

USDA
General Session 9 AM
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NOTE: FS = Female Speaker, MS = Male Speaker

AR: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We're going to get started. I just want to let you know that my name is Anna Rynick and I work with APHIS and I'm going to be your moderator this morning. We are here to listen and we want you to tell us what you think. I want to start off before we get the speakers going just quickly asking—we're going to pull lottery tickets to get the order of speakers and to fairly allocate the time. So if anybody even thinks they might want to comment or ask a question, please make sure you have a red ticket. If you don't and you want one, if you could raise your hand and we'll make sure you get one. I will tell you at the beginning, we're perfecting this whole lottery method so there might be a couple of bumps in the road today but we'll get through it. We just wanted a more equitable system for people to have a chance to talk here. But, as you'll hear many times today, there are many opportunities to be heard. Please remember to submit written comments if you don't feel you had enough time or you didn't get to speak. And also—the breakout sessions this afternoon will be more time for you to comment and be heard. Please take advantage of all the different opportunities. I'm just going to turn it over to Dr. Jerry Dick, who's going to welcome you all here.

JD: Good morning. My name is Dr. Jerry Dick. I work for USDA Veterinary Services, and I certainly would like to welcome you to this first in a series of listening sessions that will occur across the United States concerning the National Animal ID System or, as you will hear it referred to, as NAIS. I want to thank you all for taking your valuable time away from your farms, your jobs, from your home, to attend this meeting and share your views. I'll keep my remarks brief because this meeting we're here to listen to you and what your views are. In response to concerns about increased pests and disease threats to livestock, APHIS along with its stakeholders began about five years to develop the National ID program. The system enables animal health officials and producers to respond more rapidly and effectively to foreign animal disease outbreaks in the U.S., which has always been one of APHIS' USDA's core missions. The long term goal of NAIS is to provide State and Federal officials with the capability to identify all animals and premises that have had potential contact with the disease of concern within 48 hours of discovery.

However, despite five years of concerted effort, we have not been able to fully implement the NAIS. A significant number of our stakeholders have been divided over this issue and we recognize that many real and significant challenges remain before anyone can confidently claim that the United States has an effective animal disease traceability system in place. Secretary Vilsack is aware of APHIS's many efforts in the past to engage stakeholders to support NAIS and he is also aware that USDA's position on various aspects of the NAIS have not always been entirely consistent. The Secretary strongly believes that our nation needs a modern, nationwide system in place to protect the health of U.S. livestock. As he mentioned at a recent congressional hearing, if at some point in the future we confirm that a sample is positive for the 2009 H1N1 influenza, APHIS and state animal health officials would immediately begin an epidemiological investigation to determine if any other herds have been exposed to affected animals. Secretary Vilsack also stated that significant producer participation in NAIS would make our investigative efforts much more effective if we do not need to engage—if we do need to engage—excuse me—in a trace back effort related to this. The Secretary also believes that we should strive to develop a system that the majority of the producers, big or small, can support. Therefore, he instructed us to hold this series of listening sessions across the country as a way to solicit opinions and ideas from a wide range of farmers, ranchers, and other stakeholders in order to help him make informed decisions as he maps out the future direction of NAIS. We welcome and strongly encourage you to express your thoughts and views here today. And we especially want to hear your ideas for solutions to concerns you may have about NAIS. We will be tape recording all the sessions today so that we can be sure to capture all your concerns and ideas and pass them on to the Secretary. However, if for some reason you don't get a chance to share something, or everything, you want to today, we're also seeking written comments from the public. Your comments can be submitted through the web sites noted on your information sheet handout. That is www.usda.gov/nais/feedback. I personally assure you that every written comment submitted will be read and carefully considered before we move forward. One of our hopes in sponsoring these meetings is that through honest dialogue and discussion among people representing all sectors of agriculture, creative solutions will begin to emerge on the issues that had divided some of us with regard to the development of an animal identification and tracking system. I think we all would rather implement a system that truly reflects our Federal/State producer partnership. A system that farmers and ranchers can support and look upon as a benefit to their operation rather than a burden being imposed upon them. We need a system that minimizes your expense and effort, that is flexible enough to meet your individual needs, that protects animal health in a way that is sensitive to the differences between species groups and that protects your private business information. Whether you sell your livestock directly off your farm or to a major auction house, or whether your meat is sold

at a country store or on international exchanges, we want to develop an animal health protection system that will allow you to confidently market your livestock as the healthiest and best quality in the world. To create a national animal identification system that can realize those goals, we need to hear both your concerns and your ideas for solutions. Our discussion sessions today will focus on important issues producers have often raised, such as implementation costs, impact on small-scale farmers, privacy, confidentiality, and liability. These discussion sessions will also allow you to weigh in on any concerns you have regarding premises registration, animal identification, and animal tracing. At the end of the day, we want to learn what program options you could support so that we can pass that information on to Secretary Vilsack. This information will be critical in helping him determine how USDA in partnership with stakeholders can forge a more effective, successful, and acceptable system to protect animal health. So, in conclusion, following my remarks, a representative from our NAIS staff will help frame today's discussion session with a presentation on how APHIS veterinary services looks for, responds to, and traces foreign animal disease concerns, and the role that animal ID and tracing plays in those efforts. The point of the presentation is to bring everyone in the room up to speed with accurate, factual information about NAIS, its goals, and its implementation to this date. After the presentation, we will move on to the more important part of the meeting, which is a listening to what you have to say. I hope you actively participate and have time to stay for the entire meeting. I'm sure everyone is aware that there are strong advocates in the audience representing those both in favor of the current system and those totally opposed to it. But rather than focusing only on our differences, I ask you to look around the room for a minute and consider what I hope every individual present can agree upon. Regardless of whether you operate a small farm or a big operation, whether you raise chickens or cattle, whether you run a local butcher shop or own a major slaughter house, or whether you represent a local, state, or federal government agency—what we all want—bottom line—is for animals throughout America to remain healthy and free of disease. I hope that unifying focus will be the compass that will guide us all in our discussions today and into the future. In that spirit, I would like to thank you all again in advance for extending your professional courtesy and respect to everyone at this meeting, regardless of whether you agree with them or not. Let's all keep in mind that maintaining an open and respectful dialogue will get us all a lot farther down the road toward developing an acceptable system that benefits everyone. Thank you again. We look forward to hearing your thoughts and views today. Thank you very much.

JW: Thank you, Dr. Dick. And thank you all for being here—for attending this listening session. My name is John Weimers. I work with USDA on the National Animal Identification staff and I'm here at the podium and my colleague, Neal Hammerschmidt,

will present this—give this presentation as a tag team. We are looking forward to hearing more from you throughout the day as we discuss the various challenging issues and solutions related to animal identification. Today we're going to give you an overview of what the animal ID—about the animal ID in the United States. First I'll talk about why animal identification is critical to disease control. Next, Neil Hammerschmidt will review the current standards and priorities of the National Animal Identification System—or NAIS, as it's referred to—as described in the Traceability Business Plan. Lastly, we'll share some key findings of the business—of the benefit cost analysis that was recently completed for NAIS. As I mentioned, animal ID is very important to animal disease control efforts. These efforts can be summarized by key—several key activities—or parts illustrated here. These efforts apply on the farm, locally, within a state, or nationally in efforts to safeguard animal health. These efforts are inter-related. As a continuous chain, they are only as strong as the weakest link. Traceability is one part and is often the focus when we discuss animal ID. However, as you will see, all of these activities rely on accurate premises and animal ID information. The first part of animal disease control is applying the basic look-for principle, referred to as disease surveillance. Our surveillance efforts are part of our state/federal cooperative disease programs. Surveillance for animal disease programs, such as brucellosis, tuberculosis, scrapie, pseudorabies, and avian influenza, is often done at a livestock and poultry harvest facilities. Surveillance is also conducted by import/export inspectors and accredited veterinarians. It is of critical importance. Surveillance is conducted by producers as well. Producers and owners are the first line of defense in watching for animal disease as they provide animal care. The level of official identification of animals tested in these surveillance activities varies significantly by species. For example, 90% of the sheep tested as part of the scrapie program are officially identified already. However, only 14% of cattle tested for brucellosis and 16% of the cattle recently tested for tuberculosis have been officially identified. Given these figures, completing the entire disease control effort is greatly hampered in the cattle industry. Animal identification is fundamental for surveillance. The second part of the disease control is diagnostics. The United States has a very advanced diagnostic laboratory infrastructure. The USDA has a network of 58 veterinary diagnostic laboratories nationwide to test for specific animal diseases and to assist with testing in emergency situations. Analysis is the third part of the disease control effort. After conducting surveillance and running diagnostic tests, animal health officials must interpret test results. No test is 100% accurate every time. And the more we know about the animals being tested, including their past location, the better we can put all the information together for the analysis. Based on the level of risk associated with a positive test, officials can determine the most appropriate response. Analysis also allows us to summarize the health status in the entire country or a specific region. These summaries may be prepared for state, national, and

international authorities. Having confidence that animals are associated with specific locations is critical to defining regions free of a disease. Animal ID accurately connects an animal with test results. The fourth part of disease control is traceability. Once a disease is detected, epidemiologists can focus on three questions—three main questions. First, where has the infected animal been? Second, what other animals have been exposed? And, third, what additional premises and animals are at risk of exposure? Every time an animal moves to a location where it commingles with other animals, there is a potential for disease exposure. Linking official animal ID to a location and knowing the dates an animal is at each location throughout its lifetime, are critical for this to take place. Completing trace backs in a timely manner reduces the potential spread of a contagious disease and reduces the impact on animal agriculture. Standardized and complete information are key to successful traceability. It is especially important to associate the premises identification with the animal identification. Animal ID is important because it speeds traceability. The final part of disease control is disease response. Once we know where positive or exposed animals are located, animal health officials initiate response actions and on-going control measures. After finding a disease, animal health officials communicate all available options to the producer or the owner. Options will depend on whether the animal disease has any public health concern. Quarantine and movement restrictions may be immediate actions put in place by the animal health officials. To use this option, we need a national, unique, and individual animal ID, location identifiers, and an animal movement recording system. Animal ID is essential for effective disease response. So, as you can see, the animal disease control activities are quite extensive. While animal ID in itself is not the solution, without ID we are unable to have successful disease control programs. I'll now turn the podium over to my colleague, Neal Hammerschmidt, to cover some specifics on the National Animal Identification System.

NH: Thank you, John. So why is animal ID so important today? Actually, animal ID has always been important. Disease programs have historically provided the national ID system. For example, the brucellosis vaccination program at one time provided the National ID solution for the cattle breeding herd. Most heifers were vaccinated and were identified with the well-known orange brucellosis vaccination tag. Several other major disease programs, like brucellosis, have been successful and the vaccination requirements are no longer warranted. Although this is good news, this has resulted in fewer animals in disease programs, which equates to fewer animals officially identified. Now we have a gap, or void, in animal ID in certain species. NAIS standardizes data across all disease programs, and within both state and federal systems. With standard data, different computer systems are able to talk with one another, which is essential to effectively administer the programs. NAIS offers official ID even when there is no specific disease

of concern and the same ID can be used for management or other marketing purposes if so desired by the producer. Unidentified animals are officially identified when they are tested as part of a disease response. However, at that point, we can't use ID to tell us where a positive animal has been. Official ID enhances traceability only when it is in place before a disease outbreak. The NAIS has three components: premises registration, animal ID, and animal tracing. Premises registration is considered the foundation of the system. The Premises Identification Number, or PIN, is a location identifier. It is a seven character code with numbers and characters, for example, 003B7C4. The PIN is nationally unique and has no meaning. That is, the number does not reflect the state or region of the location. Most importantly, PINs allow animals to be associated with a specific location, allowing us to trace animals and to determine which animals came in contact with a subject animal or potentially exposed animals. Further, participation in premises registration to obtain a PIN is not a contractual obligation, nor does it restrict or affect property ownership rights in any way. It does not change USDA's authority with regards to protecting U.S. animal health, and it does not include the number of animals at each premises. Premises information alone is of critical importance to protecting animal agriculture. For example, as shown here, the Premises Identification Number gives us the ability to plot locations. Having the ability to plot locations within a radius of an infected premises helps determine the potential magnitude of a contagious disease and the resources that are needed to contain it. We believe that all premises associated with the raising or housing of livestock and poultry should obtain a Premises Identification Number so that animal health officials can successfully respond to disease events. NAIS establishes the standards to identify individual animals as well as groups of animals. For individual animals, we have the animal identification number, or AIN, which is 15 digits and starts with 840, the U.S. country code. For groups and lots of animals, the number consists of the Premises ID Number, the date, and the group count or the number of groups put together on that day on that location. An example of the group, or lot, identification, is shown here. Group or lot identification is used when animals move through the entire production chain as one group. Group ID was developed because individual ID in those situations does not improve traceability. Participation in animal identification components is increasing, with nine manufacturers providing 29 AIN devices. Of that device, 11 are visual ear tags, 16 are radio frequency identification or RFID ear tags, and two are RFID injectable transponders. In addition to the AIN devices, two devices for slaughter swine premises identification are available. Identification methods are species specific. Species working groups were formed to offer feedback on what methods and practices worked best. For example, the equine species working group recommended RFID injectable transponders, while the poultry and swine species rely heavily on group or lot identification. All other identification devices defined in USDA APHIS regulations such as the calf-hood vaccination tag, the flock identification with

