

USDA  
Louisville Blue Room  
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**NOTE: FP = FEMALE PARTICIPANT, MP = MALE PARTICIPANT**

LM: Good morning. Welcome everyone to the breakout session of the meeting. You're probably thinking, why is he using a mic when we're this small and close together. The gentleman here is recording so it can be transcribed later and so it can be picked up. We will use a mic and pass it around. It may be a little awkward but—

This is an opportunity to carry on with the morning's discussions if there are things that were presented that you would like to elaborate on further. It's that opportunity—if there were things that didn't come up that you want to bring up, it's that opportunity as well or if you didn't get a chance to talk, to expand on that further.

I'm Larry Miller. I'm with USDA and , Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, and this Dorothy Rowe with me as well with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. We're going to be working as your facilitators today. This is a chance to bring up all the concerns and things and elaborate on them and have more time than the general session allowed. It's your chance to give direct feedback to the Secretary. We have a new administration and input into ways to steer animal identification, tracing and where you think it should end up or how it should be structured over time. It's also an opportunity to hear what other people think. It's also an opportunity to hear what other people have to say and their concerns, and a lot of times that's synergistic. It generates new ideas and new ways of looking at things and discussions.

Dorothy and I, as I said, are to serve as facilitators. It's our role to make sure that anybody that wants an opportunity to talk and wants to share information that they get that opportunity. Also, if there are a lot of hands waving at once, we'll start establishing the queue as far as who gets the microphone next.

It was mentioned this morning in the session—this isn't a breakout group to establish consensus. We're not here to establish consensus. As you heard from in there, there are a lot of different viewpoints, and that's just not something we're going to have time to do today. It's going to take a long time; but it's to talk about views, and there are no right or wrong views. Everybody's view here is valid. It's not to argue and debate—like if

you're for to get you against; or if you're against to get you for. But it's to express your views and to bring what you have on your mind to the table.

Also, it's about concerns, but if you see solutions to any of these concerns, things that you feel like could be done to make it more workable, please bring those up. If you feel like it does not have a solution at all, that's valid too but please try to say why because it's helpful to know why. As I mentioned to you, this is being recorded, and there's going to be a transcript made of it. When the Federal Register came out, there were 7 questions in there, and we're not going to—but those questions dealt with the issues that most often come up related to the NAIS; and to refresh your memory, that was cost, small farmer impact, privacy and confidentiality, liability, premises registration, animal identification and animal tracing. So if that helps give you a little bit of a framework for bringing things that are on your mind up, use that. If not, and other things are on your mind, feel free to go outside of that.

What we'll do is if you want to say something, just raise your hand and Dorothy and I will note the order that they came up and make sure you get the mic; and we're using the mics just to aid in the transcriptions so to be sure that it's picked up. If you would, say your name. But if you would the first time, say our business affiliation—what you do—because sometimes it's useful to other people to understand when you present a viewpoint where you're coming from, what you do. And it help them to understand your issues. After that, when you get the mic, if you'd just say your name—and the reason is to—when somebody's recording and it's listened to later, it's hard to tell sometimes when it changes speakers, so it's just to aid with that. If you don't feel comfortable saying your name, then don't. Don't worry about it but it does help transcribing later.

We're not going to take a formal break. If you need to use the restroom, just feel free to come go as you wish. We'll ask you at noon if you want to stop for lunch and then reconvene at 1; or if you want to just keep going on through, and then when we're done, we're done, and you'll go to lunch then. So we'll ask you that question, and we'll use a democratic majority process for making that decision.

MS: [Inaudible] make that decision first? [Inaudible].

LM: And if you are in that boat, please raise your hand so you get a chance to say something before you leave. The gentleman had suggested that we make a decision now as far as whether we want to stop at noon which is 15 minutes from now or to keep going on 'til we're done; and then when we break, we're done for good. Does anybody have an opinion one way or the other?

MS: [Inaudible]. I'm trying to get that understanding. Keep on to 12 and not come back at 1 or just go right on through to 1:00?

LM: Break at 12, take an hour for lunch, come back at 1 and finish or just go all the way 'til we're done.

MS: [Inaudible].

LM: Until we're just done; everybody's said what they want to. There's no more comments, and then when we break, we'll be done. I'm getting the feeling people want to go on through. Maybe somebody has to leave.

MS: [Inaudible].

LM: Can you come back?

MS: [Inaudible]. Yeah, we can come back at 1. [Inaudible].

MS: [Inaudible].

LM: Okay. If it's acceptable, everyone will break at noon, and then we'll reconvene at 1? Okay. All right. Having said that, let's get underway. We open the floor up and again just—

And I just wanted to say, a lot of very thoughtful and substantive comments presented this morning. That was a lot of good discussion to build on.

MS: [Inaudible].

LM: And that'll come out in the comments, I think, as people speak to that. This gentleman had his hand up.

MS: I just had a though-provoking question that I asked myself while we were in the session today. Out of respect for Mr. Liptrap and the pork producers, I won't say what kind of flu outbreak there was because it's pretty clear that the H1N1 is transmittable between swine, avian and human species. So if that's the case and that is the case with several animal diseases, we should not just focus NAIS on tagging animals. We'd have to actually focus on tracking all the people that come into contact with those animals as well

in order to fully track a disease outbreak because someone who could go into one of these facilities and come in contact, not show symptom of a disease that is transmittable to humans from the animals and then leave that facility and spread that disease. There'd be no way to trace them, and that is a serious flaw, I think, with any type of system that would seriously want to track a disease that's transmittable between humans and other species.

TM: To help the gentleman over here, my name is Terry Rowlett. I am a dairy farmer and that's how I make my living is off a dairy—or I'm trying to right now, maybe I should state. To go back to you or your comment there, I know on my dairy farm, I don't want people coming in and wandering around on my farm. I want to know who's there. That's part of biosecurity whether you produce vegetables, whether you got livestock or whatever. I have told my employees and my family—I have 2 full-time employees on my farm. I've told them—if you see someone come in this drive, I don't care what you're doing, I want you to find out who they are and what they're doing there. And I also go a step further with my milk tank. I've had health inspector come in and say he wanted to look in it, and there was milk in it. I told him if he pops the lid on that tank, he is responsible for if that load of milk is contaminated. Nobody pops a lid on my milk tank except me and my hauler. If equipment people come and work on it, and they have to do something about an agitator paddle or something in it, I got to be there or my father will be there. Not one of my employees but one of us family members. So I think you've got to be accountable for who comes on your farm and know who comes in contact with your livestock. I even know dairy farms that are not very large—not as large as mine—that if someone comes on the farm, they have them sign a book with their address and know who is—they know who is accountable on that farm. Feed trucks—same way. A lot of the farms anymore—I've considered myself a hundred-cow operation, milking a hundred cows. I consider myself small, really, with all honesty. Being on the board of directors of Dairy Farm America, I represent people that milk 20 cows up to 4, 5, 600 and other people in the part of the country represent 5000 or more. It's just a part of the country is whether you're large or small. You go to Idaho, out there a thousand cows is small; dairy is small. Large versus—I forget that. I try to—I don't try to categorize. If you milk 20 cows, you're a dairy farmer and go that route.

But with one thing in here I will say—we talked earlier but the premise registration—I've always had a little problem with that. I'll admit, even though I am for national animal identification. As was pointed out in there, we have a number through our FSA office; that number could have been used instead of everybody having to register, put in and all that. I'll go along with that with anybody. I felt that from day one. But far as having—this is not about trying, in my opinion, put anybody out of business. This is just trying to

track a disease if it so happens to where these animals have gone, where they've moved to, where they've been and all. And in one respect, the only way it will be preventive of a disease if that animal is tracked and stopped from being moved anywhere else and spread. That's the only way in my opinion this national animal identification system can be a preventive measure. With that, I'll close.

