Animal Disease Traceability Forum Participant Feedback

(verbatim transcription of handwritten comments submitted by participants)

1. What was the most enlightening moment for you?

- Hearing different states (tribes) challenges
- Short notice April 1
- To promote a healthy industry
- Realizing that we must at the state level, be able to trace animals within each of our respective states…and share that time frame as part of documenting our current performance
- Since there are treaty disputes between our tribes (NY) and state government for the past 220 years, I may not communicate directly (state) with any native Americans…Our department lawyers do that. The degree of misinformation and lack of understanding by many tribal participants surprised me. I appreciate the chance to interact and learn about their perspectives even though USDA will have to carry tribal relations in NY.
- USDA seems to listen to what states are wanting.
- Truly a listening session for states/tribes
- We use the term animal traceability more than animal disease traceability-Finally we have to track the animal to track the disease
- VS will continue to provide & maintain the systems already in place (through NAIS)
- During the group sessions realizing how many opinions there are among the State Vets and the ID Coordinators…Then seeing great unity
- The outcome session right between lunch on the second day
- Although the standards published in the CFR will define animal disease traceability in the US, market forces may result in a much higher standard for animal identification to meet industry needs for the speed of commerce and international trade.
- Lack of nationwide agreement of specific direction for program
- Impression that the administrative and secretary are more focused on transparency and small enterprises than industry & [illegible] management.
- Same program to be sold to producers just using different terminology…we will be a joke for trying to “fool” producers
- Short informal talk at regional epi about how to measure performance
- As I expected, USDA really does not have a plan
- Did not realize the use of backtags as official ID outside slaughter channels was so large
- APHIS/VS verbalized that they will work with states closer and better to move forward…It dawned on me that it seems that USDA wants a mandatory traceability system but will wait for states to do it!
- What my tribe should consider the options available from the USDA/APHIS. Traceability wise.
- How much this process is dominated by cattle and cattle states?
- How much T.B. & Brucellosis is still prevalent in western states
- The group discussion on the first day was really good
Perhaps not the most enlightening, but a surprise, was that the tribes continue to stay “hung up” on sovereignty. If they expect to continue to market nationally, they will have to be held to the same standards as all of the non-tribal producers across the country.

That every state does things different

Realizing (sort of) how the meeting was organized and what its output would be

2. What possibilities do you see in this new approach for Animal Traceability?

- Better compliance for ID of all cattle
- It’s great, let’s go for it
- Educating the producer about disease…it is important to protect our areas
- This time we must NOT fail, or Congress will not support our efforts
- Hopefully more palatable for the vocal deserters of the NAIS…because they don’t move animals interstate (many of them); low cost ID options and CUI’s required for interstate movements by 9CFR continues and reinforces NY current regulations.
- Having all cattle tagged
- Slow incremental approach to animal traceability, but we are still getting it accomplished using existing methods accepted/shared between states
- Chance to discuss w/stakeholders w/o “NAIS baggage”
- Chance to get back to traditional acceptable I.D.
- I think the new approach allows flexibility for states, but I’m not sure that’s a good thing all together…It will be better for those who wanted the states in charge—hopefully more buy-in from them
- A starting point
- Better potential flexibility to meet the needs of producers across the entire spectrum of management systems
- If a consensus is built, a workable plan (entry level) designed, and the program can be efficiently implemented, the program may survive and improve as it expands. Another 7 year delay or lack of a workable consensus will [illegible]
- Possibility of having a national electronic health certificate system as a basis for recording animal movement
- Opportunity to get cheap official I.D’s in cattle before or as they enter commerce.
- Retooling existing program, metal official tags
- A more favorable perception by producers and participants at the farm/livestock market level of animal tracing projects
- A more verified CFR that revises traceable permanent ID for interstate movement and compliance concerns
- Better permanent ID tag systems
- A baseline for IDing animals in interstate commerce
- USDA needs to use the information provided from this forum to set standards required for interstate movements in CFR…this rule should include a CVI and ID for all animals moving interstate
- Opportunity for states to help establish the national standards
- The opportunity for the industry nationwide to participate in establishing a prudent program to protect itself
Develop a C/S program for producers…maybe this involves added component??
More producer participation if less Federal mandate regarding animal I.D.
I foresee, that requiring producers to retire tags will result in producers requiring RRID tags that they can harvest electronically, thus requiring incoming animals to have EID