herd management number, remain official and are NAIS compliant. An important distinction within NAIS is what animals should be identified and when. Animals recommended for identification under NAIS are livestock and poultry that are moved from their premises to locations where they come in contact, that is, they are commingled with animals from other premises. Animals may be identified when most convenient within one's herd management or flock management practices, but before they are commingled. The use of tagging sites has been recommended by the stakeholders, and may be a viable option for producers unable to tag their own animals. USDA official ID is not necessary for livestock and poultry that stay on the same premises. As mentioned earlier, efficient tracing is achieved by finding out quickly where the animal has been throughout its entire life. That is achieved by having the animal's ID associated with a premises ID or location ID. To determine whether animals have been exposed the dates of movements in and out of those premises are also important. Animal movement records are held in state and private animal tracking databases. These records are made available to animal health officials during a disease event. USDA provides the communication link with the animal tracking databases, or ATDs. The complete listing of the animal tracking databases is on the NAIS website. To determine which movements are important, we need to consider which animal movements are likely to spread diseases. Animals moving to another premises and animals commingled with animals from other premises are the types of movements that may spread disease. We commonly refer to these movements as animals moved in commerce. Within NAIS we do not focus on movements with minimal risk of disease spread. Specifically, NAIS does not need to trace animals that are only moved direct from their birth premises to custom slaughter in the same state. However, producers should check their state regulations regarding custom slaughter regulations. And, of course, there is nothing to track when animals do not leave their premises or operation. The business plan to advance disease traceability was published September 2008. The plan provides the vision and long term ultimate 48-hour traceability objective. The immediate priority of the plan is to advance traceability in the most critical sectors, or where the greatest return on investment can be achieved. Another priority is to integrate NAIS standards into our existing disease programs. Animal diseases are not always species specific. And we believe that the inclusion of all livestock and poultry is necessary in NAIS. However, we are focusing on certain species overall. USDA has established Tier One and Tier Two species priorities. Tier One includes the major food animal species, specifically cattle, swine, poultry—that being chickens and turkeys—sheep, and goats. Additionally, due to the high degree of movement nationally and internationally, some horses fit within Tier One. With input from the equine species working group, it was decided to have horses that require a test for equine infectious anemia or a health certificate categorized as Tier One. The balance of the species are sectors aquaculture, bison, servants, alpacas, lamas, and so forth are

categorized as Tier Two. Then, within Tier One, species and sectors have been prioritized. Due to the size of the cattle population, the low level of official ID and its significant movement of cattle, the cattle sector, is our current priority. Within the beef and dairy sectors, traceability within the breeding herd needs the most improvement. It is not unusual to spend weeks and sometimes months to trace an animal from the slaughter plant or its current premises. If we could use the unique animal identification number to know the first location where the animal was associated with, we would have two points of reference in determining where the animal had been. That is, we could do a trace forward from the animal's birthplace or premises or origin, and trace back from its last premises at the same time. This would greatly improve our ability of animal health officials to acquire pertinent information and it is referred to as the book-end approach. While the book-end system does not provide the complete solution for achieving the long term 48-hour solution, it does offer a logical next step in advancing animal disease traceability for our current programs. As we streamline disease programs and ensure information systems are compatible, integrating NAIS standards in the administration of federal disease programs remains a high priority and a prudent action. Let me turn back the program to John Weimers to conclude our report with some brief remarks regarding the NAIS benefit cost analysis. John?

JW: On April 29, APHIS released the results of a comprehensive benefit cost analysis on NAIS. The study was completed by Kansas State University with assistance from Colorado State University, Michigan State University, and Montana State University. The study has provided some key outcomes, including if the NAIS is fully implemented the Federal/State government savings in connection with the administration of animal disease control and eradication programs would be significant. But they're only part of the overall benefits. Economic benefits in both the domestic and international marketplace resulting from enhanced traceability may be greater than the cost savings realized during animal disease control and eradication efforts. Implementing NAIS becomes more cost effective as participation levels increase. And actually may not be economically viable at lower participation levels. A traceability system like NAIS is essential to timely recovery of exports markets in the event of a disease outbreak. Traceability is becoming increasingly important, even necessary, for successful participation in both domestic and global marketplaces. The cost of NAIS adoption for the major livestock species vary depending upon the industry's approach and production practices, which determines the type of traceability methods used. There is not one set cost of NAIS adoption. As part of the analysis, the research team looked at NAIS adoption across multiple species, and at varying participation levels, for both the book-end approach that Neal described, and for full traceability. Total annual estimated cost for cattle, pork, sheep, and poultry for full traceability is \$192.2 million annually with

90%—at the 90% participation level. The book-end system would be \$143.5 million with 90% participation. Over 90% of the total annual cost of adopting NAIS is within the cattle industry. The cost per animal market in the cattle industry is \$5.97, which accounts for all sectors—the cow/calf level, the stalker level, feed lot, markets, and slaughter plants. Seventy-five percent of this figure of \$5.97 is attributed to the cost of ID tags and tagging. In the study, the RFID ear tag was used as the basis for estimating this cost. For the cow/calf producer with 50 cows, the cost per animal ranged from \$3.30 to \$5.30, with most of the variation due to the current tagging practices within the herd. While the costs are significant, it is important to note that the cost is equivalent to less than ½ of 1% of the retail value of U.S. beef products. The cost of adopting—the cost per animal marketed for a full traceability system with 90% participation in the other species are—swine, 6 cents per animal—sheep, \$1.39 per animal—poultry, which included layers, broilers, and turkeys within the range of cost that you see here, with the high end of the range at less than 2 cents per bird. The complete 400 page study and a condensed overview document and several various species fact sheets are available on the NAIS website at www.usda.gov/nais. NAIS has maintained several key documents. In addition to the business plan, the user guide, the program standards, they help provide more details on the current program. These documents will be updated as NAIS continues to evolve. We'd like to thank you for your attention and we look forward to your questions and comments. Thank you very much.

AR: Okay. We're going to get into the comment question section. I just want to give you a little background information on the rest of the day first. I'll start with telling you about what's going to happen this afternoon. When you signed in and you got a folder, there was a colored sticker on it. I believe they were either yellow, red, or green. Blue? Sorry. And we did that and it was random, to divide you guys into thirds. Obviously, if people leave and don't participate, we'll make adjustments on the scene because the idea was just to create three equal groups to have the same discussions based on those questions that were in the Federal Register Notice and are on the back of your agenda. And so it's not one group's going to focus on one thing and another groups going—it's all going to be done the same way and we just wanted to keep the numbers equal so that we could have some more meaningful discussion. So that's basically how this afternoon's going to work after lunch when we reconvene around 1:00 o'clock. Now how the next segment is going to work is basically we wanted to give you guys a chance to make comments but, again, I want to emphasize that this is not the one and only chance you will have to make comments. So if you don't get enough said or don't get time to say something, please, there's an instruction sheet in your packet about other ways to make comments. If you see any one of us, we'd be happy to go through the options with you as well. The idea here is multiple opportunities, not restricted access. Basically, because of time, we're

going to have a three-minute limit for the people reading their comments or asking a questions. And we're not—it's up to three minutes. It's not a—go back—there's no—the goal here is listening—not going back and forth or redirecting. So I ask that you make your comment or ask your question. I will signal you when you're down to 30 seconds. Other than that, we would just like to hear what you have to say. And I want to let you know that—I'm going to pick numbers. So, again, I'll say—does everyone have a lottery ticket that thinks they want to talk? Everyone has a red ticket? And this is our first session, so we have a small glitch in that I have more tickets in my bag than there are tickets that were given—that you all have. So we'll skip numbers as best we can and you'll accept our apologies for that. It's not going to—I don't think it'll slow us down in any way. I'm going to call five or six numbers at a time and I'd ask people to line up at their microphones so that we can keep moving. And, again, if I call your—if you have ticket and you don't wish to make a comment, that's fine. Just pass. I apologize, like I said, that there's tickets that are not given out that I'm going to be going through the numbers. And we'll just go—it's a little before 10:00 so we're actually ahead of schedule and we'll just go until lunch, roughly, noon. I will signal you when you have 30 seconds, and hopefully we can all stay within our time limit. The panel will respond to questions about the presentation. This is not about speculating on the future of the program. Right now, the Secretary is listening. That's part of the reason why we again want to remind you that this is being recorded. Transcripts will be provided. Because that's his way of hearing what's going on. He couldn't be in every single session. So speak clearly into the microphone. Please give your name and where you're from. And let's begin. I'm going to call numbers and, hopefully, when I call your number and you come up to the microphone and we'll get, like, five or six people going at a time. I'm just going to call the end parts of the numbers. So, I have 26, 37, 44, 71, 41, 159, 40—oh, good, maybe we're getting through all the ones we didn't use first—34, 66, 51, 115, 7, 31, 81, 56, 9, 3, 116, 94, 119, 104, 112, 006, 21—okay. Why don't we let the first gentleman begin? I'm going to step to the side and I'll signal—I'll step back toward the podium when you have 30 seconds left.

MS: Good morning. My name is Dan Vaughn and I'm from Whitehall, Maryland. My first question is, is this the time to give you my opinion or am I only supposed to ask you guys' questions about your program?

AR: No, no. Please give your opinion. Or ask a question. It's up to you.

MS: Well, I'm going to stand this way so I can address everyone in the crowd as well as you people.

AR: Would you like to hold it?

MS: No.

AR: Okay.

MS: This is an issue that I feel very strongly about and also everyone in my community feels the same way. We are all against animal identification. My first question to you gentlemen is, and you ma'am is, what do you produce? What do you make? Answer me. Do you make anything? Animals? Do you produce food of any kind? Do you work in an industry building car parts? Do you make anything?

AR: Sir, your point is well taken. But please—

MS: No, let me finish, ma'am. You guys have had your chance and it's our chance. Thank you. Now. This shows how out of touch with agriculture that our Federal government has become. This is the busiest time of year for us. I started milking this morning at 3:00 o'clock so that I could drive an hour and a half to get here. There's probably people in here who came farther. I know you gentlemen had to hire a driver to get here. Isn't that correct?

AR: Speak into the mike. They need to hear this.

MS: Yes, ma'am. Thank you. The Amish community had to hire drivers to get here. This is an issue that does not exist. There is no problem in the industry that needs to be fixed. The only example that I can give you is the hoof and mouth outbreak in England two or three, four, years ago. Now this has never happened in this country. And the reason is because this country's climatic and topographical diversity keeps these things from spreading. The other issues is, if you would leave agriculture alone and let us be our own little areas, the animals are spread out farther. The more increased government relation we have, the more concentrated animal areas we have so that increases the chance for disease. We want to be left alone. It's just plain and simple. You are making up an idea for a situation that does not exist. And I'll make another point that you guys all need to think about. They do not have any right to do this. The United States Constitution does not allow them to do this. We are allowing them to do this. They have no right. They have no law. This cannot be implemented without our say. We have to stop it.

AR: Sir, can you wrap up, please?

MS: All right. Plain and simple. At some point in time, 70 years ago, the Jews should've stopped getting on those trains. We've got to stop these people now. If they get this one step, there's going to be another. This is wrong. I'm against it. I have at least 20 people in my community that I called and talked to last night before I came. They're all against it 100%. Thank you. Good luck.

AR: Thank you, sir, for your comment.