MS: I'm just trying to get a clear understanding. Seems like 2 things at play here that—of course, having the rights that if someone comes on your property, I can understand that. Hey, you identify yourself. That's no problem. But I'm wondering—and you say only you and your family open your tanks, and I understand that. But is that why you just want to keep them off? That's the main reason that someone's not giving you the respect for coming on your property? Or is there any other reasons other than that, if I may ask?

TR: Anyone is welcome to come on my farm. Anybody around this table or in this meeting or anybody is welcome to come to my farm. But I'm going to know why you're there. If you're coming for a visit, great, come on. I'll take you and walk you around through the facilities. You may have to put on plastic boots, because I don't know where you came from. But—

MS: [Inaudible] NAIS is giving people the right to come on—

TR: No, no, no, no, no, no. This might have been just a little bit off beat of what this national identification system is about. But what I was at with that is with the people coming on my farm, that's just a control method of knowing—because the gentleman there made the comment of people coming on the farms, not knowing where they've been or whatever. I forget the exact wording you used.

MS: [Inaudible].

TR: Right. Well, it works the same way. If you came on my farm and I showed you around, when you leave there, you don't want to go back to your farm and carry possibly a disease that was on my farm back to yours. I mean it works both ways. It works both ways here.

BS: My name is Ben Secar, a pastor and aspiring small time—very small time farmer. I understand the concern. It's not just a matter of being accountable for the folks that come onto your farm, of course, but where have they been and where do they go after they leave. If you're trying to set up something that's designed to monitor the comings and goings not necessarily just of animals, but of the disease themselves so you can track the

disease through each carrier, human or cow or chicken or swine or whatever else, you're going to have to apply the same sorts of principles to all of the critters that are going to be carrying it no matter how many legs they've got. So if we're doing this for livestock and if we recognize that these diseases that we're trying to track can go from one species to another then all those species must be monitored, tracked if we're going to really know what's going on. Otherwise, we'll have big holes in the system because what you're saying, if I understand, that track the cows, good; but what about the people who come around. It's not just a matter of not letting strange people come and mess with the animals and everything else but a matter of—we won't be able to track the disease if we don't also track the people which is obviously a pretty—to say extreme is an understatement.

MS: I'd like to ask you folks, USDA, where you are intending to go with the information that you're gathering at these listening sessions? Is this to preclude reasons why you should not have mandatory ID or why are you doing this?

LM: I don't work with the NAIS program day to day, so historically I don't know all the ins and outs of that. My understanding is that there's—you gathered a lot of viewpoints and opinions and controversy on how things should transpire, and what the Secretary is trying to do is there is concern about our ability to trace infected and exposed animals during a disease outbreak and a need to try to be able to trace those animals quickly; but then again at the same time, how can we do that in a way that's workable for everybody that could be impacted by such a system? And are there things that haven't been thought of yet? Is there a better way to—better mousetrap that can be built? But there's that issue that exists versus all the other things that have come up in association with that issue and is there a way to address both? And I think that's where it's at now. And John—

JW: John Wiemers. I am actually on the National Animal Identification staff for USDA Veterinary Services. Been working with this since the beginning. Our current Secretary would just like to have a feel of where people's minds are at and what perspective they are and exactly what was being said this morning. This information will go back, it'll be all transcribed verbatim. He'll have a chance to look at each and every comment. We're getting comments that are coming in over the internet, sent in by written, through email. So each and every comment will be considered, and we're waiting for his direction.

LM: We had two people and then I was going say we break for lunch.

MS: [Inaudible] take our lunch break. [Inaudible].

LM: Okay. We'll reconvene at 1, everyone, and thanks. We'll start with you and then you as soon as we reconvene. Thanks, everyone.

Welcome back. We have a few new faces joining us. We're talking about concerns that either came up in the morning—I don't know if you were there in the morning or want to expound on or people that didn't get to talk or new issues that folks may want to talk about. We'll just keep going from where we left off, and I believe you were going to be next at the mic. Then there was going to be this gentlemen here, and he may be prepared to talk or not now.

DL: I'm Dennis Liptrap, a pork producer. I forget exactly kind of what we were talking about, but there's one thing that's obviously evident to me that we are talking far beyond the scope of what we're really talking about here and the purpose of animal identification and premise registration. And that's to make it easier to do what we've already charged our government, both USDA and the State Department of Agriculture, to do. And that's to protect the health of the animals. By raising healthy animals, we produce safe, healthy food. The greatest impact on animal health is animal to animal transmission, horizontal transmission; and that comes from the movement of animals from farm to farm. Some species operate with a great deal of movement; some with very little. Obviously, the direct farm to consumer food movement, you have very little movement. Very little traceability or problems in recording that. And they'd have very little involvement in this particular program. On the other hand, large farms and feedlots, particularly cattle I can think of, often times go from a cow-calf person to a backgrounder to a feedlot before they're harvested. If we have a disease break, we trace them back. We have records now—or I should have the USDA and State Department have records—now to trace these animals back, but it's a paper chain. If we have a disease break on an individual farm, they draw circles, and they have to ask local questions, so we're trying to speed up this process with premise ID.

Cost—I think society bears some of the cost and through tax support. But by making USDA responsible for tags, I think, takes some of the cost off of the hand of the small producer and would therefore help him because I've been involved in some other disease eradication programs that we did have cost involved.

The confidentiality of the database—I think anybody that works in databases today has to be much more concerned about hackers and how you keep it, if it's nothing more than a list of names and addresses and phone numbers that you maintain of your local church groups or whatever organizations you're involved in.

I think another point that I would make that is very, very important that—particularly the animal ID portion be species specific. You have different requirements for pigs, for poultry, for cattle and for other species, and it be somewhat size sensitive which it automatically is. Certainly, animals that move as groups don't necessarily need to have individual animal IDs unless you have animals that are separated from the group. In the species that I work with, sows are a prime example that don't necessarily go direct to the harvest plant, and they're probably going to need to be individually ID'd.

All of this is put in place to assure the health of animals and our ability to respond to minimize disease spread from farm to farm, animal to animal. Again, by producing healthy animals, we produce healthy, safe food.

LM: Thank you, sir. Other people.

MS: Just like to ask—when you were saying about the point about the point of where—what preventive way for diseases is what I'm mostly concerned with and you said how there was 3 steps you get to one part and then—but is a such thing as a disease amongst a farm like in some families? We all could have a cold but because all what we probably eat together, it doesn't affect us to break out with that disease. But if I was to come to your house, definitely your family is going to catch mine and I'm going to catch yours. So is there a preventive measure for both large and small groups that handle animals? What would be the step if it was a small farmer taking it in? What do you do? You're saying it spreads horizontal, so what do I do? Wash my cows down, chickens or whatever before I take them in? What is a preventive step that takes this disease situation out of the way? Thank you.

DL: The number one way to prevent horizontal transmission is to prevent farm to farm movement of animals. You move from farm and the commixing of animals. I should say the commixing of animals. I'll address small farm issues because I've dealt with them all of my life and still do. I was raised on a small farm. We share breeding stock, namely boars or male animals that are shared. Or we carry female animals from one farm to another to get them bred. That's not a practice that we could recommend in the way of health prevention. Now, it's a practical method that's sometimes necessary to propagate the species or get animals bred if you don't use artificial insemination. The other way that we highly recommend—and it's the way that was address this morning—and that's biosecurity—control the traffic, the farm to farm movement of people. What I'm saying—if they come to your farm and they're from another farm, clean clothes, plastic boots, coveralls many times.

