations happening, not even every year,
13 whether it's every two years, every three
14 years, that's yet to be determined. Certainly
15 the states that are in that Level II more
16 frequently, so hopefully an indication of
17 making progress or losing ground can be
18 determined.

19 For Level III, we've kind of left
20 it up to the state to ask for an evaluation
21 when they're ready to be reevaluated,
22 hopefully, with the intentions of leaving

1 Level II.

2 Dr. Morris, you had a couple of
3 questions that I thought maybe you would want
4 to take the opportunity to respond to.

5

6 MR. MORRIS: Thanks, Neil.

7 The first question here is how
8 often do you foresee going back farther than
9 six months to trace an animal?

10 I think that's an excellent
11 question, and as many of you probably have
12 learned here throughout the day, that some
13 things that are seemingly so simple can be
14 somewhat complex. And I'll initiate my answer
15 by stating that there is no such thing as an
16 average disease, meaning that if indeed we are
17 looking at Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy,
18 and pardon me for using that as an example,
19 but if the incubation period is 60 months,
20 then the concept of assessing tracing
21 capability only goes back six months would be
22 illogical.

1 By the same token, that is an
2 example of the transmission of Encephalopathy,
3 in which the transmission occurs at or shortly
4 after birth, and in that scheme of things,
5 that true book end system is appropriate.

6 Another classic example is the Sheep Scrapie
7 program. It's an excellent program in terms
8 of tracing capability, focused primarily as a
9 disease-specific traceability again because of
10 a disease transmission in which book end is
11 adequate for successful measuring of
12 eradication.

13 Conversely, if we look at Bovine
14 Tuberculosis, where transmission can occur in
15 many different locations along the animal's
16 life, then we're looking at trying to fill in
17 the dots between the book end birth or the
18 first identification and termination, wherever
19 that may or may not be, rendering, whatever.
20 So the need for information on tracing
21 capability, and here again, please don't
22 anticipate that it's always strictly a

1 database, because as Dr. Eldridge illustrated
2 in his slides earlier today, don't forget that
3 picture of personnel that are in the field
4 conducting information and accessing
5 information from an investigation standpoint.

6 So it's a combination of
7 historical data in those database systems,
8 combined with field investigation that is the
9 essence here of looking at traceability.

10 Even if we have data in the
11 database, we're going to have to validate it
12 in an actual disease investigation scenario.

13 How often do I foresee going back
14 six months to trace an animal? I think in
15 terms of measuring tracing capability, and as
16 Dr. Watson and six other state veterinarians
17 have recently experienced, it can be
18 challenging, but it will be necessary because
19 we do have to provide test exercises that
20 cover a wide range of possibilities relative
21 to accessing at least historical Animal
22 Disease Traceability information.

1 The next question probably
2 addresses some of the simplistic, complex
3 aspects. Are all feed lots eligible to
4 receive feeders exempt from individual ID or
5 are just slaughter-only feed lots eligible to
6 receive feeders?

7 Well, the simplicity and
8 complexity comes in the definition of a
9 feeder. Are cull cows and bulls feeder
10 animals? In some situations, that, indeed,
11 well may be the case, or is it strictly what
12 most people think of in terms of feeder
13 animals relative to the exemption from the
14 rule?

15 So it's not really a
16 straightforward question. However, in trying
17 to make it simple and I think addressing the
18 spirit of the question, at present the
19 recommendation, and here again, once you see
20 the proposed rule, the opportunity to comment
21 is that the eligibility to receive
22 feeder-exempt animals from individual ID would

1 probably last until approximately 2013. After
2 2013, pending state regulations, from a
3 federal standpoint, it would then shift.

4 The last question, and one that's
5 kind of my favorite question, actually, is the
6 issue here of disease traceability and
7 surveillance versus animal traceability and
8 how should a producer or state support this
9 concept?

10 I think it's been alluded to
11 throughout the day, but the essence of
12 combining some type of location identification
13 system with a unique ID at a point in time is
14 the essence of tracing capability. However,
15 the states wishing to associate those three
16 criteria, it certainly is up to their, as
17 Leonard says, resources to be able to do so.

18 But I think what we have to
19 remember is that if we take those three basic
20 criteria and we combine it with a marketing
21 attribute, we have an ag marketing system,
22 agricultural marketing system, value-added

1 program. If we take that attribute with
2 negative test data -- and that's what Dr.
3 Gavorich was getting at with her response
4 relative to accepting or collecting tags at
5 slaughter -- if we combine that data with
6 negative test data, we have surveillance, and
7 the importance of surveillance cannot be
8 underestimated in how Leonard, Dr. Watson, any
9 state, begins to integrate their animal health
10 system because it's the documentation of
11 disease freedom, the access of negative test
12 data that will primarily keep your animals
13 moving interstate. Yes, the traceability
14 thing cannot be underestimated as well, but
15 it's the documentation of disease freedom
16 that's going to help you continue doing
17 business as usual.