MS: Good morning. Thank you for having this listening session. I'm Kim Sealy, third generation dairy farmer from Milky Way Farms in Troy, Pennsylvania. I'm also a co-founder of Northern Tier Sustainable Meats Cooperative, a local regional cooperative that supplies meat to a Pennsylvania State-owned college. I also represent the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture as the President of the Board of Directors. Any approach to food safety should be based on the risk imposed by certain farm practices or marketing approaches and the subsequent efforts to manage that risk. By far, the greatest risk in our food system occurs when two factors are combined—food anonymity and broad distribution patterns. The most important solutions, therefore, are not only to keep the distribution systems as local and regional as possible, but also to put the farmer's face back on the food. In an ideal scenario, both would occur. However, there are many things that can be done to avoid some of this risk in the first place and, indeed, many farmers have already been doing them for years or even decades in response to their own concerns for their family and their friends and neighbors. We strongly believe that the USDA should support such efforts, not do things to thwart them. As a priority, we recommend that national animal ID should not be imposed on farmers who sell product directly to the public, to the individual consumers who have developed a relationship with them. Furthermore, we recommend that in situations where a farmer is selling identity-preserved products through a more complex value chain to colleges, restaurants, through a third party independent source, they should not be mandatory to do this as well. The essential element here is not that there is some theoretical distinction between good farmers and bad farmers, but a firm acknowledgement that some farmers have chosen to stand behind their products by name and reputation, all the way to the final point of consumption. These farmers should be encouraged to exercise such responsibility voluntarily, and in ways that do not involve excessive government intrusion or expense to either the farmer or the American taxpayers. If a mandatory program is implemented, I would make mention that the majority of family farmers will choose civil disobedience in response. If we think we already have a food safety problem, we can only imagine the chaos in our court and jail system and in our food chain if we fill our jails with honest family farmers. Our society is at a tipping point in food ideology right now. And I

recommend the USDA to think long and hard and not underestimate the significance of another bad program.

AR: Thank you, sir, for your comment.

FS: I'm Maureen Diaz from the Gettysburg, Pennsylvania area. Mr. Sealy really put very well a lot of my concerns so I'll just be a little more simple. First, I'd like to ask how having a national animal identification system is really going to make a difference with animal disease. I understand the supposed benefit of being able to track where diseased animals have been, but I do not believe that this will make a real difference in stopping the spread of any disease outbreak after the fact. It seems that addressing the unnatural and unhealthy animal husbandry practices would have a far greater impact on the spread of animal disease. Animal disease is not the problem of the small local family farmer. It is the problem of the confinement animal operations. It's the problem of the factory farms, not my local farmer. But, more importantly, I am concerned for the plate of the small farmer and the private livestock animal owner like my own family. The way we see it, real food safety can only come from small local family farms. When animals are raised the way nature intended, on clean well-managed pasture with access to fresh water, sunshine, and fresh breezes, as many of my farmer friends do, disease simply is not an issue. Furthermore, if the farmer is putting the same food on his table that I'm seeking to put on my family's table, I am assured of the utmost quality and safety without government oversight. Please do not answer this concern with statistics of disease outbreaks which are contrived or manipulated to place undue blame upon small family farms, as has often occurred. This is a real factor in food safety. Disease comes not from the small traditionally managed farm, but from the very natural—excuse me—but from the very unnatural confinement farms. And this is what I want you to address. The extreme burden that implementing NAIS upon the small farms and homesteads of our country is great. Many, if not most of these farms, are already struggling to survive. They do not need yet another costly burden added to their load. Nor do the taxpayers need further burdens imposed upon us. And the reporting that must be done for animal movements, as well as required record-keeping, creates a grave disadvantage and hurdle to the small farmer's success. Our family keeps several animals on our property for food as well as a horse for pleasure.

AR: Ma'am, can you wrap up, please?

FS: Yes, I am. We are financially strapped, which is one motivating factor for keeping our own livestock animals. Were we to be forced to tag each of our animals, and especially in our small flock of chickens, which do not live and die all at the same time—we would

be forced to either give up or, as Mr. Sealy pointed out, we would exercise civil disobedience. I guarantee it.

AR: Ma'am, I'm going to have to ask you to finish, please.

FS: Furthermore, we find the forced implementation of the program unconstitutional. Clearly, it is against our right to privacy, even the premises ID, unconstitutional. And it will prohibit many people from the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness. This is, after all, America.

AR: Ma'am, please stop. Thank you. I just want to make sure everyone has an opportunity.

FP: My name is Dr. Ann Swinker Niffin. I'm a cattle breeder. I have Hereford and Angus cattle, Black Baldies. We have a pure-bred herd of Hereford. I also raise Arabians and Trakehner horses and have done that—we just received our Hereford 50 year of existence from the Hereford Association—but professionally, I'm a professor at Penn State University, Board of Director member of the Pennsylvania Equine Council, and I'd like to report back to this audience and to the USDA folks represented at APHIS and at the NIS office have already seen some of our reports. But I promised a lot of the people that I would pass on the concerns that we collected from a veterinarian, a horse owner, a horse show manager survey, a 4-H survey, in addition to an Amish community survey—on the equine issues related to animal identification micro chipping and premise ID. So all of these studies have been published. The surveys on resistance to animal ID and premise ID and the attitudes of the American—and this was not just a Pennsylvania study—all of these were nationwide. They're published in the *American Society of Animal Science* last July 2008. And those are available through the *American Society of Animal Science*, if anybody wants the full statistics on these abstracts. In addition to studies that will be presented in two weeks at the Equine Science Society meetings, first of all, on micro chipping horses, Penn State did a year long study—our research team is back here if anybody wants to talk to them about it. We did find out there's no inflammation or migration and this was an unbiased study using several horses at the University with microchips and horses. The attitudes of all of those surveys that I mentioned to you—the name of the surveys were Resistance to NIS Horse owners, Veterinarians, Amish Community, Horse Show Managers. I promised the people who took those surveys—you can see all the statistics of their concerns. Number one concern was that we have a data set that is very uniform, safe, and secure—was the number one issue. The other key issue that the horse industry is asking if we are going to do this is there some way to make this animal identification database help us with lost animals, stolen animals, or displaced

animals due to disasters. If we're going to have this system, this is something that we really need to do—we need to get both the State and National to work on it.

AR: Ma'am, I need to ask you to wrap up, please.

FP: Okay. Another concern the veterinarians have is keeping the State out of the extra paperwork. The horse show managers see it as an advantage to help them to prevent fraud, to help them run their programs a little bit easier, work with the breed associations. The other key thing I want to point out again is there's no health risk to the horses like there were in some of the other studies reported in dogs and mice in Europe. Another point that I really want to bring up is we need to make the database safe and secure. If we're going to do this, let's do it right.

AR: Thank you, ma'am, for your comments.

MP3: Thank you. I'm Roy Marr. I'm an Ag teacher and I'm also a farmer about 25 miles north of here. And I think you guys are probably—I'm probably one of the guys that you're looking for because I raise—I have mother cows and, of course, a lot of calves right now. So, hey, send the gunships up my way. But, anyway, as an Ag teacher—I've been an Ag teacher for 27 years—how I found out about NAIS was through one of my students and myself were researching the 865 Bill here in Pennsylvania. Kind of a quiet, sneaky bill that was sliding through Pennsylvania here until we found out about it. One of the students said, "You know, do I have to register my property to show animals at a local fair?" I said, "Well, it looks like it." I said, "Let's get on this and research it." And the more we researched the more we found some significant little things. I sent out an email to all the Ag teachers in the state of Pennsylvania which was monitored by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. And there was a pretty interesting email that was sent out after that email that I sent. It was kind of stating and slowly diminishing, you know, the problem. There is no problem. But we found out that that person was also a former Farm Bureau member and is, of course, now in PDA and, of course, now Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. So, there was a lot of things going on, and I'm not naming any names, but pretty interesting. My students were upset. A lot of them still are. They know I'm level-headed. They know I've been teaching for 27 years. Some of them, I had their parents. I have three kids at home. I want them to show animals at a fair if they want to. I have three 5-year-olds, by the way, so if I'm nuts, I am partially nuts, maybe. But at any rate, there's a lot of things to think of. This is America. The first and foremost thing is registering private property. That's the foremost thing. And some of the students were researching the German and the Russian, and that's exactly what happened. Exactly what happened. Okay? They know the history better than I do.

I might've lived the history, but they know the history because they're learning it from their teachers, which is good. Okay? So, again, I'm a former member of National Cattlemen's Beef Association, I'm a former member of the Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association, and I'm also a former member of the American Angus Association. And they took blood money from the government. And that's all I needed to hear. I no longer register my cattle. I still have some on the farm. But I don't need to do that any more. I probably lost thousands of dollars, which I don't have, selling registered animals any more. And that's part of it. I think there's a lot of people doing the same thing. We're losing people. Quickly. We don't have students any more that are interested in agriculture the way they should be.

AR: I'm going to ask you wrap up, sir, please.

MS: And I will. Again, this is their constitutional rights. And I think everybody in here knows that. And that's the key issue. I'm not against disease surveillance. We watch it all the time. Okay? We see students that want to go into agriculture and can't because of some of the laws and regulations that are written. And they're supposed to register their neighbor's property if they actually keep the animals at the neighbor's property, or their grandparent's property? No, it's not going to happen with my kids. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir, for your comment. I'm going to read the next set of numbers. 23, 22, 24, 85, 139, 39, 86, 121, 143, 144, 185, 106, 189, 38, 185, 156, 107, 187, 137, 141, 77, 179, 130, 181, 76, 129. Thank you. Sir? Why don't you go first?

MS: Okay. I'm a small farmer raising sheep and chickens. The sheep are raised for lamb—meat sold privately—and the chickens are for eggs and chicken meat also sold privately. Now, there's no technical information as to the probably size and cost of the database used to record the identification, location, and health of each food animal in the system. Now, according to the 2007 Ag Census, there's about 2.3 billion cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, domestic fowls, and horses raised on 3.4 million farms with yearly incomes greater than \$1,000. Now, there are 411,000 farms with incomes less than \$1,000, with an unknown number of animals. There are also an unknown number of 33 animal species, including ..., buffalo, camel into alpaca, deer, ..., marsupials, and so forth. Now, all these are required to be registered and tracked under the NAIS system. The tracking requires the use of tags and each animal capable—and this is my opinion—receiving signals from four GPS satellites presented in the sky at any one time. And this may not occur all the time, obviously. They're processing these signals to compute the location of animal within two meters—that's about six feet—and sending the information about the animal identification, health, alive, dead, and sick, and location continuously to a

database via phone towers or satellite. The size of this database require—depend—on the animal and location data for each animal, rate information sent to the database per second, minute, hour, day, and so forth, and data retention in the database in a month, year, five years, and so forth. Each animal group location—the farm, ranch, and so forth—would have to have one or more expensive repeater units capable of amplifying the low power signals from each animal tag to a level capable to be received by cell phone tower satellite for transmission to the database. The number of extra phone towers or satellites would be very high and very expensive. The size of the database would be very large and dwarf even the very large Google database. I think this is all very expensive, and I think it's completely unnecessary given what the other speakers have said. Of course, maybe the size is not as large. Also, there's the problem of contamination of the database, either by electrical storms or by hackers. Hackers could set up a completely synthetic animal system and completely contaminate the database in all respects. That's about all I'm going to have to say.

AR: Thank you very much, sir, for your comment.

FS: My name is Willow Lafever. I represent Sonnewald. We are a natural food store sitting on a piece of property that has never had chemicals on it. We've been promoting sustainable living, both human, animal, plant, and the earth itself—for over 50 years. I want to start by thanking everyone who helped to organize this. This is an awesome indication of how this nation has been designed to work. It is a nation of We, The People. Letting our representatives at the State level and at the National level—we need to let them know what we want. They represent us. Thank you all for coming today. Especially thank you to the farmers. I'm not a farmer but I grew up on a homestead and I do know this about farmers—don't talk to them between March and November—they're way too busy. Did you all think about the farmers? And not you, but the people that you represent? Do you realize what farmers lives are like? Do you have any idea what these men and women and children do? Day in and day out? To put food on our tables? I want to say Amen and Amen to the first speaker—forgive me, sir—I didn't get your name. Amen and Amen to Mr. Sealy's comments. Amen and Amen to Maureen Diaz. And Amen and Amen to Roy Marr, I think—the teacher. You're saying it beautifully. Keep speaking. It interest me—Oops—I forgot to set my stopwatch. I came prepared. Just get my attention, will you please? I am intrigued that this is the first meeting in the whole nation, folks. I am reminded that York was the first capital of this country. I am reminded that God chose York to lead this country. I am reminded that He created through very divine anointing a country of freedom. Freedom to worship as we please. Freedom to pursue right livelihood—meaningful work. I am reminded that we're losing

so many of those freedoms. As I'm listening to the presentations, I'm thinking—are we talking about animals or are we talking about people? You know, it's the same thing.