MS: Like going in the hospital.

DL: That's right. And you talked about people. What's the single most important thing we can do to stop people to people? Wash your hands. So we can do the same thing on farms with foot baths and the plastic boots. Even some of the large farms—and I'm not sure in dairy but I can tell you on pig farms, large sow farms they don't allow even their veterinarian to come on the farm unless he's been away from pigs for 48 hours. And we shower down in many of those facilities. I've got one large facility that I visit. Before the day's over, I've taken 8 showers.

MS: If I may, one last question. So seem like from what I'm hearing from NAIS, I know about the tagging and the like, but then what do you do in the slaughterhouse that when they're coming from all across the country or whatever to get there and when they all mingled—and like the gentleman said about once a cow's dead, you don't have the NAIS tag or whatever it is—the electrons—electrical thing you put into them; then what at that process which is the seed for growing diseases when they all come together? What is a ...? Because in the end, tags start in the beginning with animals, but it end up—in the beginning it starts with tags ... but end up on the toe of us in the ward, and we get tagged when the diseases knock people out. So I just want to know what is a preventive stage in slaughterhouses?

DL: Well, in the harvest facility, animals are identified according to their source. So if the veterinary inspection on the line identified a problem, that animal can be traced back to the farm of origin. Okay? Now, animals or food, particularly meat, is not a sterile product. It could be made sterile through radiation. That is not a consumer popular idea. Therefore, the recommendation is to cook your meat, not to eat it raw. And the other thing that you need to do to protect it at the home level is to wash your countertops down when meat juice gets on them.

Now, I guess I have one real concern in this whole issue. We tend to make it large versus small, and that's not the issue. I will defend anybody's choice to buy food where and how and produce food where and how they so choose. But each day the population on this planet is growing, and food insecurity and insufficiency at a reasonable cost is still a major, major problem. Sixty-six percent of the farms in the U.S. sell less than \$10,000.00 a year in saleable products. This is 3 percent of the gross farm sales. Six percent of the farms produce about 82 percent of the gross farm sales. Now which segment—and they gross over 100,000. Which segment is going to feed the world? Let alone our country—feed the world. I said we export 1 in 5. I think I said 1 in 20. We export approximately 20 percent of our pork production. That's because we're

competitive in world pig production. That's because we have a demand for pig meat the world over. It helps with the balance of trade as do most agricultural commodities because that's still an area that we are competitive in the world.

Now, there's another misnomer that I want to say. We do not load our food animals with antibiotics and hormones and all of this other stuff. I've worked in the swine industry and advisory role for almost 40 years—30 something. We're feeding fewer antibiotics under better control today than ever before. Our farms are more environmentally sound. And there's another point that I get really passionate about when we talk sustainable agriculture. There's a little component called economic sustainability or profits. Without that, society will not survive. I grew up on a farm. I have a backyard garden. At one point my wife canned. I harvested our own livestock. But my children, and more importantly my grandchildren, won't have that knowledge unless they so desire. You better believe I intend to produce safe, wholesome, healthful food; and programs like animal identification, farm premise registration that protect the economy of the animal industry as well as the food safety and security as we go forward, the kind of programs that are necessary today.

MS: So the first point I'd like to make is about feeding the world. I think that's a little bit of an over-stated term. If the population wasn't getting fed, there would be a net reduction of people every year. There would be a decrease in population every year, and there's not. Clearly, the problems we have with food production are about food sovereignty and of individuals who, without access to a cash market economy, also lack the ability to can food and feed themselves in a subsistence level from their own land when we all have the ability every day on every square inch of the earth to make a profit because all the profit in the world comes from solar energy. The earth is a closed system. We have finite everything except for one thing that comes to this earth from outside of it, and that's this solar energy that basically allows for all life on earth to be possible. So what's the most efficient way to harvest that energy and the cheapest way to do it? Pasture-based systems. I don't necessarily—I think the—I've had a problem making a difference between large producers and small producers because to me there's no difference. Everybody's trying to make a living. The main difference—and that's why I'm still searching for a term—is whether or not you mimic nature and make most use of its efficiencies. Grass makes most use of its efficiencies. Without grass, we wouldn't be here. Pasturing animals sanitizes the soil, mixing animals on pasture eliminates parasites that are not—that don't cross species. Parasites for chicken are ... cow and vice versa. So in my mind, the best way to make your farm secure is to raise as much grass as possible with the most diverse species as possible and commingle them all the time. NAIS basically creates a direct disadvantage to people who commingle their animals

because they have to tag each individual animal. Whereas confined animal feeding operations, which have this great inefficiency of failing to use solar energy well, get an advantage. And I don't think there's a choice that has to be made among farmers—large or small, confined or pastured. Not asking anybody to choose, and I certainly would not discount anything that anybody wants to do, but I do think that this program is biased. USDA has been biased towards confinement operations for decades now, and I think it's simply a matter of letting each other co-exist and the market and the consumer base—my consumer base is not going to disappear unless I'm regulated out of business. I'm sure it's the same for the export market, so I really have no quarrel about anything except the specifics of the program which would make it very hard for me to do business, and that would be at the expense of other farms as well.

SS: With all due respect to all the animals and that the purpose of this is to protect animals, I want to speak from the standpoint of the human consumer.

DR: State your name.

My name is Stanley Stratford. I'm from Frankfort, Kentucky. I'm alive today because I'm able to find organic vegetables, free range poultry and grass-fed meat. It's very difficult to find, I assure you, and it's expensive to find. It is not an even playing field for the consumer. The big corporate farms have a downhill slope, and the small individuals farms that are refraining from the antibiotics and the hormones and the chemical fertilizers and on and on have an uphill slope. And I find that because I find it very difficult to find the kind of food that I need to live.

I might explain briefly that 4 years ago I was diagnosed with Stage IV terminal cancer and told to gather my family around. Instead, I went on a nutritional diet, a therapy that was entirely based on organic vegetables and, as I said, the free-range poultry. Today, I'm very much alive, feeling quite well, and I realize now that if I'd been on such a diet all my life, I would have felt a whole lot better all along. The stuff that's being fed in the grocery stores to us is ruining our health, and it's one of the main reasons that our health costs are so high. It's one of the main reasons our health is so poor. On the other hand, good, honest food that is as nature prepared it goes well with our bodies and enables us to live good, constructive lives. Our bodies are intended to deal with natural food, not stuff that's all hyped up so that it produces more and bigger stuff and that can ship better and stay longer on the shelf. I get—out of season the only place I can get any of this food is at Whole Foods. They had free-range poultry. They had one turkey leg. That's my choice. I don't have a choice. I'm limited because, first of all, the playing field is tilted. And secondly because everything in the government supports that program. I hear very

little, if anything, in support of natural food. I think that's where our real problem is as far as consumer are concerned. Now, if we're not going to be concerned with consumers—and I thought these agencies were supposed to be—then I guess it doesn't matter as long as the animals live but the people don't. I think the people are the more important, and I think we ought to be considering what this means to them. And it means a way to have natural food. And so far, the small farmer is the only one that's delivering that consistently. I just want to say I don't want anything that's going to impede this. It's bad enough as it is. I need it better but don't make it worse.