3. What are you still feeling challenged by?

- Whether R-C/f members will buy in
- When the animal is ear tagged
- (Producers) Will USDA purchase wands & computers to help promote animal traceability?
- What will the standards be as far as answering questions in my home state from producers and organizations?
- Gaining compliance on current and future federal state CVI and ID requirements for livestock moving interstate to and from NY
- Will USDA require CVI to be electronically searched?
- USDA trust the states to get the work done using USDA assistance/guidelines and state resources
- Feds are abrogating their responsibility as creating uniform standards and the resulting systems from various states
- IT systems are so far from adequate and movement forward seems forever stalls…
- Sorting through it all and not losing the momentum gained in the work alone the past four + years
- The numerous databases are still a challenge, VSPS is very non-user friendly
- Being able to trace an individual ID number in either a state or fed database – i.e. could be any number of databases!
- Lack of personnel and computer hardware to trace animals within the state
- Meeting the needs of producers who embraced NAIS concepts while simultaneously re-establishing a more traditional system of identification and tracebacks—re-establishing some practices we tried to discourage under NAIS
- Lack of clear consensus on animals to be IDed, and indicating the number of improved devices will be too broad
- Lack of useful records at beef farms
- Lack of infrastructure resources and personnel to manage traceability data
- USDA needs to show more leadership—quit using “Required” and use “Mandatory” because it is
- Take responsibility; don’t pass it to the states
- Information management and recording significant events in animal’s life history
- No money for a database
- Data entry
- Very confused about IT data management devices and inter operability with other data systems
- Timeline in June
- Still don’t know what animals are to be IDed, high risk, 18mos, breeding, enrolled in disease eradication programs, all?
● The IT capabilities and options available, getting the IT equipment & programs through the OCIO in my own state…I hope we can use John Picanso as an intermediary as we deal with our own OCIO’s
● Uniformity between states and tribes and national, we need to have 1 system with flexibility within
● How to guide process overall
● What will performance standards be? Will they be achievable?
● Getting producers on board, this will still require tracing animals to farm that move interstate—so only those animals staying in state will be exempt

4. What would you like to see happen next? Describe your comfort level in moving forward.

● A strong definite statement from secretary Vilsack & USDA explaining mandatory ID for interstate movement and punishment for violations
● Steel ear tags, interstate movement
● USDA needs to make a standard…make it happen, if not turn the money back and drop it…quit passing the buck
● First point identification (with either metal or rfid tags as producers request)
● We need a concrete rule to get anything moving off dead center, which is where we are now!
● Definition of traceability standards and formulation of proposed rule; a framework is being established for uniform standards/documentation for interstate movement of livestock; while there will be “grouping pains” associated with traceability implementation, I am optimistic that the framework being established will enable more consistent and rapid traceability in the future
● A well defined rule that is backed by USDA
● Allow state health official identification using state PIN to a state physical location – tracking and reconciling would be done at state level
● Working within and between states to come up with workable ID/traceability plans
● Publish a minimum set of rules for animal traceability
● Clarity and simplicity in a step wise effort get a final rule – build the broadest possible base of producer support—be deliberate—keep everyone informed and more forward
● Taking of new rule through APA and publication of performance standards
● Definition of interstate commerce
  ○ sale barns
  ○ slaughter facilities
● NY is already doing most of what USDA is currently proposing. The biggest source of discomfort is the clumsy change in terminology
● Clear concise information sharing opportunities- maybe another meeting with state and health officials
● Not to re-invent the wheel, but to improve ID capabilities
● Draft rules with state/tribe/industry input
● Simple species specific rules, must be simplified NOT like scrapie
● It would help if USDA would finally draw the line that all cattle must be IDed to move interstate, PERIOD! This would simplify the process for the states.
• Engage stakeholders at state level (not USDA driven) get R-Calf, stakeholders on working group

5. What worked well for you around this meeting’s interactive process and what could have been better or done differently?

• Roundtable discussions
• Its going great, keep going
• Meeting with the appropriate people and them understand us and us understanding them
• Given the circumstances, this was a difficult topic and a huge challenge to APHIS-VS staff; I would like to have seen an opportunity to provide more written material
• Discussion groups with different individuals for each breakout session gave me greater interaction to other participants (and more participants) than sitting on one group for 2 days would have provided
• Meeting was good
• Ability to attend 4 breakout sessions and having the notes of all breakout sessions typed up— I liked the support and representation of APHIS staff
• Great job – little time to put together
• Good discussions, breakout sessions (4 topics)
• Well done in light of the members and the diverse opinions within the group
• Format seemed to drag to a standstill at times
• There was a very open exchange of ideas; positive atmosphere was maintained despite the potential for controversy. Everyone had a chance to voice their opinion; I appreciated the input of tribal representatives. I better understand their concerns.
• Small group discussions weren’t very useful
• Morning session in ballroom was very large & made hearing difficult at our table
• Open sessions to allow feedback from states, it would have been better for me if some, if possible of the information highlights could have been distributed prior
• Many people were frustrated because they mistakenly assumed that APHIS was going to tell us what was going to happen instead of actually listening to us. I hope that APHIS-VS will continue to take the states & industry’s advice and keep practicality & common sense in this process
• We needed industry people input, feeder, stockyard personnel, and slaughter house people
• I liked the forum; hopefully it will generate a complete agenda for the working committee