AR: I just wanted to signal you. I didn't want to scare you.

FS: Oh, good. So how much time do I have?

AR: About 30 seconds.

FS: Thank you. We're treating symptoms, folks. If there is a problem, let's get to the root of it. It's very clearly being spoken here. The root of the problem is we are not living in obedience to God. We are not raising animals right. We are not raising plants right. We are not taking care of the Earth right. We are not living in obedience to God. God says clearly, if we will live in obedience, "none of these diseases shall I put upon you." We are creating—we are allowing this—we're going it to ourselves. I'm wrapping up. If this area led the country before, it can lead again. If not us, who? And if not now, when?

AR: Thank you very much, ma'am, for your comment.

MS: My name is Craig Schultz, and I am the State Veterinarian. I'm also the Director of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Animal Health and Diagnostic Services. Prior to coming to the State, and I've only been here for about six months, I was employed by the Federal government in the Food Safety and Inspection Service and worked in very large market cow slaughter facilities as well as poultry facilities in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Before that, I was a practitioner—a large animal practitioner in Northeastern Pennsylvania—for 15 years. In addition to that, I owned a herd of registered Holstein cattle with my father that were dispersed in 1991. Agriculture is Pennsylvania's largest enterprise. The commonwealth—63,000 farms—produce commodities with a combined value of \$5.8 billion. Of that amount, more than \$3.9 billion is generated by the sales of animals and animal products. Pennsylvania has a large stake in the National animal health protection system. Central to animal health protection is an effective and reliable method of disease identification, containment, and eradication. As technology advances at an ever-increasing pace, animal health regulatory systems face greater and greater challenges. In the 21st century, food animals and their products moved faster and farther than ever before. Our modern food supply is complex. From time to time—from the time our food is produced at the farm level to the time it is served—it can travel several thousands of miles touched by countless of individuals and regulated by a wide range of private and public overseers. The risk of accidental or intentional introduction of dangerous transmissible animal disease in the animal marketing system is a significant

concern for those of us that are involved in animal health protection. These risks are not unique to large operations. Even small producers with local markets are not immune to the challenges of the public safety and can be impacted by large-scale systems. The public and animal health challenges of our modern food supply from farm to fork places greater emphasis on the need for accurate and timely traceability back from fork to farm. As DNA-based technology to detect and track disease continues to advance, animal health officials will be challenged and must be prepared to respond. Dangerous transmissible animal diseases and food borne pathogens do not distinguish by type of size of the farm operation they strike. International trade in livestock and food animal products has great significance for Pennsylvania's agriculture. Trading partner confidence is created and maintained through effective animal disease food borne pathogen and animal—food animal—residue monitoring and control programs. The success of these initiatives depends on reliable and accurate traceability.

AR: Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, please.

MS: Thank you. I'll stop here.

AR: And I'll just take this opportunity to remind people who aren't getting their whole comment read to please consider submitting your comment on line or in any one of the other ways you can submit.

FS: Good morning. My name is Joyce Buck. My husband and I operate 180 head dairy herd in nearby York County. I'm a Director of the Corporate Board of Dairy Farmers of America and a member of the National Milk Producers Federation. Thank you for the opportunity to share comments on behalf of both of those organizations. Last year, the U.S. had 93 million dairy cows on more than 57,000 commercially licensed dairy farms. We produced nearly 190 billion pounds of milk and generated about \$38 billion in dairy-related income for this country. And we dairymen have about \$110 billion invested in our businesses across the country. The National Milk Producers Federation and its member cooperatives strongly support the establishment of a mandatory animal ID program at the earliest possible date. We support adoption of ISO compliant radiofrequency tags and one centrally-managed national database to facilitate tracking in the event of a animal cattle health crisis. In 2005, six major dairy groups including Holstein, Jersey, DHIA, and National Milk, formed IDairy to form a national system of animal identification and work toward that. In 2007, National Milk, on behalf of IDairy and working with USDA, formed a cooperative effort to promote premise identification. It is estimated that nearly 75% of dairy producer premises are already registered in this country. Numerous dairy intensive states, including Pennsylvania, have 90% of our dairy

premises registered. But if a crisis develops among the remaining 25%, we are all at serious risk of having to halt cattle movement and suffering the likely economic costly fallout of our market losses. In Pennsylvania, we have several dairy intensive areas, including one of the top dairy counties in the nation outside California. It's been estimated that a foot and mouth outbreak in California's south valley could cost upwards of a billion dollars and cause destruction of anywhere from 20% to 100% of their dairy herds. An outbreak in our neighboring Lancaster County with its dairy-intensive economy could have similar destructiveness in our own region. It could easily wipe out the assets and livelihoods of hundreds of our family dairy farms which form the fabric of many of our rural communities. Should an infected animal or herd go through our sale barns, the economic fallout could go to our neighboring counties and our neighboring states. Cost is a concern of programs. Premiums of most of the insurance programs we are obliged to carry on our farm are already far higher than the cost that would be involved to protect us against the unknown of an animal outbreak crisis of some disease. A national animal identification system is critically needed as insurance protection.

AR: Ma'am, can you wrap up, please?

FS: I can. Thank you. In a world increasingly shrinking through travel and trade, an outbreak of a serious cattle crisis is a matter of when and not if. Images of the flames of pyres of infected herds cattle being destroyed in Europe are still fresh in many of our minds. We need to be prepared for such a potential crisis in a manner to limit its economic, market, community, and consumer fallout to as small a footprint as possible. Thank you very much.

AR: Thank you, ma'am, for your comment.

MS: My name is Jeffrey Keefer from Bangor, Pennsylvania. We have registered Red Angus cattle and some Angus cattle, also, along with some crossbreds. I actually have a few questions. Part of my naiveness for not really researching as much as I should have—maybe these were actually already answered—but what happens when a farmer doesn't comply—ramifications? And also if he actually uses the tags but doesn't actually report it or does anything with it. Basically, where I'm going with—you get backwood farmers or front road farmers that they just don't want to do it. Or they put the tags in and they have no recordkeeping. What happens to that aspect of the situation? The second question—the tags. What happens when you lose the tags? The animals lose them? I know personally we use different kind of tags. A month ago we were selling cattle down at Virginia Beef Expo. We took cattle in Thursday and by Friday morning I'd already lost one of the tags. I don't like them. That's why I switched to them. So what happens

when that tag gets lost? What do you do? Do you have to replace the tag? Do you have to report it? So on and so on. I believe one of the other ladies had talked about the horses with the shows and such. We do a lot of show cattle. Will those numbers—that permanent ID—go on, say, registration papers and when you show up at a show? Will that be your ticket into the show as such? Or will they still be to your normal breed standards and such? And who ultimately is responsible for the recordkeeping of all these numbers and the cattle? The movements and what happens when the animal—when you either slaughter it or it just dies and you bury it? Or whatever? What happens to those kind of situations?

MS: Thank you. Several questions there. Let me talk first about the lost tag issue. Certainly we realize you're referring to the cattle specifically. Tags are lost. What the species working group for the cattle industry has recommended is that if there is a tag lost that the producer would have the option—again, this is their recommendation of how it could work—is that the producer would re-tag the animal with a second tag. If they know the number that was on the animal originally—maintaining a record of what the original number was would be important to do so if you, in fact, know that number. So cross-referencing the old number with the new number but re-tagging it based on your herd management preferences. Again, as we look at the use of the official animal identification number, the AIN, for disease control purposes the intent from day one was to make it such that industry organizations, industry programs, could utilize that same numbering system if they so desire. So if the breed registry wants to use what we call the AIN, or 840, number for breed registry, that's certainly their option to do so. In regards to the responsibility of the records, what we're looking at is, again, the way the system works today in voluntary participation with the identification, for example, those tags are obtained by the producer. Having those AIN numbers linked or cross-referenced to the premises number really fulfills the need to associate those numbers of those tags, the AIN numbers, on the tags to a location. As animals move, the producer can report the movement to an animal tracking database if they so desire. The recommendation of the cattle specie working group was that the person bringing the animals in to their premises could report to the animal tracking database to minimize the recording of those movements multiple times. So that's the recommendation of the cattle working group in regards to reporting. The termination records, most of those would be collected at the point of termination.

MS: Thank you.

AR: In regards to your first question, sir, right now the NAIS is voluntary so there wouldn't be any measures or mechanisms in place to take any follow on actions if producers or farms, ranchers, refused to participate. It's voluntary.

MS: But what would happen once it's—if it would come due—what would—?

AR: We can't speculate on that. It's an honest statement to say we just don't know.

MS: Fair enough.

MS: Another thing to consider is that currently and for the last many, many years—that when animals are tested for a disease—at the time of testing if they're not previously identified, an official identification tag will be—is put in those animals—and that information is recorded. It always has been. If animals are vaccinated for brucellosis, for instance, I imagine many of you folks are doing that, that orange tag is recorded as being put on those animals at that location so those official tags have always been recorded and reported through Federal databases. And so that's simply what we're going forward now is just taking a different standard using that.

AR: Okay, I'm going to call numbers again—146, 142, 192, 148, 134, 126, 149, 154, 120, 54, 135, 108, 68, 48, 138, 27, 55, 155.

LM: My name is Lee McCurnan, I live in Beech Creek, Pennsylvania. I do have a small farm with four horses and multi dogs, pets, you name it—and kids. I do work Penn State Cooperative Extension. I'm at Clinton County, and I also work up in Penn State with some research, so that's a little bit about my background. I want to thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to come here, and I also thank the people out there that came today. I think all of us are here because we're concerned about our animals, our rights and what it could mean to us. I did want to share—it'll be very short and sweet. I wanted to encourage that I am very encouraged by any efforts that a system wide ability to identify animals easily in regards to my efforts as a coordinator and a facilitator at my local county fair. I think that we need to listen to everyone, and I hope that everyone, whichever way you feel, listens to each other also. Thank you.

MS: My question is—how many people milked cows this morning or fed cows that do not support NAIS? Raise your hands. Okay, there's quite a bit. How many that support NAIS fed cows or animals this morning. There's a couple there. There's a lot more work involved on a farm than most of you realize that are pushing for NAIS, and I hope you realize that this might be a burden to more farmers in the future and our next

generations to come. Why in the world would you make more work for farmers if they're overburdened already with work? My goal is that everybody grows their own food someday so we don't have to mess with this NAIS system. Everybody grow their own food someday; this problem would go away. I appreciate the speakers that talked this morning, and I look at them as elders; and you should go to advise for elders, but I hope they can see further where this could be more of a problem than a help. My question to the veterinarian is—what causes a disease? Do you have any idea where disease comes from or where it starts? If you could answer that, that would be great.

MS: You bet. Diseases are generally classified as being caused by organisms that fall into different classes such as viruses or bacteria or fungi. Those kinds of organisms exist in the animals. Sometimes they exist latently in the animals, and they're carried for long periods of time in shed. Other times, they're either a contaminant of food or water or the environment. So there's a wide variety of ways that animals can get sick.

MS: Have you experienced natural and conventional farming yourself?

MS: Yes, I have. I actually started a dairy when I was in fourth grade and was the state dairy exhibiter for the State of California when I was a senior in high school, so I've milked a lot of cows. I've bucked a lot of hay, done all that. Yes, sir.

MS: Have you experienced that grass-fed animals tend to have less disease, possibly?

AR: Sir, I'm going to have to remind you that we're not really going back and forth here. We're just taking questions or comments. You can ask a question or finish your statement, please.

MS: Okay, sure. I've been farming organic and conventional type for 10 years, and I've seen when sticking with natural diet on animals, the disease tend to go just to zero—I mean, almost to zero. And we need to focus on natural diets for our animals rather than feeding them conventionally, piling them on top of each other and feeding them unnatural things, and I hope you consider that. That would be a way far better than trying to figure how out to control that particular disease. We need to get to the root of the problem before we make the problem worse. Thank you very much.

AR: Thank you very much, sir.