MS: Forgive me, please, for having too many questions but I'm not a farmer. I'm not with USDA, and I'm not a producer; but I need to try to find out this information. Now, Adam brought up an interesting thing from—Marshall ... from the ... company and mingling animals together. And the gentleman here say that his case for NAIS and why as a larger person doing but the bottom line is still back to these diseases, and I'm just wondering—so many things pulled together; and then we get to the processed food and everything but—Adam, for what you were saying, then there is a way that small farmers can still exist commingling without the fear of as much attack on diseases as far as from a larger production. I know if you got a larger ... you have to kind of cut it down even better to try to deal with so I'm just saying; can both of these animals mingle together in this world for producing food without it being, what I call, the artificial food with all the antibiotic stuff. You said there's less than ever before. If it makes any sense, I'm trying to make some for myself.... Thank you.

MS: So I guess my answer to your question would be animals generally, in a confinement operation, are genetically very similar and are fed the same things. Like the gentleman said, they're fed less and less doses of antibiotics; but they're all very susceptible to diseases from each other. That's why they have to be fed antibiotics in the first place. Animals on pasture in a pasture-based system are not—in a diversified pasture-based system where animals are cross-bred among different farms are not as genetically similar as these animals in these houses, and because they're not confined, they do not have as much contamination among the herd as would be the case with animals in close quarters where there's no sunshine or grass.

I'm sure that there are people here that would disagree with that, but that's been my experience, and I feel like that's being shown through the successful models of sustainable farms that are cropping up and helping to grow the local food economy. And again it's not a question of one versus the other in my mind. It's what both co-exist and people can make up their own minds. So as long as NAIS doesn't prevent me from existing, I'll be all right.

TR: For those of you that are new, I'm Terry Rowlett, dairy farmer up in Henry County. I'll just explain my operation a little bit real quickly—briefly. But before I do, what Adam just said—both scenarios as we like to talk as he was pointing out, grass-fed, grass-pastured and everything can exist. Feedlots can exist. We as people, human beings as he stated, has a choice of what and where we want to get our food. In my operation, last night we were milking 112 cows. During the overnight hours, they stay on concrete ... free style. Sand is put in there every 2 weeks. Lots are scraped twice daily. In the daytime, the cows go out in the pasture. Or maybe I should refrain and say an exercise lot. It's about a 15-acre field for 112 cows, so you can term what you want; but right now the grass in that field is up knee high or more because my help is complaining about going out—they can't see the cows laying over the hill because the grass is too tall. It needs to be mowed. But anyhow—but the rain—we were blessed. We are regulated more so than any industry in livestock that there is—dairy is. Twice—or every other month, I have a Board of Health inspector on my farm. And believe me, sometimes he finds things that's not even consistent with touching milk or anything of that nature, and I wonder sometimes. But we are very regulated there. My milk is picked up every other day. A sample is taken of that milk, and I'll state my milk either goes to the Winchester, Kentucky plant (Kroger) or down to London, Kentucky (Flav-O-Rich)—whichever my dairy coop wants to send it and whoever needs that truckload. When that hauler comes, he pulls a sample from that tank just from my milk, puts it in a thing, takes it. When he gets to this plant, whichever, before that truck can be unloaded, a sample is taken from that truck, and it's checked for any antibiotics in the milk. If it's found, that load is rejected. And most of the time, I'm—and then—well let's go back. Then the dairy coop checks each individual sample on that load. From there, it's determined who is at fault—whose milk had the antibiotics. I'll just use as an example if it was mine. I am responsible for paying for that whole load of milk. That's my responsibility. If I use antibiotics on my farm in any way, shape, size or form—and believe me; most everybody—a cow is just like a human being in one respect. They'll get a cold. They'll get a runny nose. They'll get droopy ears and all. And there's this thing that we have a problem occasionally with mastitis. And believe me with the wet weather, it's been some problems. Even putting out on pasture. We treat those animals. We mark those animals, but before that cow's milk is allowed to go back into the tank, we have a test that we run—two of them. One is called a Delvo. It checks for specific antibiotics. And the other is a SNAP test which is quick, and it checks for other antibiotics. We run both of those on our dairy—on any cow that is treated whether she's had a cold, whether she's got mastitis. The vet's been there, and after a cow has calved and deems that she's got an infection in her uterus, gives her medicine. He said, “No, there's no withholding time here.” I don't believe it. I checked the cow; because I don't want to pay for a 40,000

pound load of milk even at today's milk prices that we receive, which is not that great, but I don't want to pay for it.

So we are very regulated. But in all and all on this, to me, it boils down to one thing. We can produce the most wholesome, nutritious, safest food supply in the United States or the world for that goes on our farms. We can market it that way. But if for some reason a disease pops up around in my area, as I think Dennis pointed out—if it popped up, my herd would be quarantined just the same as the other fellows. And my herd may be as safe—safer than anybody else's in the area. But I'm quarantined until the cause is found. That means I've lost revenue. I've lost income because my milk could not be marketed. So I am very concerned, and that is one of the reasons that I support this identification system. To me, in one respect, it's kind of a two-sided coin. It depends on which side I want to look at. In one way, it has nothing to do with the safeness of our food supply. It has to do with tracking the animals that we find that are infected with some type of illness and getting back to the source from which it came, so that other animals or other farms is not contaminated with it. And I don't think—from what I—John over here may be able to tell some more on this. My understanding is if you got a farming operation and from what I've heard in the meeting today maybe a lot have and that's great. It takes all to make this world and to make a farm or community. But if you market your products, it has nothing to do with the fruits and vegetables, this national animal identification system does; has nothing to do with the fruits and vegetables. It only has to do with livestock and poultry or whatever. I consider that livestock myself. So it's just tracing those animals, but if you market one of those and used free-range chickens—if you go to Adam's farm and you pick up a free-range chicken from him that he's grown there, he doesn't have to have an ID on that chicken. He doesn't have to do that. He doesn't have to have—we've been talking about this radio frequency thing. He doesn't have to have one of them if he's going to market direct to you. That's not part of it. But if he's going to sell you a hen, and you're going to take it home and then get you a rooster, and then you're going to have a bunch of eggs you're going to take and raise you a flock of chickens and all, then he might have to have some type of traceability there. But it's going to the end result, the harvest—as Dennis has called it, the harvest. You will not, my understanding, have to have that. Now, John, am I right or am I wrong here? Correct me if I'm wrong because I need to have understanding of this. But back to the dairy. We are the most regulated in the country, and that is one of the reasons I would like to see traceability, especially in the dairy industry because I know I've got friends, fellow dairymen in Michigan that this has been disastrous on them up there because of the brucellosis outbreak up there. And this ID system has worked. It has worked up there for them. I'm sure there's people up there that are producing their own food, and taking care of their neighbors, and marketing food off of their farm, and that's great. I don't

criticize that a bit. But in some ways, I feel like I'm being blasted for trying to want to protect my food with what I market and supply to consumers out here that have a choice. That's it. They have a choice. It takes all kinds to make this world go round and round, so...

JW: Did you ever follow-up to his question about the identification or well, okay, I just wanted to—this is John Wiemers with the national ID staff. The way the system is set up is to focus on traceability of animals in commerce, for the animals that are in the marketing chain that go from producer, to the farm, to farm, to farm to have the traceability you mentioned. If animals are raised on a farm, they're born on a farm. They go directly to a consumer. That's traceability right there. You know where the animal was born. You know where the animal was raised, and you know who it was sold to. There's no really need for individual animal identification or movement recording in that situation.

The system was never—the information we have on our website and the information we have that describes the system says those movements are not required to be recorded. We want to focus on the idea of traceability and not just simply mass identification of animals. Again, the microchipping situation was never a requirement in that instance. You might have had a comment to make on it along those lines.