18 So my point being is that the
19 challenge here, I think, is because Animal
20 Disease Traceability differs from theft
21 mitigation in the fact that not only do we
22 need to know where those animals have been, we

1 need to know who those animals have been in
2 contact with, and in addition, to be able to
3 document disease freedom, whether it be from
4 information in a surveillance program at
5 slaughter or other test attributes along the
6 way and frequency of epidemiological design.

7 So the ultimate issue and
8 challenge again for our state and federal
9 partners is to establish a disease
10 surveillance program based upon location,
11 unique ID, and a point in time. And with
12 that, then, we can best serve the producers
13 and any and all domestic and international
14 marketing opportunities.

15 So, Neil, with that said, I think
16 I've concluded my questions.

17 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Thanks, Dave.
18 Okay, a couple more here. What process will
19 be used when an animal has lost the original
20 official tag? Will it be retagged, based on
21 current location and possession?

22 What we're looking at, certainly

1 tags are lost, they fall out, so if I had
2 moved cattle in, they came in tagged, and
3 along the way a couple animals have lost their
4 official tag, certainly before I would be able
5 to move those animals interstate, based on the
6 specific regulation, an official ID tag would
7 be necessary for those animals.

8 Ideally, I would be able to retag
9 the animal and associate it with the animal's
10 original number. We realize that can't be
11 done all the time, but certainly maintaining
12 a record that this number that I applied to
13 this animal was a retag animal so that that at
14 least is part of my records at the farm level.

15 And that, at this point, we're not
16 looking at reporting that, a requirement for
17 reporting that retagging, and that type of
18 information, but I think it would be of merit
19 for the producer to maintain that type of
20 information locally.

21 I want to turn this over to Dr.
22 Huntley or Dr. Eldridge. Will the western

1 state pasture permit process (no CEIA) be
2 discontinued?

3 DR. ELDRIDGE: Say that again, the
4 western states --

5 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Will the
6 western state pasture permit process be
7 discontinued?

8 DR. ELDRIDGE: We have, in
9 Washington, a pasture permit with our
10 contiguous states. That is Idaho and Oregon,
11 that is the only place where we do that
12 agreement. That process is where a producer
13 in, like I say, Washington, wants to send some
14 cattle to summer pasture in Idaho, they send
15 that pasture, send that permit to me, I verify
16 the information that's on there, that the
17 cattle remains vaccinated and all that, and
18 then it's sent to Idaho.

19 And Idaho then verifies that those
20 cattle are under fence, not commingled. These
21 pasture permits are not issued for grazing
22 where there's multiple herds in there. And

1 only on these two states do we allow that to
2 occur. So are we planning on discontinuing
3 that? Well, I want to work with the industry,
4 and I think that would be quite a burden to
5 folks that own pasture and/or own ground in
6 both states, so that they can go and do their
7 business as usual and so forth.

8 So we'll probably not discontinue
9 it, in those two, but it isn't, it doesn't
10 exist to go beyond that, never has.

11 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Thanks,
12 Leonard. Another question, where will
13 producers get the official tags from? So,
14 again, on the silver tag, that's a state
15 issue. You'll be contacting Dr. Huntley, the
16 ADIC or Dr. Eldridge to become knowledgeable
17 on how those tags are obtained. The silver
18 tag, obviously, the Brucellosis tag still
19 specific to vaccination, the availability of
20 Scrapie tags won't change, the 840 tag
21 distribution process won't change.

22 We currently have, Dave, I think,

1 14 manufacturers?

2 MR. MORRIS: Yes.

3 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: Plus or minus
4 ten in that neighborhood with nearly 40
5 different types of tags, including visual only
6 to RF ID button tags for the equine industry,
7 injectable transponders and so forth, the
8 availability of those devices and protocols
9 for reporting the distribution will remain
10 unchanged.

11 A couple other questions real
12 quick. I believe this is sheep and goats.
13 Are our tags tagging based on OIE/EU
14 standards? To the best of my knowledge, there
15 really aren't OIE standards, per se, on tags,
16 tagging. There are recommendations of OIE on
17 traceability standards and things like that
18 that certainly USDA is in tune with.

19 There's another question, and I'm
20 not sure it's a complete question, but
21 multiple tags, so there might be still some
22 confusion or needing clarification on the

1 issue of multiple tags and/why. And some of
2 the animal health officials here can voice
3 their opinion on the pros and cons of an
4 animal, heifer cow, for example, with multiple
5 brite tags.

6 I think we've had some good
7 discussion way back when we started the
8 discussions with the industry on this, and if
9 I have the ear in hand and there's three or
10 four brite tags on the ear, that's pretty good
11 information because you almost have the
12 database in your hand where the animal has
13 probably been for good reference points.

14 The problem is when the animal is
15 being moved and you're recording a number and
16 that animal is at five different locations,
17 every point along the way had a different one
18 number recorded on the ICVI, and so if that
19 animal is part of a disease investigation,
20 which number shows up, which one is lacking.
21 Now the process might point to five different
22 animals, but in essence, it's just really for

1 one animal. So the Working Group, with input
2 from a lot of people directly involved with
3 trace back work, recommends that we limit the
4 brite tags to one brite tag, if you will, per
5 animal.