TH: My name is Tom Hartsock. I'm a member of the Maryland Ag Commission, but I do have Pennsylvania connections in a couple of Penn State degrees. If milking cows give

you credibility, I milked cows as a kid too. My immediate concern is for the growing numbers of small farmers, particularly those who are direct marketing because I think that industry is going to continue to grow as people count on identified products as a means of addressing their concerns for food security. I dread the day when someone goes into a grocery store and uses a small insulin hypodermic syringe and puts some kind of crap into a piece of meat at the meat counter, and that's going to result in many, many more people rushing to find a farmer who will grow their animals and produce for them. So this is going to be a growing market both in the organic natural sector, the locavore movement and all that sort of thing. I'm going to ask two questions and I'm going to make one comment. The one question I have—from what I saw from the presentation, it appears to me that a direct marketer who keeps his or her animals on farm at all times and then markets them through a local slaughter facility does not have to identify those animals as a routine. Now they may have to have a premise ID if they're buying and selling breeding stock, but if they're keeping their finished animals that they market directly on farm without moving them, my assumption is that they don't have to be registered. So I'd like to have that confirmed by the panel. The other thing is my concern with the cost benefit analysis. It appears to be an industry-wide analysis and does not truly reflect the impact on individual producers, particularly small producers. For instance, the actual cost to small producers who have to individually ID all animals will be about the same as the cost to ID the individual cattle or something around \$6 an animal, I'm guessing. So I'd like to confirm that as well because the industry analysis includes, I'm sure, very large swine operations, large poultry operations where the cost per animal is very small; whereas for smaller producers the cost per animal is incrementally much higher. And this broad-based cost benefit analysis does not reflect that. That was my two questions then. And my comment is—whatever system we create must not unduly penalize the rapidly growing segment of small farmers, particularly those who are direct marketing.

AR: Thank you for your comment, sir. I'm going to give the panel a chance to respond quickly to those two questions.

MS: In regards to the question about the identification of animals that do not leave the farm or move direct to slaughter, that's the correct interpretation. Again, as we look at the priority from disease management control traceability perspective, we're looking at the animals that move from their premises to another production premises that are commingled with other animals that have the opportunity to move on from there. Animals moved direct from their birth premises, premise of origin, direct to slaughter—no need to identify those animals. The point we made earlier, though, there are state

regulations that govern custom slaughtering operations, but from a traceability point, you're exactly correct. Thank you.

MS: Your question about the benefit cost analysis—the research team did look at different size operations as well from very small operations to larger operations. And you're right; there is a greater cost to smaller operations just because of economies of size and scale. However, I wanted to reemphasize that that \$5.97—that included the cost across the marketing segment. So a portion of that is attributable to the farmer, a portion of that to the backgrounding and a portion of that to the livestock markets and to the slaughter industry as well. The overall cost, as you mentioned, is highly attributed to the cost of the tag, but they also looked at the cost of what is the true cost of running an animal through the chute. The shrink and the labor and all of that is part of the overall cost.

AR: I would like to point out that there's a lot more information on benefit cost analysis on the website, and there's a lot of public information materials on tables outside as well—some printed or hardcopies of things.

TM: My name is Tom Mallor. I'm a retired engineer and farmer, and I'm the market master for a farmer's market that opens this Saturday for its 8th season. Although I'm on the board of several farmer organizations and a member of others, I'm just representing myself. I'm going to read this because otherwise, I'm not going to get everything done in the time period, but I don't like to read it so—anyhow—NAS started as a way for companies selling meat on the international market to increase their sales. They quickly realized that the effort would not be cost effective, and that another means of funding it had to be developed. Who better than the American taxpayer? The proponents knew the taxpayers would balk at using public money to underwrite private enterprise. They repackaged it in the always popular guise of public health and safety and sold it using the old reliable standards of fear and the assurance that the program would be voluntary. Although the program was allegedly voluntary, states such as Pennsylvania have strong-armed farmers into joining. In addition, even before the ink on the bill was dry, proponents started arguing that it would not be effective unless participation was mandatory. That is obviously finding support as these listening sessions seem to demonstrate. These and similar sessions appear analogous to wardens assembling groups of death row inmates for meetings on how to get input on how to make their impending demise easier and minimize the impact. How is impact minimized when the end result is you're dead regardless of whether you're an inmate or a farmer? In 1910, a small group of American international bankers secretly developed a way to protect and increase their wealth and power. They crafted a system that weakened their competition and had the taxpayer underwrite their risks and losses, regardless of their business practices. It was

sold to the president, the congress and the American people under the guise of protecting the economic health and wellbeing of the public. This con has been perpetuated to sustain for almost a hundred years. It's called the Federal Reserve. How is the NIS any different? A small number of special interests have gotten a program passed that allow them to squeeze out their competition, solidify their position and have the taxpayer consumer foot the bill and lose control of their food supply. It's about control. It's not about public health, welfare or safety. We have leaders who have supported taking control of private companies. They are now working towards control of our food system. When we lose control of our money and our food system, we have lost our freedom. We have become serfs and slaves. We have lost control of our money. NAIS is the other shoe.

AR: Sir, can you please wrap up?

TM: I just have a little bit left. We don't need listening sessions that beg the question. We need leaders asking questions like—who are the real proponents of NAIS. How do they benefit? Where in the world has the NAS type program been implemented and what were the results? What cost and other hardships does NAS cause the proponents to incur as opposed to the consumers or the farmers? What specific new and existing public safety issues the NIS will address that are not currently addressed by laws and regulations or the proper enforcement thereof. Of what benefit is the program to the American public? NAS benefits very few people on the backs and wallets of many.

AR: Sir.

TM: I've got three sentences. Americans have the right to decide what they eat, where and how they buy it and who grows it. The NIS establishes the mechanism for stealing those rights. We are losing rights at an unprecedented rate. We do not need the NAIS. We do not need to be reworked to lessen the impacts. It needs to be scrapped, period.

AR: Thank you sir for your comment.

BK: I'm Ben King from Germantown, Pennsylvania. Grew up on a dairy farm. Been in all sections of agriculture most of my life. I'm concerned about the mandatory NAIS. It's an infringement on human rights, infringement on private property and an infringement on freedom of religion. I don't see how an NAIS program can help. My 32 years of life experience has taught me that the federal government can be very incompetent on its best day. We're still fighting the war on drugs from the 80s and it's escalating. And every producer knows he or she needs healthy animals or they will be on the fast track to

bankrupt. Producers have their own systems of identifying their animals. They know if their animals are healthy or not. The government, whether or not they know the animal is healthy—they don't check them every morning. It seems to me a waste of taxpayers' money, and as taxpayers we are bleeding already. The producers—I notice you had retail sales of food. Well, guess what. The producers do not get retail sales of food. They're lucky if they get 10 cents to the dollar. The producers quite frankly can't afford it. Right now, the producers are producing milk under—they're losing money producing milk. A dairy farmer gets up in the morning and he goes out to milk his cows. He's not making any money. He's losing money right now at \$10 a hundred weight. How can the producers keep producing, have added costs implemented if they're not getting cost of production at the most? How can new farmers start producing? The average farmer is over 65 years of age. Who's going to produce food for the next generation? Food is essential for human existence. So that's all I have to say.

AR: Thank you very much for your comment.

DD: My name is Daryl Dickinson. I am from Ohio. I had the privilege of driving 7 hours over here yesterday, so I could get my precious 3 minutes in. I thank you for that. Then one kind person that I've never met before relinquished his 3 minutes to me, so I hope you'll put that 6 minutes on the clock, please. I had an email from John Carter, the president of The Australian Cattlemen's Association realizing that I would be at this meeting and he said, "Fight NAIS." We've had NLIS in Australia now—mandatory. It's a nasty word. They've had that in Australia. It's killing them. The book work, the compliance, fees, the fines, the penalties are driving them crazy. He says, "Fight NAIS with your life. Don't let the government get it started. They started it in Australia. It's just cost them a fortune. Land has dropped in prices. The big ranches have dropped. They're trying to sell. They cannot fight the government. It's killing them down there. So just a few points; that's a word from John Carter who's right in the middle of it in a country that can't stop it. Their government will not relinquish it. At this time the United States livestock is the most disease free in the world, the safest food. The current system has and will safely serve the nation. It is not outdated as some have said. U.S. herd health is the professional example to the world. Each livestock owner maintains their own herd health. Today, 47 states do not have a recorded case of any reportable livestock disease. This is the lowest disease of U.S. record. If USDA will direct their concerns to foreign imports, future unknown disease will be even less, contrary to what briefings have indicated. The largest owners of meat animals in the states are the states and the U.S. government—their wild game herds. The number of these large animals is more than doubled the number of domestic beef cattle. These animals roam freely over the United States and three other countries without regard to numbering, vaccinations or

disease. Those three countries are Mexico, Canada; and I checked with the Australian Department of Wildlife, and they say they have a migration in Russia. So the United States government does not intend to number their herd. We feed their herd. So while the U.S. wants mandatory NAIS for the private sector, they have no regard for policing their own disease. Who, in fact, are the major transmitters of animal disease in the United States? Did you know there were 200 people last year killed in car wrecks from deer on the highway? That's 200 deaths if we're worried about people's lives, and that's the government herd that's doing that. Okay? Are you with me? The USDA has briefed elected leaders with flawed data. Leaders have been told there are 1.4 million livestock farms in the USA and over a third enrolled in NAIS. The correct number of farms is over 3.9 million. They've omitted certain segments that they don't want to count. They will require these segments to sign up for NAIS if it's mandatory, but there's according to their own census, 499,880 farms that sold under a thousand dollars worth of livestock last years, so those were omitted. The horse population—

AR: Sir, can you wrap up, please?

DD: I've got 6 minutes.

AR: No, sir, there's no seating time.

DD: I've been yielded another 3 minutes.

FS: No, it's not fair to everybody else. You only get 3. It's not fair to everyone else. Everyone else is waiting for their turn as well.

[Unable to hear several comments]

AR: That's fine. It was my fault. My directions weren't clear. I'll let him finish. I apologize for the confusion, but from this point forward, there's no seating time. It's 3 minutes per person.

DD: Thank you very much, ma'am. Instead of the one-third enrollment that we're told about, there's 1.96 million horse owners in the United States that were not counted. So we believe instead of 1/3 of the enrollment already in NAIS, there's only less than 10 percent enrolled if you look at the full picture. The USDA has told cattle producers that beef export sales is the key to profitable cattle business. This is not correct. Last year we exported \$2.1 billion worth of cattle. We imported 4.8 billion. We are a net import nation. We don't need to export anything. We don't need to apply for any kind of status

to help us export. If we never export another pound of beef, it will not cost anybody in this room a penny. Okay? NIS has proposed—for several dozen years nearly 2000 food producing ranches are going out of business. NAS, if it happens, there will be more than 2000 people going out of business per month. I'm a little nervous on this because I feel this involves my farm, my sons, my daughters, my grandchildren; and I don't think we'll be able to survive NAIS and the cost of it, so forgive me if I'm a little emotional, okay? Revival data indicates that the average bovine in normal course of commerce has 8 owners during their earthly existence. NIS would require a computer entry for each movement or transfer. Within 3 years, NAIS computer entries would more than equal the census of the earth's human population, and every farmer and livestock owner will have to pay. That is the biggest numbering system that's ever been devised for taxpayers to pay in the history of the world. Over 3 million livestock producers are refusing to surrender to NAIS property enrollment. The reason is—livestock people are receiving deceptive answers and do not trust USDA. They're scared of USDA and their ever-changing protocol and all the questions that are being asked that cannot be answered. That's the reason—they can't be answered because they haven't made all the rules yet. So I feel kind of like the hold herd sire that was going down the chute, and they asked him just before he got to the ... chute; says, "How would you prefer your castration? Would you like it with a knife, with a bodezo or with a band?" So the answer, like other herd sires might be, "None of the above."

AR: Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, please.

DD: Okay. I only have one objection to NAIS. In all fairness, it's the word "mandatory." Everything else is okay—mandatory is the killer. So one piece of advice. If a government program isn't worth doing, it isn't worth doing well. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir, for your comments. 9, 158, 8, 190, 47, 123, 84, 15, 93, 136, 140, 75, 183, 89, 63, 28, 87. Do you want to start, sir?

TL: Hi. I'm Tom Lavalet. I'm kind of here more as a consumer than a producer. I've had health issues over the years, and pretty much I've learned what to eat, what not to eat. Local food—I'm kind of ... with Sonnewald Natural Foods. Kind of learned of them—really I drive by them and never knew what it was—through mutual friends and there's just kind of an experience just to go there even. I do have farm background college wise. At that time in my life, I did work on a 350-cow dairy. I've cropped. I've done custom farming. I actually drive a truck for a living now; see a lot of people. Everybody here, farmers—I know what work is involved. I've done it—been there, done that. I have a garden now. I farm a little bit of ground, some grains; kind of learning what to eat, what

not to eat. And the local thing that's been brought up—people want local food. I mean—people do want it more and more. I'm learning more and more through people that I deal with. It's much better. Diseases in large populations seem to be where the diseases are coming from. And we certainly don't need that. There's so many calories used in the production and transportation of food. It's brought up the point everybody to grow their own food. I think that's great if everybody could do that, and a lot of people can. A lot of people have big lawns. Put vegetables in. Change your diet a little bit. I've learned through my own personal health issues over the years—I've lost a lot of weight not eating junk food. You go—for me to go somewhere, a community store or something else, I'll see the food there, the packaged stuff. It's not good. I've seen the natural foods—stuff better. We should be an agrarian nation. That what we were designed to be from the get-go. We've gotten away from that. We don't need people up here controlling what we do. There should be some guidance. I can understand that but let's—everybody take responsibility for what they're doing. We are—the people here today, we're being responsible by being here. People come and we're not far away. It wasn't a big trip to get here. Some of these people have traveled quite a distance, and I'm hearing the passion in the farmers. I have friends that are farmers. They're hay producers, animal producers and just hearing the frustration here and in their voices. So that's really all I've got to say.