MS: I know that there's a line being drawn between animals that enter the supply chain and then animals that are processed on the farm for custom slaughter, but it's not exactly a clear line for me because I don't have my animals custom slaughtered. I don't process on the farm. I take my animals to a plant where there's a USDA inspector for chicken and my beef. So I am involved in retail sales directly to the consumer, and I retail sales . . . and all that, and licensed to be a mobile vendor and all that, so I'm regulated. My food is entering the supply chain, and I just think that that line is not very clearly delineated at this point. Unless it is already, and I will have to have my animals tagged because I process at a USDA-inspected facility and so meat retail.

FS: The place where it's harvested does 300 birds a day. Each bird is inspected, and they know. We come in with our batch of birds and it's like, "Okay, this is Adam's batch." Then they get processed, and packaged, and we take them home. They don't get mixed with the others, so what is that line, and what will you be?

JW: When I mentioned the supply chain, I meant the marketing chain of the live animal. When we're concerned about disease traceability, we're talking about when the animal originates, born, to the point of harvest. That's where veterinary services and that's

where the national animal identification system is concerned. The point from where that animal is harvested to the retail level, is not our area of expertise. It's not the area of live animal disease control. That's in the area of food safety. That's a different agency, and that's also a different whole set of issues, a different whole set of concerns.

We're dealing the identification of the live animal for animal health purposes. That's what this system is designed for. If you took animals directly from your farm to your slaughter plant, that's one step. You have traceability already. In you are in compliance with NAIS already.

MS: It's really more complicated than it seems, because actually none of the chickens are hatched on my farm. I get them from Mt. Healthy hatchery and they're considered filed under their NPI fee, so if they're going to come with a microchip.

JW: In other words, you get your hatchery chicks, day old chicks, sent to your farm. You raise them up, and then sell them to slaughter. That would be similar to what our swine industry does when they have pigs that are born on different farrowing operations, brought together and then they form a group lot. That group lot is kept together as a group all the way to slaughter. Slaughtered as a group, and that would be group lot identification. That's very similar to what you're doing. I think that would qualify as what we call group lot identification, only on a smaller level. You could go back, any animal you've got you could say would be traceable to that hatchery, and they know where those animals come from. I've dealt with some of those hatchery individuals.

We're not here to debate, or I'm not here to educate you. I'm here to listen, so I'm going to listen to your concerns, and I understand that you've got these questions about the nuances of the movements of animals, and what it means to you, and how this will affect your operations, and will it affect your ability to make a living and to turn a profit, and most importantly, supply your customers with the food that they want. We're listening. We're hearing you, and we appreciate you coming here.

MS: I definitely appreciate you being here, and I think this is the closest I've come to having actually my questions answered about the USDA, about the system, which is great. The other part that I would have a nuance question about is the co-mingling term, because my cows go out in front of my chickens. That's no commingling, even though they're on the same pasture and the same ground?

JW: I believe when we're talking about commingling, it's animals of the same species, an animal from this farm, this farm, this farm, and another farm all brought together. Where

you're talking about sharing your germs with your relatives on Thanksgiving, and I get sick from you, and you get sick from me. That's what we're calling co-mingling, not the integrated, I would say, the ecological balance system. That's not what we're talking about. We're not talking about multi species use of the same property. We're talking about groups of the same species from different locations being brought together, having the risk of disease spreading.

MS: You know, I think oftentimes we try to complicate things that aren't quite that complicated. We have to bring them to our own situation and how that's going to work. I will address a little bit here, why premise ID is a very important part of NAIS. Those that have worked in this area in animal health know that if we find a disease some way, an animal disease, we put a pin on that farm. He's quarantined. We know from our veterinary staff, the range, and distance, and transmission of animals that are at risk.

So traditionally, we would go out and by talking with neighbors and the farm owner where the diseased animal was, "Which of your neighbors have pigs, or beef cattle, or goats?" If it's with sheep, if it's a scabies break. Who has them? You go and try to visit. The fastest you can visit those farms in that circle, the faster you can test the animals on that farm and see if any of the farm is infected. Minimize the spread, because say your circle was two miles, and you found a farm out on that two mile radius, you create a new circle. The faster you can identify the at-risk farms, and everybody is at risk. If you have that species, everybody is at risk. We need to test and check every farm or the veterinarians do within that circle.

If the farm is pre-identified, and it's a real challenge, and Dana brought this up. The real challenge is not just the identification of the farm, because we can identify farms. But this year I have chickens and sheep. Next year I have goats and beef cattle. Next year I have a couple of pigs. That's the hard part to keep track of. On my farm we have beef cattle and swine. It's been that a way for years, and it's going to stay that a way. The only chickens we have are some wild turkeys that come down along the deal.

The other area at risk—and he talked about the wild animals or the deer in Michigan that brought dairy farms at risk for brucellosis. We've eradicated pseudo-rabies from the swine herds in this country, saved a great deal of money for large and small producers alike. But where are we finding the most recent? We thought we'd eliminated it, but we found an outbreak of pseudo-rabies in wild swine, feral swine. That's become a major problem in growing states. In fact, so far that Michigan declared open season on feral swine. You see, we have to be ever vigilant in the animal industry to protect the ability that we have to raise animals for food and to sell them into the general public.

MS: I guess this is a specific request for USDA then to just be able to clarify within whatever plan or the documentation that's out there about NAIS, where the exemptions are, with maybe some examples as an appendix, because that's definitely not been something that I've been able to gather. What you've just told me is not something at all I've been able to gather from reading the documents.

Also I wanted to make another point about Michigan, just to put it out there, is that they have filed criminal charges against an Amish farmer who refused to register his premises based on his religious beliefs. I mean, if this is not some kind of fringe civil liberties issue that people are having. This is real, and they're doing it, and they're talking about fining him several thousand dollars. I mean, that's a real concern, and he's just the first one. I don't know how far that will go. I hope it ends right there, but that's a real concern. I think that's what you've heard today from some of the folks who are worried about civil liberties.

MS: That's been most helpful for me. I got to buy some food this evening, but we have found from me, farms in USDA, Adams meat. It's okay if you take it directly because it's not cold meat . . . and it's okay. We can trace it. Where did the other gentleman go with the . . . If he sends his straight to NAIS because he's got a large batch, but he can trace it immediately, go to their form, find where it's been raised. You can cut that off. The only problem I see in NIS right here is the fact that if it starts making the small farmer pay for every one of them, then you eliminate the small farmer. That's not a good thing.

You have a choice between food that was here and there, but I still don't have an understanding yet. Once his goes to market, he sends his to the slaughterhouse, once yours go to USDA ID and you guys inspect it, and it goes to the slaughterhouse. Once that tag is on the deer or just whatever's in there to identify the animal, then it becomes just meat, no more an animal.

Now, we discussed the part of washing hands at home. My brother and I came out of the same household. We had the same homegrown diseases that everyone else had, okay, but when my brother gets a family and I get a family, we living in separate areas, then our homegrown diseases don't mingle well across the board with the other family. Everything gets to grandma's house and the slaughterhouse. Well, who's not washing their hands? I think is where the big problem is coming at the minute.

What I want to know is a prerequisite or what we do to keep things from happening in the slaughterhouse? Somebody in there didn't wash their hands, whether it's a small

slaughterhouse in the country, if it's a big slaughterhouse in Chicago, wash our feet, rubber boots. When we come on to every forum, that's no matter what happens in the slaughterhouse.

This is what I'm asking to point, because here's where the disease control—it's the incubator if nobody's doing what they're supposed to there. How do we stop that? I don't think we have any more problems, if we can just find out the last person supposed to wash their hands, so to speak. So with that, I just wanted to say that that would be the most at-risk point from my understanding, but how do you prevent this thing from happening where it all meets up to get packaged to send to wherever before I buy it?