6 That, when that number needs to be
7 put on a certificate, ICVI, that it's recorded
8 instead of adding another one. Our table had
9 some good discussion on the pros and cons and
10 practicality of that chore. That is the
11 current recommendation of the Working Group,
12 with the understanding that if there are ways
13 to automate the data collection through, for
14 example, RF ID, they want the opportunity,
15 here's an animal with a tag or silver tag
16 whatever reason, management, marketing
17 purposes that if the producer deems it
18 necessary, beneficial, to have an official RF
19 ID tag, that that be appropriate because that
20 increases the readability of that number, with
21 the understanding that the number on the brite
22 tag would be recorded and associated with the

1 RF ID code.

2 So that's some of the background
3 on the issue of multiple tags and the
4 recommendation of the Working Group to
5 restrict maybe a practice that in the past has
6 been fairly common to really improve the
7 traceability from their standpoint with the
8 understanding that there are some
9 disadvantages.

10 Please.

11 TABLE SPOKESMAN: Would one tag be
12 sufficient for an operation of multiple
13 species?

14 MR. HAMMERSCHMIDT: So you've got
15 sheep and cattle on your premises, your farm,
16 is the question. You know what, the Sheep
17 Scrapie Program, there are tags specifically
18 approved for sheep flock, plus a management
19 number. Those tags are usually a lot smaller.
20 Those are pretty much limited to sheep.

21 So, in that case, you would
22 probably be at a disadvantage and it's

1 probably not appropriate to put the sheep tags
2 on your cattle. Are there other cases where
3 there's tags that are multi-species
4 appropriate and usable? Certainly the brite
5 tag, nine character brite tag is used on
6 cattle, swine, possibly deer and elk use the
7 same type of tag, so there are some of those
8 tags that can be used, but I think when we
9 look at the sheep industry, those tags are
10 specifically approved for sheep and goats for
11 the Scrapie Program.

12 If you look at some of the 840
13 tags, the button tags and different sizes of
14 panel tags, there will be some of those tags
15 that are listed for two, three different
16 species-appropriate, based on their size and
17 configuration.

18 Certainly the metal tags, there
19 are tags that we still call silver tag that
20 have eight characters but are a smaller tag,
21 with eight characters instead of nine, but
22 those are usually for the species that are

1 smaller, smaller ears so the retention is
2 better with the smaller tag.

3 So it varies on which type of tag
4 you're looking at. Does that help you?

5 I think that's the questions. I
6 apologize if I've missed any. I know there
7 was other comments. Those comments will be
8 collected and taken forward by Lisa and others
9 to make sure they become part of the record
10 for this meeting as well.

11 MS. MILLIS: Let me just check in
12 with folks now. Are there any other questions
13 that people have before I turn the floor back
14 to Dr. Ferguson?

15 All right, well, then, it's back
16 to you, Dr. Ferguson.

17 DR. FERGUSON: Thank you. And I
18 won't keep folks hardly any longer, I would
19 just like to say thanks to everybody for
20 coming out today. I think we've heard a lot
21 of very good comments, we've heard a lot of
22 thoughtful points, some good suggestions and

1 discussion.

2 Let me draw folks' attention to
3 additional places to get information. First
4 of all, let me point out again that there's
5 some more detailed documents in your packet.
6 If you get home and you have time to read
7 through those, I really would encourage you to
8 do so. There is a lot more specifics in those
9 documents that we didn't have time to get into
10 today.

11 We are also committed to being
12 very transparent on our website, and if you
13 click on the traceability link, you can find
14 a wide variety of different things, including
15 transcripts from all of the public meetings.
16 We will be transcribing this one, that will be
17 posted on the web also.

18 So I believe we also have, we've
19 got the Tell APHIS website, I'm looking at
20 Joel to help me out to get that correct, so if
21 folks want to use that to provide

22 If you want to go to the Tell

1 APHIS website, it's USDA.gov and it's a little
2 link that says, Tell APHIS in the upper
3 right-hand corner, so you can go in there.

4 And you cannot just submit comments and ideas,
5 but you can vote on other people's ideas, so
6 there's already some suggestions and thoughts
7 up there, so feel free, go in, see what's
8 there, add to the discussion. We love that.

9 And if I might, we are also still
10 accepting written comments for the
11 traceability suggestions through August 30th,
12 so if you have any additional thoughts that
13 you didn't feel comfortable sharing today in
14 a public forum but you would like to submit in
15 writing, you certainly can do so as well, and
16 that is through regulations.gov, and there's
17 a link on our website as well.

18 DR. FERGUSON: Thanks, Joel. Let
19 me just take one last chance here. Let me
20 acknowledge Dr. Eldridge for assisting us here
21 today and giving us the opportunity to host
22 here. Dr. Watson, Brian Thomas are members of

1 the Working Group, thanks again to you guys
2 for coming out and helping us, and I believe
3 that's it for today, so everybody drive
4 safely. Thanks.

5 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
6 matter was concluded at 3:02 p.m.)

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