SM: Good morning, and thank you very much for allowing us to have these listening sessions. My name is Sandra Miller. I am a farmer. I own and operate a farm here in Cumberland County. It's a diversified family farm. I am also a board member of the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, the Pennsylvania Farmstead and Artisan Cheese Alliance, the Pennsylvania Meat Goat Producers Association, and most recently, I was given the opportunity to serve on the Governor's Food Safety Council here in Pennsylvania. What is the real story behind the national ID system? For the last few years there's been a lot of talk in the news and on the internet and amongst organizations regarding this National Animal Identification System. And I've been reading the same things that the same folks are saying over and over again since the emergence of this comprehensive animal ID program. They call it the mark of the beast; the end of small farmers; the infringements on personal rights. And people have really been whipped into a frenzy over this. They're sending letters. They're holding protests, and they're coming to these listening sessions. But I'm not one to blindly follow, so on March 11th with the House Agricultural Sub-Committee on Livestock, Dairy and Poultry's hearing was streamed live over the internet, I took the time to watch the entire hearing and see how as a livestock producer this program is going to ultimately affect me. And what I saw left me shaking my head in absolute disgust at the ignorance of the legislators tasked with the oversight of this program. First, NAIS has been marketed to Congress and the public as a

way to secure our food—our nation’s food supply. To further complicate matters, as of the March hearing, the Department of Homeland Security has been brought on board. Not once throughout the entire hearing despite repeated attempts by 3 panels of agricultural luminaries offering testimony including 4 veterinarians could our elected officials wrap their heads around the concept that NAIS primary function is to trace back infectious diseases outbreaks within 48 hours. This was apparent during the question and answer period for the second panel when Representative Conway—a Republican from Texas—pointedly ask just when does the 48-hour trace back begin? Does it begin when a person got sick from eating an infected hamburger or when they were first officially diagnosed? Panelists attempted to explain the difference between food safety and infectious diseases that could economically devastate our livestock industry. While the panelists’ concerns were diseases that could spread amongst livestock populations causing widespread market devastation, committee members were more concerned with disease transmission from livestock to humans—something that NAIS does not address.

AR: Can you wrap up, please ma’am?

SM: Yes, I am. The problem that I see is that this is being marketed for food safety when the truth is it’s being marketed for international trade. And that was specifically made apparent by the chairman of the committee who blatantly said, “This is being implemented as,”—he says, “In countries such as Canada and Australia, the number one reason this has been implemented is for international trade.” And what I want to know is why—as a producer who markets my animals 100% to the customers—am I going to be required to participate in a program that has absolutely nothing to do with my business?

AR: Thank you, ma’am.

FS: I guess not.

WG: Good morning. Thank you for taking the time to listen to us, and I certainly appreciate the degree to which people have sacrificed to come here this morning. My name is Wendy Glofki. I live in Wyoming County, Pennsylvania which is a very rural area. For what it’s worth, I’m a PhD chemist, and I’ve done academic and basic research and certainly have been involved with the manipulation of data to justify ends—but that’s another story. What I’ve done is talked—because they are so busy—I’m not a farmer—I have talked to farmers and producers, dairy farmers, poultry farms in the Bradford County, Susquehanna and Wyoming County areas, and without a single disagreement they wished me to convey this to you. No. They are not interested in participating in a program of this sort. They are well aware of the implications for them as small

producers. They're also interested in understanding the Constitutionality of the issues and what corporations will be providing the technology. What are their relationships with the proponents of the NAIS program and the implementation aspects of it? We've had issues with raw milk here and across the country where people who produced raw milk who chose not to comply with ordinances were essentially aggressively pursued by both state and federal agencies. And the people with whom I've spoken take these examples to heart when they consider participation in yet another government program. So, that's it. On behalf of the people who are working today and who can't speak to you from those areas, I'm conveying their thoughts on this. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, ma'am.

JS: I'm Jonas K. Stalzfus from Perry County, Pennsylvania. My wife and I operate a small beef farm. I grew up as an Amish [inaudible]. I have many Amish friends—small farmers—I want to convey to you as USDA officials that I'm hearing a lot of very bad stories—these are documentable stories—about what USDA is capable of when someone doesn't tow their lines specifically. And that—like Darrell Dickenson said—that thing called mandatory scares the bejesus out of me. When a story like a sheep producer up in the New England states who has gone through all the loops, and she jumped through all the hoops to bring in a specific flock of milk producing sheep. She quarantined them on the proper USDA island. She followed all the regulations. And she wakes up one morning at 5 o'clock to see a group of USDA enforcement officials there to gather up her flock and take them away and slaughter them without any reason. The flock wasn't diseased. There was no reason for this. This is why we don't trust your enforcement capacities.

When the wild boar reserve down Virginia wakes up one morning about 5 o'clock and there's a half a dozen SUVs out there towing trailers with 4-wheelers behind them, SWAT teams from the USDA there to slaughter all his supposedly sick hogs with pseudorabies, they keep the man and his wife incognito most of the day. Some of the rumors say that some of those slaughtered wild boar went to the local butcher shop to get slaughtered for the personal use of the USDA employees—that's not a fact necessarily—it's just a rumor. The fact is that it happened. These boards were hunted down and slaughtered. Again, no reason—none at all. When this little family out in Washington that transports a bit of their milk across to Oregon, they had their 6 cows impounded, and the family was forced to pay for the impounding and also the cost of keeping those animals. They couldn't even have their own milk—another example of the enforcement capacity of our beloved federal government. We don't trust you. We don't think that you have the capacity for compassion. We don't think you have the capacity for looking

at us from our point of view. We don't want NAIS. What is there about no that you do not understand? Thank you very much.

AR: Thank you, sir.

LR: Hi, my name is Liz Reitzig, and I am the Secretary of the National Independent Consumers and Farmers Association. Our position on NAIS is pretty simple. We will not comply. I have the opportunity to represent America's small, independent farm at the Secretary's roundtable discussion on April 15th. At the end of that meeting, Secretary Vilsack expressed concern at the lack of credibility that the USDA had that was coming through with people's testimonies. Well, Secretary Vilsack, one way that you can regain a small shred of credibility is to completely abandon this program.

Also at the end of that meeting, the Secretary assured us that he wanted to hear from America's small farmers. The following week the National Independent Consumers and Farmers Association met in Washington, D.C. and we gave the Secretary an opportunity to meet with some of America's sustainable small farmers in Washington. I was organizing that meeting; however, I was informed that the Secretary was too busy returning from Italy. The Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture was too busy returning from Italy to meet with a group of America's small sustainable farmers. I'm still waiting to hear when he's willing to meet with us so that we can tell him how NAIS would impact us. So, Secretary Vilsack, if you are listening to this, please respond to that directly. We are still waiting to talk to you. Thank you.

AR: Back to the numbers—70, 83, 127, 180, 88, 152, 153, 117, 52, 150, 11, 35, 72, 80, 17, 100, 102, 91, 125, 105, 90, 67, 46, 20, 18, 10, 61, 65, 193, 169, 145, 124—62, 194, 147, 118, 16, 79, 78, 101—69, 57, 60, 122, 29, 33, 193, 128, 12, 184—probably.

FS: Okay, you have 5.

AR: We're okay with time here. Go ahead and start when you're ready.

WR: Good morning. My name is William Taylor Reil, and I make my home in Elverson. It's in Chester County. I've been involved with a number of active groups, but more importantly, I've been involved in the study of Constitutional law—though I'm not an attorney—for almost 20 years—focusing on Pennsylvania constitutional law, specifically. And what I find incredibly disturbing is with all the discussions—and you've heard this repeatedly from a number of people—but, yet when Government is asked, "Produce the constitutional authority to do what you're trying to do" there's deafening silence. In

reality, there is no constitutional authority for this program or Premise ID. And what government needs to understand is without constitutional authority you're outside the law, and it should not and cannot lawfully occur. And the end result is—this is typical—unfortunately—of much of what goes on in government today. In reviewing the USDA—specifically the NAIS—websites, there's a great deal of information on that website that's misleading, deceptive—in fact, fraudulent. You trick people into joining Premise ID without the full truth being disclosed for the government's benefit. That is the classic definition of fraud. That's a felony in any stretch of the imagination. The specific provisions that I see that are violated by this program in the state constitution—that is, Pennsylvania State Constitution—is Article 1, Section 1, 2, 3, 8, 11, 17, 25 and 26 at a minimum; in the Federal Constitution in the Bill of Rights, Articles 1, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13 and 14. That, in itself, is enough to say stop. Prosecution for these offenses is extensive if this continues. This the Secretary needs to understand. He and everyone else who is in the government takes an oath of office to support, obey and defend the constitution—if at the Federal level, the United States Constitution; at the state level, the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, for example. Violations of oaths of office are prosecutable. What we need to understand—all of us—is to say to government, “No Constitutional authority—don't do it. You're outside the law.” So all of this activity that's going on—

AR: Sir, can you wrap up, please?

WR: I will. All the activity that's going on and the expense associated with it—all this program is not driven by law. It's obviously not driven by need. It's driven by certain select entities that want control and revenue collection. It needs to stop just like so much else. Follow the law, and let's not waste our time and money and burden the people with unconstitutional restraints. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir.

SV: Good morning, Secretary Vilsack and USDA hosts. I live and work in Virginia. My name is Susan Velasco. I took a day off today to come to Pennsylvania to attend one of your listening session. I consider this a rare opportunity since there are so few of them. I am a consumer. I represent myself. The fact that I'm here at all should be an indication to you that the truth is dawning at last on the general population. It has been a gradual awakening until now to be sure. Your department has been trying to force NAIS on us for a long time, and like Mr. Stalzfus said, what part of no do you not understand? The eyes of the public are being pried open by the undeniable, inescapable truths that the aim of the National Animal Identification scam is to put small farmers out of business so that

big Ag can be the sole provider of the world's food—that the food that your department approves is making us sick and sterile—that [inaudible] food processing plant and milk pasteurizing facilities are the origins of food borne illness—not small farmers crops, grass fed meats and raw dairy.

The truths that the USDA has no legal authority to implement NAIS and doing so violates the constitution; that the USDA is prepared to use force to implement the NAIS despite your claim that the program is voluntary; that GMO foods are everywhere and grains and by-products [inaudible] food processing which makes the animals and us sick. I know these truths and so do my friends, my co-workers, my church, my family, my cancer support group and every stranger I get a chance to tell in the theater restroom waiting line. I am the tip of a massive iceberg that you are beginning to discover as more and more of us turn to local produced foods, raw milk, and grass fed meats because they are safer than the food your department approves. We don't need trace back mechanism. We know where are food comes from.

You should be helping us to access this safe food supply instead of trying to eliminate. You should be helping us by outlying CAFOs instead of protecting them. You're supposed to protect us. You should implement regulations that put big Ag out of business if their practices make us sick. Don't target small farmers whose food is healing us. You asked for my suggestions for a solution to the growing food safety problem. I hope you are honestly open to them. Here they are. Provide capital incentives to farmers to use the land which is theirs after all to grow real crops without pesticides and chemical fertilizers instead of GMOs; raise animals on pasture instead of in crowded buildings; produce clean raw milk which doesn't require the assault of pasteurization; test our food for nutrient content before allowing them on the market the same way the European Union does, and ban any foods from the grocery shelves that don't measure up. Require farmers to put their livestock on pastures, and stop putting bad food in our cafeterias in schools, hospitals and hotels. I'm deeply troubled about what I've learned about NAIS. It is expensive, intrusive, discriminatory and aimed at the wrong target. Go back to the drawing board. Stand up to big Ag and industrial food processes—

AR: Ma'am, I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, please.