MS: Again, I'm going throw out something. John's going to have to clean it up, maybe, and I understand why you're here, John, is to listen to. As Adam said, I think that some of the comments that you made has been very valuable. At least they have to me also.

Back to his question at the slaughterhouse, it's up to the people that own the slaughterhouse and the management there to insure that their people, as he was using, wash their hands. This traceability is more for, as I understand it, an epidemic out here that in our livestock, that yes, could cause hazard to us in the food supply chain. When it gets to the slaughterhouse, it's my understanding that it could be carried all the way through, identified all the way on with a barcode stamped somewhere on that piece of meat to get through it, but I'm not saying that that's what will happen.

It goes back to me as a dairy farmer, when my milk supply goes to Winchester, Kentucky or Flav-O-Rich at London, it's put into a big humungous silo. Therefore, it is co-mingled there. Once that client accepts my product, you know, then in essence, it is their responsibility. There has been major milk recalls, and the company who processed it bore the cost of it, because milk is a fluid substance. It's hard to attach a barcode or something to it to see that my 12,800 pound of milk that left my farm today ends up here in Louisville at a Kroger store or on the shelf somewhere in Atlanta, Georgia with the Flav-O-Rich brand.

It all goes back to the process, and you know, as Dennis was calling it, the harvest. That is where it's processed, and once it gets there, if the meat and all, the product, is healthy, wholesome, this traceability will have nothing to do with if they wash their hands, how it's handled in that process there. It will take and it just traces, be enabled if they do find a product with the inspectors there, they can go back to these animals and trace them back.

I'll give you an example. If I cull a cow, and she goes somewhere through a marketing chain, a local livestock market, she's sold. She gets to a processing plant, a sample of that meat is taken, found out that she's had antibiotics in her. They could trace that back to me. Then they'd have to—whatever the liability would be, it would be on my shoulders there, but as of today, they cannot trace it back to me. It's one of the reasons that I try to take and produce a good product and market it. If I said something wrong, John, like I said, straighten me out.

JW: You know more about the milk market than I do.

SP: Yeah, but I'm talking about the whole scheme of the doc.

MS: Let me make my comment and then you can finish, because they reinforce write it down. I have to do that many times. Dennis Liptrap. I can relate to your question when it comes to the harvesting of pigs and pork. First of all, that animal is identified to the farm, but like you say, when we get to the harvest plant, we co-mingle them. Okay?

They are inspected on the line for visual. Lymph nodes are examined. The abdominal cavity, the kidney, the organs, etcetera, for any health-related problems. They pull on a random number of animals blood to be tested for antibiotic residue. Later in the process, some of the plants use either high temperature water, or highly chlorinated water as a final wash of the animal carcass. The carcasses are generally swabbed with a sterile swab and culture taken to see that there's still not contaminated with a serious one.

The processing facilities, the package, the cutting line, the kill line too, are all inspected daily for sanitation and, what I'm saying, before they start and looking for health problems. They're washed down with extremely hot water between work cycles. If you've got meat—and it's very difficult once we disassemble that product, disassemble that animal, to put barcodes on the individual pieces of meat or the individual boxes of meat that go out to the store. I don't care what size you are, that gets to be extremely difficult. If there was a health risk identified further down the chain, E. coli 157, that usually—well, it will, not usually—that will trigger a recall of product.

There's a lot number that has gone with that product at that time, the day it was harvested, packaged, shipped, etcetera. That triggers a recall to try to recapture as much of that product as you possibly can. If it's something that needs to be traced back to the farm, ultimately, they could come back and look at every source of animals that day. Adam talked about his 300 birds in a group, and maybe they did five different groups. Of course, he's keeping track of it, but in this case, they would come back and if they needed

to go to the farm, they would go to every farm using premise ID, looking for the cause of that health risk.

MS: Why all the way back to the farm, when everything's been ID'd? It's okay over here.

MS: Okay, they would only come back to the farm if they thought there was a reason for coming back to the farm. You're testing down the road and go from there.

MS: Why not just test the stock . . . in the slaughterhouse. That seems to be a problem.

MS: They are doing that. They are doing that.

RS: Thanks. I guess I have comments and questions in . . . that relate to this discussion. I'm sorry, my name is Rae Strobel (sp). You were talking about antibiotics, so are you an organic? No. Okay, so my question is, it seems like there are other agencies than what you were saying. There are other people that are responsible for inspecting the slaughterhouses once the animals get there, so what kinds of diseases are you tracking? What kinds of things would, like where in that line? Do you know what I mean? Like how would you be able to tell if you want to go back to the farm?

DJ: My name is Dana Jenkins, and I'm with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. My question is, are you talking about after the animal is slaughtered?

RS: Yeah, because that's where this discussion has gone.

DJ: The stand with the NAIS program is after the animal is slaughtered, NAIS is done. I mean, John can answer that better than me.

JW: Yeah, we really look at the live animals, but like was mentioned, on the slaughter line, they examine the tissues, the lymph nodes, look for any signs of a disease that might be of concern in the live animals.

For instance, if they inspect a bovine animal, and it's got abscesses in the lungs or lymph nodes that are abscessed, those are things that we would really highly want to look at to see if it was tuberculosis. If those samples that we collected, they'd be cultured for tuberculosis, and it was positive, we'd certainly want to trace back to find out where that live animal originated and not only where it originated, but what other farms it had been on, and what other animals that it had been exposed to that animal, so we could find it as quickly as possible. That is a human health hazard.

Other cases are when we take blood samples for brucellosis, which is another disease of animals and humans. If we find a positive blood sample, we want to know what animal that was from, and where it originated, what other farms it had been on, what other animals have been exposed. Those are two examples of diseases of concern that we look at. That's differentiated between the things like E. coli contamination, salmonella contamination, those kinds of things that are contamination type things are being traced by agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration and the food safety inspections for it.

MS: Okay, again forgive me, but I guess I'm a simple kind of guy, and they got simple yet to me. I'm beating a dead horse, but I too believe in CPR, so I'm trying to get it resurrected here a little bit. Listen to see, once it gets to you, everyone who sent all the animals to you that's been okay. We got to the slaughterhouse, and I know, say with all due respect, it is being inspected, but if the E. coli gets borne by maybe the temperature of hot water raises the temperature in the area, not just washing hands and that.

Then we say we go back to the farm to look, and I understand that it's tested, but seems like our biggest problem still is not the regulation is not being put on where—they then mingle in the field, then naturally with Adam, and like we were discussing. Then they get to mingle all in the slaughterhouse, and so you got a million cows coming into the slaughterhouse. I know you'll have a million batches for hamburger, so they all falling in the batch somewhere together saying that they USDA inspected. If it all starts there, it seems like that's the problem maybe where we need to look for the disease that won't have a battle that's bouncing back and forth before.

I think all NAIS, he's identified on the small scale. He's identified on a larger scale. You are identified on a larger scale, but I'm not understanding now where when these E. coli's come back and call back, why does this have to go to the farmer when his milk's already been shown? He can't take 40 gallons in there if it's got antibiotics on it. You can't take your pork in there if you got antibiotics on it. Rather than keep going back to this farm, please just have a simple person there. It seems like they're coming on at this, and may I ask one question? Anyone here from a slaughterhouse? Wow, and you guys are fighting each other and keeping me nervous, so I'm sorry. Thank you very much.

FS: My name Aramie (sp). I'm from the student farm worker alliance. I also work on a local organic farm. I guess I'm going to step back and just go on record taking it back to the bigger picture, which is how I tend to think of things. I share a lot of same concerns. I'm

getting my food locally, having friends that are farmers, hoping some day to be a local farmer myself, and there's a lot of details that concern me.

Ultimately, the reason that I am not in support of NAIS—it makes sense if the goal is to feed the world. It makes sense to have all this regulation, and very strict rules and, you know, extremely good traceability. If you're feeding the world, that's what you need, but the goal of feeding the world, it seems to me has caused these problems of disease. Life is never free of risk. There's always an issue of disease, but these huge outbreaks, and the whole reason why a program like that this would need to be implemented is because a few giant, giant companies increasingly have the means and are moving towards feeding the entire world, feeding our nation. I'm sorry. I didn't come prepared to speak, so you know.

We're talking about slaughterhouses. I'm not from a slaughterhouse, but there's been so many cases, well documented, well written books, articles, legislation, documenting this happening, of slaughterhouse workers being exploited, of the industry regulations being there, but not being used. When I hear well, there's a regulation for this and there's a rule in place for that, what concerns me is I know of far too many instances where that's completely ignored. That's the main issue I have right now with all of this.

I realize that there's no transition to local food overnight. There's no transition to everybody getting back and doing what people used to do in their backyards and their farms. I understand, as Adam was saying, that too, industries are going to be co-mingling, to use the word we've been using. I guess to me, NAIS it just, I don't know, it's another one in a historical series of events that is just going to ultimately make it so consumers don't have a choice anymore, and so that there is one very powerful group, corporation, whatever it's going to be, feeding the world, tracing the food, doing all of this. I don't think that should be the goal.

I think that's where I'm going to end. I realize we're talking about livestock here, but just to back up the points on the slaughterhouses, and the points, and the concerns that I have and that a lot of people do have, about legislation. If you look at the fields of Florida in agriculture. There have been cases of modern day documented modern day slavery. Is that supposed to happen? Is there a rule saying you can't have people working in modern day slavery conditions? Yeah, so my point there is that the rules of NAIS is going to this, and NAIS is going to do that, that the USDA is going to do this or that, don't hold a lot of water with me, and don't hold a lot of weight.

MS: Thank you.

MS: Tim, he used the governor's office agricultural policy. The main reason I'm here today is just on behalf of our office, just to hear the comments and to welcome the group from USDA, and tell you all how much we appreciate you choosing Louisville as one of your listening sessions. I think everybody in here understands how important agriculture is to Kentucky. Last year we had over \$4.8 billion in revenue whether we're talking about the North American and national livestock exposition, the Kentucky Derby, the sales at Kingland, or grasshoppers incorporated here in Louisville, agriculture touches each citizen of the state, and it's very important to us.

Today I'm considered a bureaucrat. I've been with the state about five years. Up until seven years ago, though, I farmed every day, so I understand the passion and the issues that we've talked about here today. Agriculture does, it represents. Terry Rowlett represents. Dr. Liptrap represents Adam in different aspects of agriculture. I've had the opportunity to the last three years to travel with my church to Bucharest, Rumania; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and Manouse, Brazil. I'm tickled to death that we're standing here in this room, or sitting in this room, talking about how safe our food is, and we're not talking about a major problem that we've got famine, or we've got people dying of various illnesses.

We have a tremendously safe food product here in the United States, and that's due to the efforts of every individual in this room, whether you're working on behalf of the government producing food, or an interested consumer. Our office, even though it's called the governor's office of agricultural policy, policy is a very small element of our office. Most of it is dealing with grant and loan programs for farmers across the state. Kentucky has invested over \$280 million in the last seven years for agricultural development initiatives. Hopefully those programs are structured so that it benefits the larger commercial farms, as well as the small individual producers.

The interesting thing is we've got some family farms here in Kentucky that are generating several million dollars in sales each year. Then we've got a lot of other producers that are actively involved in organic production and local food initiatives. I feel like we have a place for all of those types of agriculture at the table. I appreciate everybody's passion, but I just hope as everybody works towards a solution and coming together with a way of protecting food safety for our consumers and also the integrity of American agriculture, we all come to the table willing to compromise and do what's best for our state and our country as a whole.

FS: I want to say thank you for coming here. This has been a very unique opportunity to be able to kind of talk, and learn, and learn from each other, and so I appreciate the open dialogue that's happened. I guess my suggestions before, NAIS, as you continue, as Adam said, to clarify the exemptions, keeping in mind the comments that you heard this morning. It's hard to say. It's hard to find the language for those exemptions. It's small, but that doesn't necessarily cover it. It's pasture, that doesn't—I mean—so it's hard to find that. Then I saw in the crossing the state lines, that doesn't necessarily cover it.

We live in Newton County which is right across. I drive into Louisville for work every day, and I cross the Ohio river into Indiana, and then back into Louisville. We have friends who farm in Indiana and sell in Louisville, so that doesn't necessarily cover it. To try and figure out, and that's difficult, where those exemptions are and to make them clear so that it doesn't hurt the local food movement.

MS: I'm like everyone else, I think, I thank everyone for having this today. The main thing that I feel, we all, everyone around this table that has a farming operation, whatever size, it's a farming operation. It's a livelihood to you. It's a livelihood to me and my family and all. We're got to remember, we're all livestock producers. We're all in the same boat as such. We produce the livestock is not for the fun of it or for the profitability we get out of it. Yes, maybe, we all used to say it's a livelihood. It's in our blood to continue farming, to continue to operate, and I guess it is, because I've had many opportunities to leave the farm.

I know a real quick case in point. In 1974, I just got out of college, out of the service. My father had to relocate from Trimble County because the LG&E was going to take his farm, or did take it for a power plant. My father was milking about 27 cows. You don't know how much I despised that, have to be there twice a day to help dad, didn't get to go to basketball games, didn't get to go with other kids doing what they—well, not kids, but teenagers—doing what they did and all. I went off to college, got a degree in agriculture. I had several opportunities but I wanted to farm.

Well, dad went to looking for farms in our area. They thought he was getting rich off of LG&E. They didn't realize he had to pay off the farm he'd just bought three years prior to that, and try to find someplace to live. He and my mom were very devastated. I said, "I don't want a dairy. That's too confining." Well, as it went through—I laugh now too, John, when I think back. Everywhere in our county, there in Trimble County, people were, so had a former VoAg teacher came over and wanted us to come look at this farm. He said, "It's got a dairy." Dad said, "No, Terry don't want a dairy."

Finally, I said, "Let's go look at it." I said, "Look at all the dairies around here that's out." They went out, a lot of them. At that time, I was raising hogs too. That's how I was paying off my college loan. Anyhow, we went and looked at it. It was a great facility. We were used to a stanchion barn. This had a milking parlor. We were used to bailing hay, you know, and not getting very much production out of our cattle. This had a silo. I was used to all this in college, at Eastern Kentucky University. Finally, I tell my father, it's his money, he could buy it. I'd try to milk the cows, and I wouldn't be there today and gone tomorrow.

That was in 1974. I've never been sorry of my goal, or the route I took, never have been. Yeah, there's a lot of times. Someone made the comment in there today, I think the young lady made the comment, "We don't get to take vacations." Today's a vacation for me, as such, and away from the farm. As my wife says, "Yeah, you get off, but I don't," so I said, "Well, you could go." No, but anyhow, she doesn't speak either in public, so she was afraid something would happen, and she'd have to speak here today.

We're all in it for a common cause. We want to see this done right. I think a lot of the points that Adam's made, and I think it will be taken back. There was one thing, you asked a question. I wanted to answer it on the mic that no, I am not an organic farmer, and our dairy operation is not. That's the way, I do use antibiotics if I have to. It's not one of those things that I like to do, but I don't like to take medicine either, but I have to take some medicine every day too. It is a way of life for all of us.