SV: Thank you, I will. Trying to convince the American people that CAFO meats, GMO crops and pasteurized dairy are safe and nutritious when you know the opposite is true is immoral, Mr. Secretary and foisting NAIS on consumers and on farmers is corruption at its worst. I am appalled, and you should be ashamed.

AR: Thank you, ma'am.

MR: I am Mervin Rupert of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania—a small dairy farmer that's in a transitional period of getting out of it and letting sons take over. I am really thankful that we still have this privilege in this country to voice our opinions—our views—and that we still have a little bit of a voice yet. I'm mainly here because I'm concerned for my children—the grandchildren—sons that are trying to farm and these little grandchildren coming up—what they're going to have to face as far as regulations and all that kind of stuff. And since I have an opportunity to speak—those in the audience that know the power of prayer and our God—we face a serious threat in this country, and we need to pray to our Maker for guidance and deliverance, and those of the Muslim faith or any other faith need to pray their God to keep America safe and healthy. The little people have made this country great. These big organizations that are getting behind us as far as the co-ops—my 35 years of dairy experience has taught me that the cooperative system that was made up of supposedly farmers to help farmers—to get farmers a better milk price—to fight for the farmer has continually de-railed the farmer. And I can talk on this personally because if you come to a co-op meeting, the agenda is already planned, prepared—the end result is already intact. In the summer of 2000, my eldest son had God's blessing to have the opportunity to rent one of the most productive farms in Lebanon County. We did our homework as far as milk pricing. All milk is priced Federal Order 4. His milk would be shipped under Federal Order 4. The mailbox price that the farmers received under the Federal Order 4 amounted to \$2 a hundred difference in the price from the best to the worst and the co-ops are working for us, but for some reason the independents that the co-ops were trying to squash paid more money. Please, people, do your homework. Listen to your authorities, but do your homework. This will be mandatory. Thank you very much.

AR: Thank you, sir.

FS: This is for the record. I've owned horses for 33 years, and I know a pile of horseshit when I see it.

FS: First, I am not a stakeholder. I own my horses. NAIS will never be acceptable because it violates the bill of rights, and those rights are non-negotiable. By what authority does USDA or even Congress violate the 1st and 4th amendments? The Amish and similar groups cannot participate without violating their core beliefs. My private property is not a premises that can be entered without permission or a warrant. USDA has not given a satisfactory response to these concerns. In fact, they dance around the questions whenever they're brought up. My horses are not guinea pigs or cash cows for microchip

manufacturers, and I won't risk their health or my finances for a questionable technology that doesn't benefit me in any way. I've reviewed the so-called benefits stated in the cost benefit analysis, and they're a joke. I've read all 442 pages. I will not file tracking reports on my horses unless you pay me for my labor, and I will not file reports on my clients horses when they travel to and from my farm because I'm not a spy.

MS: Yes.

FS: The cost benefit analysis is seriously biased and flawed. It's funded by APHIS compiled with the help of the architects of NAIS. It is full of assumptions that do not accurately represent the horse world in which I participate, and it contains misleading and false statistics. I have some with me. It is obvious from reading through it that the only real beneficiaries of NAIS are those businesses that are involved in imports and exports. In fact, individual livestock owners are dismissed as insignificant. USDA is disingenuous when it says it wants to control the spread of disease. Why then are you lowering import restrictions to allow cattle in from Mexico that have bovine TB? Why are you trying to bring in cattle from Argentina which is known to have a reservoir of FMD and cattle over 30 months of age from Canada that have a higher risk of BSE and disallowing a private business from testing for BSE in response to their client's needs? Why are you not aggressively pursuing a cure for Johne's disease and moving a high security disease containment facility into the middle of cattle country? The USDA has changed our import policy from zero tolerance to managed risk. We're already seeing the failures of that policy. NAIS is not a disease control plan. It is a damage control plan to try to clean up the disaster you will create. You're opening up Pandora's Box. Let's be honest about the real reason for NAIS. It is to comply with OIE regulations by 2010 and to hell with the Bill of Rights and us insignificant people. I view USDA, the state Agriculture Departments and the pro-NAIS legislator's actions as traitorous. You are selling us out for profits for multi-national corporations. You have fooled some of the people, but you haven't fooled all of them. World trade organization agreements do not supersede the Constitution. I will not comply.

MS: Yes.

AR: Thank you, ma'am.

DM: My name's Dave McIlhenny. I'm a family farm operator from western Pennsylvania. Our family operates an 80 head cow/calf operation, and I'm here to speak for Farm Bureau. Farm Bureau supports the current system of the voluntary animal ID system and is monitoring 4 major areas of interest to the success of that program. The first would be

cost. The Farm Bureau believes that the cost should be shared by government and industry. Confidentiality is another clear point and believes that confidentiality is important to the system. Education would certainly compel USDA to further their efforts on education of NAIS to all producers and all segments of the industry. Liability is another issue is to support liability protection for producers for this system. On a personal note, our family farm operation at 80 cows believes that NAIS is our simplest, cheapest form of risk management to support and insure that our operation will be in operation for our younger generations to guard against foreign animal diseases such as foot and mouth and to guard against an event such as what occurred in Great Britain. With that, I thank you for your time and your efforts thus far. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir. 131, 30, 111, 53, 42, 113, 64, 164, 163, 161, 73, 19, 45, 36, 49, 58.

CR: Good morning. I'm Craig Russell from Snyder County, Pennsylvania. I'm here representing myself and the Society for Preservation of Poultry Antiquities. And I'd like to start by saying I'm not here to reach consensus. I'm here to say no to an evil, poorly conceived government program. As someone elegantly said before, we need not to get on this train, and I will not get on it. My membership almost unanimously is opposed to the program. People from other kinds of farming—other animal interests—have been calling me this week—people who couldn't be here—and they said, "Tell them hell, no." And I'm here to say hell, no. I think as the people who are here—whether you are for or against, you ought to look at some things. These people are trying to control us. They're trying to manipulate us. Seven meetings across the country for 50 states and territories—do you think they're seriously concerned with what we have? Let me give you a little—what we have to say. Let me give you a little history. In 2004, I was invited to their headquarters—actually in Maryland, but near D.C. because they wanted to hear what we had to say. I got there, and I found that they didn't care at all about what we had to say. They wanted to use us as a rubber stamp. I'm not your rubber stamp, and I will not be. There was a t-shirt here this morning—a lady wearing a t-shirt that said, "I love my country, and I fear my government." My grandfather used to say, "We have problems when the government causes fear and isn't afraid of its citizens." Well, I'm 60 years old—a little old for a revolution, and life is sweet, but I don't want the chains of slavery. I'm a free man. I'm an American. And one of my contacts the night before last said, "You tell them that we're going to fight. If we lose, we'll keep fighting. If we win, we'll keep fighting. We need sensible programs—not programs designed to crush the small producer." And people who are not really in the system. I was amazed when I picked up some of the handouts outside. Things that I was told in 2004 were going to be policies are now myths. You folks have tried to manipulate us. It is—as others have said—about

international trade and paying homage to the big boys and crushing the small. It doesn't make any sense.

AR: Sir, can I ask you to wrap up, please?

CR: I asked someone to time me because I don't trust you people. Did we have 2-1/2 minutes there? Okay. The lies are just amazing. You need to know that you need to be afraid of us. One other thing about their manipulation. These so-called breakout sessions this afternoon—they're not about interest groups or anything like that. They're just to divide us and to control the input. I would not take part in one of these so-called breakout sessions, although I will stay here to talk to anybody who wants to talk about poultry issues and kind of thing. I guess one last thing. I was very unimpressed with the things you had to say this morning. I'm not here to make peace. I'm here to lay down the glove. The only person I know up here is John, and I don't trust anything that that man says. I haven't looked to be sure, but I suspect if you look in the dictionary under arrogant bureaucrat, his picture is probably there. In one of our past discussions I mentioned the concerns of Mary Zanoni, Farm for Life. John immediately launched into his disregard for Mary. He said, "She's in it for the money." Yeah, she's been spending her money fighting for the people of this country. She's not been making money. I won't get on the train. Thank you very much.

AR: Thank you, sir.

JB: I'm Janet Bayer from Jarrettsville, Maryland. You heard my husband speak about the logistics problem and the hacking problem that could happen in the NAIS database and privacy issues. We had the Jarrettsville chapter of the [inaudible] price foundation, and we've been drinking milk for 6 years raw—grass fed right from the farm in Pennsylvania because the Farm Bureau in Maryland says, "No, no. Raw milk cannot be legal in Maryland." I don't know a farmer that would want to produce milk that I'd want to drink because it has to be 100% grass fed. Winter milk is not as good as spring milk. And I just paid \$11 a pound for the butter. And my little sister who had a broken pelvis a few years ago after having 2 kidney transplants and cancer—well, she's happy to get this butter because she hasn't had any more broken bones. But you didn't allow the farmers to sell the butter. Oh, no. You sell milk. The whole thing is ridiculous. I don't blame this farmer for refusing to take the permit from Pennsylvania. So many wonderful things have been said here today. I'm really grateful to all the people who have come who can talk about the Constitution. About 40 years ago my cousin died. She had cancer. She was one of the 5 year survivors. The last year of her life her fingernails grew through the back of her hand in the pain that her Dr. Ketter who she'd worked for could not ease.

That's terrible. That's not a cure. And that's why I moved to a farm and raised my own food. It's only 18 acres, but I'm raising it. And I've got the most delicious grass fed meat I'd ever want to eat. And you're going to take it away from me? You're going to make me label it. Well, we're not moving anything off the farm. We have our own ram. The last 2 rams I bought were horrible from the big boys. Now we kept our best looking ram and boy—twins and triplets. It's marvelous. And we're not going to register. But by mistake my husband registered the premises. And I guess we're in it forever. Please take us out. And we'll continue to share food with our friends and neighbors no matter what you do. I think that thousand dollar a day fine for not registering or telling you when some chicken died is absolutely unconscionable. Does the Farm Bureau want to take over our land so they can run their machines over it? It didn't work very well in the past before we bought it 35 years ago. I think the Farm Bureau should get real. Farmers—milk farmers are going out of business, and they're still against raw milk not realizing that we pay \$6 a gallon for the milk. I told you the \$11 for the butter. And the yogurt's \$14 a gallon.

AR: Ma'am, can you wrap up, please?

JB: So, I thank you for this opportunity to share my life with this lovely group of people—teachers and [inaudible] and I'm just so grateful for all of this. And we will prevail because there's more of us than there are of you.

AR: Thank you, ma'am.

MS: Hello, my name is Mark Schoenbeck. I come from Floyd, Virginia in the Appalachians. I represent the Virginia Association for Biological Farming. It's a membership organization—Virginia's main organization in sustainable agriculture. We have about 200 members, and we hold a conference every year, and we co-sponsor it with Virginia Cooperative Extension. It's called Virginia Biological Farming Conference. And I also talked with about 5 different small-scale livestock and poultry farmers—the largest has about 2,500 meat birds, 500 layers, and about 80 large animals, and the smallest has 2 hogs for home consumption and 35 layers for their CSA. And I also talked with the Virginia—the ABF board of directors. The message I'm hearing is quite consistent. We do not need this program. We do not understand how it can possibly benefit, and there is some concern about adverse impact in terms of costs and burdens. And, at this point, I have to say I am, frankly, extremely perplexed. On the one hand we hear all this benign information about how it's a voluntary program, and it's going to be designed to be actually helpful to small farmers. And I heard 1 or 2 small scale farmers in here say, "Yeah, we do believe this is a good idea, and it will help our children farm." And on the

other hand, we hear a tremendous amount of concern and anger and extreme distrust. I want to step back a minute and put this in a broader context. I welcome the opportunity that we have to talk about these issues with the USDA. I've also welcomed the new emphasis on support for small and beginning farmers—beginning farmer/rancher development program—and strong emphasis—increased emphasis on organic and sustainable inorganic initiative and the conservation programs. I appreciate the leadership of Secretary Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Merrigan on this. Okay, having said that, I would say that given the potential for misuse of an animal identification premise and animal identification program and the extreme level of distrust and anger and upset over this, I think that it would be a very good move to drop the program at this point because—

MS: Yes.

MS: —it is just—

MS: —creating an atmosphere where there's—it's not an ability to create the trust of the USDA. And this actually makes me sad because I've seen some very positive things from the USDA. I've met individuals who I feel honestly support the small farm, and I almost think that perhaps Vilsack himself does as well. But this is just a wrong turn. I wanted to ask—to me, NAIS is closing the door after the pony has escaped. Let's look at prevention. One—conditions under which these animals are made. I'm hearing lots of small farmers who love their animals. They put them out in pasture. They give them plenty of sunshine. They give them good veterinary care. They watch to make sure they're healthy every day versus these concentrated animal feeding operations where they never see the light of the day. They could hardly move for bumping into the next animal or bird.