We've got to come to some common agreement on this. I don't feel personally that it's going to put anyone out of business. I don't think—it might cause a little hardship. When we talk about me, as I made a comment in there today, about purchasing the tags for my dairy cows and heifers and all, the cost of it with the price of milk today, and all, it's hard enough to pay the feed bill, let alone something else being put on expense.

When we talk about the large, small, we're a livestock industry, whether I'm a dairy farmer, a beef farmer, swine farmer, poultry farmer, turkey farmer. We're a livestock industry, and we're all working for a common cause to produce a product for the consumer out there, whether it's marketed straight off of our farms, which I applaud the people that do that, and the people that want to buy that. That's their prerogative, and that's great, but not everyone wants to do that. If they do, then they haven't found the right people to make contact with to be able to secure them.

With that, we're all in it together. We do need large farms. We do need small. By that—hear me out—if Kroger plant at Winchester, Kentucky wanted milk from one large

farm, and that farm, we know, sees no production. They would have to do something in the spring flush period with a lot of milk that they didn't know what to do with. They can take several small farms, whether they be large or small, and they can balance their operations, because their everyday needs of milk is not the same. They run sales at times and so forth.

It's just like with livestock, the feedlots, that's a business. That's a business to those people, just like my farming operation is a business to us, and everybody else's farming operation is to them. It used to be termed, as I was telling Dennis over lunch, termed in Kentucky here, there was two types of people who had milk cows. One were dairy farmers. The others were cow milkers. A cow milker, in my opinion, is a person who milks cows to put food on his table, but he has some other means, and it used to be tobacco, to pay his capital expenditures, purchase his farm, pay the farm payments.

The dairy does a little cream that was sold. That would be took and put towards clothing on their children, shoes on them to go to school. The big assets, the farm, the tractors, and all, would be from tobacco. Nowadays, we've all got to become dairy farmers. We've got to make, because I do grow tobacco still, but it won't pay the capital bills, capital assets. I've got to become a dairyman, make my operation as efficient and all as I can. With these low prices, there's not much more efficiency that I know of to get out of it, but we've got to try to hang on, and we're all in it together.

I think some of the points that have been made here, I've enjoyed them. I think they're well structured. When they take this back, I'm anxious to see in the end, what the results are going to be, John. I think these sessions will be beneficial to making that. Thank you.

AB: I just want to echo something there. I don't think I've introduced myself before. I'm Adam Barr with Community Farm Alliance, but I got to echo that we're all in it together, being that there's only 1 1/2 % of our population is farmers right now. There ain't many of us left. We ain't got a lot of political power, so it's not like a lot of these regulations are ever going to come down in our favor until we have the consumer, which is everybody, behind us, and working together to try to forge forward with something that works.

I still am not in favor of the national animal identification system. At the end of the day here, I feel very good about the conversations that's going on right now, and the fact that USDA's listening, that's spectacular. I think, this administration, if that's been their mission, they're doing a good job. By this administration, I mean, President. That's a

good thing, and I appreciate Secretary Vilsack putting all of this together. I would like to say, if they're reaching out, we would at the level of Community Farm Alliance, with 2,000 members, a grassroots organization. I'm also a representative for CFA to the national family farm coalition, NSFC.

There's currently a campaign in progress to help develop a food safety alternative to NAIS, because I really think that that's where the greatest impact is going to be had on human health, on animal health, and in general, is to do something about food safety. I recognize the difference there between animal health and food safety. That's something that we're still not in agreement with, because the lines around the NAIS program are still very fuzzy and have been for quite some time, where things change. They say it's mandatory, then it's not. I mean, things have been shifting so much that nobody really knows what this program is going to look like. We're not anywhere close, I don't think to something that's going to be workable for everybody.

That doesn't mean that we're not at the table, because I think everybody wants to be at the table, because they got a stake in it, and they got a livelihood in it. We got to stick together, and we got to get the consumer behind us, instead of seeing animals being pushed around on a forklifts, they need to be seeing a gentleman out here in Kentucky, in Henry County, raising his dairy cows, so they know how food is raised, so that they can get a clear picture of what it takes, because 98.5 % of the population have no idea. I think that's all from what I have wanted to say. I got to go home and feed everything and pick strawberries.

MS: I want to thank all of those folks. I never would've had a chance to talk with folks at the NAIS and do all these places. It's just fantastic. I learned a lot here today as a person, where I'm going to go and buy food, and my choice. I can go out and work with Adam and them on their farms and have a good time, walk around in the mud, having a lot of fun.

The question was asked, I thought, when it came out. No one knew about NAIS. I think that's been stabilized here, to me, the identification and where it comes from. I think the question that wasn't answered is about—I think the real reason was here because of the fact that the diseases that are coming out of the situation, how we process things and whatever goes down. I don't think that's ever been addressed. I asked that question. I never did get an answer on it, and that's okay.

That's good, because maybe this might be part of the preventive measure that we have not looked at, is where the disease is actually coming from here, where it's actually

coming from. I just said it one more time, where it's actually coming from, because I haven't gotten that understanding yet. If we have seen it, but when asked, there was such great silence which makes the largest noise. I think somebody know, but no one's not putting it out, where it's actually coming from. I can't point fingers at anyone saying it's to blame in this room, because no one can stand up and answer that question.

I think that the preventive measure for the diseases sits there, but it causes us to point fingers rather than attack the situation at hand. I do appreciate our—I mean—the Internet wouldn't gave me what I got today. I sit down there and go blind reading it sometimes, so I appreciate all your folks here today. It's been rewarding for me, and I take this to a neighborhood where people, as I said at the end, up with the results of a lot of diabetes, high blood pressure, and all this stuff, and don't start in with farmers and producers and that kind of—it ends with people. Thank you very, very much.

MS: Thank you, sir.

JW: I started to answer your question. It's a whole different department that takes the post harvest inspection and moves on out into the food supply chain. You're dealing with a different set of diseases, a different set of bacteria pathogens. Pathogens that are out here everyday because we don't live in a sterile environment, thank goodness. That comes back through the harvest plant, and would only go to the farm if it was a disease or a pathogen that probably originated on the farm. Otherwise, they're looking for the source. It might be the retailer out there in his processing facility where he grinds the hamburger. It might be back in a mid-level, or it might be back at the harvest plant itself, but that's a whole different group.

That's not John's group. That's not NAIS. It's not part of our situation. I will tell you this, and I have traveled outside of this country, particularly in a lot of places in Latin America. I have a whole lot less concern—I've been in harvest plants there—a whole lot less concern about the safety of the food that I had the opportunity to consume in the United States and North America than I do in many other countries of the world. You can rest assured that those of us that are active in international trade are pleased that the rest of the world, for the most part, accepts our inspection and processes as producing wholesome food.

Adam, I'll wind up my point. I've talked too much. We do have a lot of common ground. We're at verbal adversaries more than we really are. What I'm saying, all we're trying to do is offer a choice and to produce wholesome, safe food. That's all we're trying to do.

FS: Sorry, I'll try to be brief. In terms of where it comes from, I was just thinking. When I get sick, it's when I'm not sleeping, I'm not eating well. My immunity is compromised, and a flu comes along, and I get sick. I imagine the same is somewhat true for animals. The healthier the animals we can raise, based on a diet that's good for them, the more healthier animals are going to be.

LM: Thank you. I'm looking for a signal or a hand. I think everybody's talked out. Yeah. In closing, as facilitator, I would really like to commend this group and give flowers where they're due for the sincerity and the thoughtfulness of your comments. You've been an excellent group to work with, and I really appreciate it. Thank you for taking time off to be here and to participate. It's been an excellent discussion. Thank you.

[Tape ends]

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