AR: Sir, can I ask you to please wrap up?

MS: Okay, I will. And the other thing is let's focus on rebuilding local infrastructures so local food systems can thrive. And, third, if we must have an NAIS, let's direct it where it is intended—where it is needed—tracing international trade—tracing the very largest operations which do move disease over long distances. And let's not have it address the family farm who's feeding the people in their own county. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir.

DW: Hi, I'm Diane Wiest. I'm a small—one of those kind of invisible small sustainable farmers under \$1,000 so I'm here more as a consumer than as a farmer. Basically, my intent is to be able to feed my family clean, healthy local food—not just because of the health aspects of it—because it just plain tastes better. The mandatory aspect of NAIS is my concern. And, although we've been told that it's voluntary now, then there's that whole little glitch where it may become mandatory if not enough people volunteer. To me, that's mandatory. It will be, eventually. It concerns me because it operates on the assumption that I as a small farmer can't be responsible for the health and well being of my own small flock of chickens or whatever—that I need to have government intervention in order to make sure they're okay. And that is not the case. If large producer associations such as the Dairy Cattle Association feel that there's a need within their industry to have such a program, by all means let them fund it. Do not put it on the backs of the American taxpayers. Leave us alone. Basically, I'm just here to say no. Thank you.

WS: Hello, my name's Wayne Shengler from Frijolito Farm in Columbus, Ohio. I'm opposed to NAIS, but you asked for solutions today for creating a system we can live with. This suggests to me that you've already made up your minds to move forward and that all the comments of strong opposition here today will simply be disregarded. With that in mind, it seems to me that true beneficiaries of NAIS will be those producing meat for export, whereas most of the objections seem to be coming from folks like me. I'm a small farmer doing direct local sales through farmers markets and a CSA. My poultry is processed by the only state inspected custom poultry processor in the entire state of Ohio. There's nothing secretive about my operation. My farm is easily located by a simple internet search. If the USDA wants to destroy my flock or check my records, they would save probably less than 30 seconds by having my farm in the NAIS database. So my participation in NAIS would not benefit me, would not benefit my customers, and would be of only inconsequential benefit to the USDA. The people who would benefit from 100% participation are my larger, already more advantaged competitors like Tyson and Perdue. With the disease control whitewash of NAIS, these large producers will likely see increased sales to foreign buyers. They can leverage those profits against small producers like me who are selling domestically. It seems reasonable, then, that the companies benefiting from my participation should be paying me for my participation. By imposing a substantial fee on meat exporters—a NAIS gains tax, if you will—and using that to pay subsidies to small local farmers so that compliance actually results in a profit for these small farmers to make us competitive with big exporters, you could eliminate many of the objections to this program. In summary, those who want this program should pay those of us who don't want rather than forcing us to foot the bill for their inventory tracking system and international PR campaign. That's all NAIS really

amounts to unless you propose to not only track but also control the movement of not only all livestock in North America but also of all humans and wildlife as well. Thank you.

FS: Hello, my name is Forest Stricker. I'm from the Reading, Pennsylvania area—Burkes County. I'm an organic dairy farmer. We have about 160 cows. We produce organic milk from a grass-based dairy. We are a conventional farmer, and for stewardship reasons we didn't want to use the chemicals and pesticides and herbicides and insecticides. And to be a better steward we went organic. And back in those days we had veterinarians coming into the herd every month, and now we hardly see a veterinarian except for a calving problem. And so the herd health has turned around due to being on grass, having the cows out in sunshine, fresh air, green grass—which is much more nutritious than stored feeds. We've also had families—mothers contact us for organic raw milk. I didn't advertise. They came to me. As was mentioned earlier, these mothers want this milk for their children unpasteurized, unhomogenized—just all natural just the way it comes from the cow. I hear many, many reports where their children could not drink pasteurized milk because they were lactose intolerant, but they could drink the raw milk. No problems.

MS: Yes.

FS: Yes.

FS: So we have a healthy product, and we want to not have that hindered in any way by—we want to say no to NAIS to any mandatory controls. We want our freedom. We want our individual rights—our Constitutional rights, and we just don't want that—USDA to do anything to interfere with that. I do have 1 incident—last fall—we do have a raw milk permit, and we had to test for TB and brucellosis. And our veterinarian came back and said we had a—5 suspect TB cows. So we had to have a state veterinarian come in and retest them—3 days—well, when she came in it was on a Friday before Thanksgiving, and to just show you a little bit of hardship we went through, she said, "If you don't test these cows today, we'll have to shut your herd down for 2 weeks because it was going to be Thanksgiving and the lab wouldn't be open." And I was just very distraught by that that they would shut my farm down for 2 weeks because of 5 suspect cows. It would have cost me about \$25,000 for 2 weeks of dumping of the organic milk. But, anyway, when she came back we had to catch the cows. Our cows are on pasture so we had to kind of lasso them. They were full. They didn't want to go in the headlocks. It was just a lot of problems just getting this done. But the problem I had was just the fact that she came in and just threatened us that she would shut our herd down if she couldn't come in

and test these animals today. And, of course, we complied and let her do it. But is that a foretaste of what we're going to see—

MS: Yes.

FS: —that—

MS: Absolutely.

AR: Sir, can wrap up, please?

MS: Yes. Again, I just want to say no to the NAIS. No, thank you.

AR: Ladies and gentlemen, we're coming close to noon. I'd like to allow 2 more people to speak. It'll send us over by a few minutes, but I think that'll even out with a couple of the delays we've had. So, I'm just going to keep calling numbers and if my trusty assistants can yell at me when there are 2 people ready, I would appreciate it. 50, 160, 98, 97, 96, 59, 95, 157.

FS: Stop, stop.

FS: This is 59.

AR: 186, 165, 166.

FS: Stop. Sorry. This is 98. Okay, so you have 2. Thank you.

DP: Thank you. I'd like to thank the panel of assembled USDA staff for giving us the opportunity to speak at this session on National Animal ID. My name is Dave Pad, and I represent Holstein Association USA and 30,000 dairy producer members from across the U.S. We know you've all been bombarded with the commentary on pros and cons of a National Animal Identification System. From the organization's top national perspective, one of your top priorities needs to be the implementation of a national mandatory animal identification program as fast as humanly possible. The livelihood of our members and all involved with production animal agriculture are in jeopardy until we have a national mandatory animal identification program. The United States currently lags behind the number of countries that have effective mandatory animal identification programs. Many of our international trading partners and competitors such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, the European nation and Japan have adopted solid national identification programs.

Animal health officials from around the world have long recognized the efficient and effective system for animal identification is an essential component in an animal health program. Establishing an internationally recognized system of animal identification will enhance the competitiveness of U.S. exports of animals, dairy products and other products. Our lack of standardization in national animal identification system is one factor that prevented the United States from receiving [inaudible] risk status which is the best status possible under the rating of the BSC from our world organization of animal health, OIE. Receiving [inaudible] risk status would not only enhance our ability to compete internationally it would greatly support U. S. domestic price structures so that producers, regardless of their interest in international markets, it would benefit when the United States expands its international export markets. Currently in the U. S. it can take months for animal health officials to complete an investigation of an animal disease event because records are often, at best, kept on paper. The lack of a good national program makes trace back a huge challenge. For an example, of the 199 positive cases of bovine tuberculosis identified in the United States between late 2003 and early 2008, over 84% of the animals did not have official USDA identification. As a result, USDA and state investigative teams spent substantially more time and money in conducting trace backs, including an expanded scope of identification to identify suspects and exposed animals. The average time spent conducting these trace backs involved 27 recent bovine tuberculosis investigations in 199 days. This is simply not acceptable. While critics of the national ID program often cite cost as the reason for not implementing the program, in reality we cannot afford not to have a mandatory national ID program. Initial data from a cost benefit analysis Kansas State University has conducted, the USDA showed an annual government industrial cost associated with achieving full pre-harvest traceability for cattle—

AR: Sir, can you please wrap up?

DP: Yes—swine, sheep and poultry exceed 2,000 million annually—200 million annually.

AR: Sir—

DP: For those who bring the concern of confidentiality is a reason not to have a mandatory ID, we believe the consumer should have the right to know where their food is coming from. Recent concerns over peanuts, pistachios and other food products heighten the importance for food safety concerns of our consumers producing food to [inaudible] will no longer be acceptable in the U.S. In closing, there's an urgent need for national mandatory animal ID in the United States that allows government to quickly respond

effectively to the animal health emergency. America's dairy and beef producers are vulnerable without this system. Thank you.

AR: Thank you, sir.

GC: I am Gwen Castle, and I'm 40 years from Pennsylvania, but 20 years from upstate New York. I'm a producer of—I have sheep. We produce lambs—both grass fed and grain fed in the winter for a particular market, and I participate in a national—mandatory national ID program at this time. Sheep has scrapie within the breed which is a TSE-like BSE or mad cow disease. It's in sheep throughout the world, so approximately 12 years ago a voluntary program was put in place—10 years ago, I think. I'm not sure exactly. And producers were asked to sign up and voluntarily participate. And I believe that the figure was about 33% of producers were willing to sign up voluntarily. About 4 years ago the program did become mandatory, and now the percentage is—I think actually almost 91% now—participation. The reason that I'm here is that I'm not necessarily supporting NAIS, and I'm not against NAIS. I can see benefits to producers. I can see where someone would be against it for many reasons. But I just wanted to share with you a program that as far as a producer is concerned doesn't run us out of business and also doesn't hurt us in any way—may not directly help us unless there's a problem. So, it's sort of a background thing that happens all the time. At this point our tagging is provided through funding—in New York State, at least—so I as a producer at this minute do not pay for tags, although the tags would only run about 78 cents each. I would be very willing to pay for those. I put them in myself—same as I would tag lamb tags or flock tags. It's the same tag, basically. In fact, I buy my flock tags from the same provider that makes the scrapie tags. The information at this time is kept by me. If I sell an animal for either to another producer or I ship an animal over a certain age out, I keep that information. At this time in New York State we do not have to tag animals under 18 months so I don't have to—I keep that information, but I don't have to put a scrapie tag on it. I do have a concern in the sense that I don't understand the follow through once an animal is slaughtered, and if I sell commercially—which I don't happen to—but if I were to sell—how that tracing would—30 seconds? Okay—would actually work in the system. Okay? Well, that's what I'm saying. I don't understand it. So that's a question out there. The concerns that I have and other sheep producers do have is the cost of the program as it moves forward because we are assured at this minute that scrapie will be rolled into NAIS. Now, that doesn't mean it's going to be rolled in exactly as it stands.

FS: Ma'am, can I ask you to wrap up?

GC: So we have a cost concern—yep—we have a confidentiality concern because we're keeping our own records. But because we're keeping our own records there's a break in information and then also the ease of use—that we don't have to have 20 people helping us. Thank you. And I don't know if I mentioned, we do about 600 lambs a year, so that's big for the east coast.

AR: Thank you, ma'am. Okay, basically that brings us to the close of the morning session, so here's what I would like to ask you and tell you. If you have written formal comments that you want to leave, you can leave them at the registration desk. I'd ask that you report back here at around 1. The sooner we get going, the more time we have. Come to this room, and we'll divide into thirds. Pay attention to your little sticker. If you don't wish to return, that is certainly your prerogative. This is not mandatory.

FS: Yet.

MS: Yet.

AR: Oh, no. I never want to have dividing into groups be mandatory. I ask only one thing that we continue to dialogue with each other respectfully—that you understand that the people who'll be working with you this afternoon are facilitators—not subject matter experts. They're not in a position to defend or refute NAIS. So please keep that in mind, and speak your mind freely. These are comments, again, that are going to Secretary Vilsack, and that's part of why they're being recorded. I'd also like to note. I saw a couple of people taking pictures. I don't think the government employees have issues with that. This is a public meeting, but I'll just throw out there that if you're going to use them for anything other than personal use, you might as well—make sure you check with whoever was in your photo that they're okay with that. Different people have different processes—I mean this is an open public meeting. I would—that's just advice for caution's sake for those who are taking the pictures. Have a good meal. I'll see you back here if you choose to come back. Thank you.

Oh, and I'd like all the facilitators to come up here, please.

MS: I missed the most important part. What did they say about the meal?

MS: You're on your own, but they have somebody—they have the stuff over here. He'll be open.

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[Tape ends]

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