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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**ORIGINAL**

PUBLIC MEETING

NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

(NAIS)

May 18, 2009

9:00 a.m.

Pasco, Washington

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APPEARANCES:

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1 MR. WATERS: Good morning, everyone.  
2 And thanks for being here. I really appreciate the  
3 weather. When I left Maryland yesterday morning, it  
4 was about 60 degrees and raining.

5 So, I've been waiting for this kind of  
6 weather. I didn't realize I had to come to Washington  
7 to experience it.

8 On behalf of Secretary Vilsack, I want to  
9 welcome you to this USDA NAIS listening session.

10 I want to take a minute or two to go over a  
11 few things before we get started.

12 The goal for these sessions is to give you  
13 a chance to express your opinions, and we hope for you  
14 to discuss what kind of system you think will work and  
15 any solutions you have to offer for this system.

16 But our main goal is to listen to you, to  
17 listen to your concerns, to listen to your ideas, and  
18 to listen to your suggestions.

19 Why don't you take the packets that were  
20 given to you. I just want to go over what's inside of  
21 these.

22 The first thing you'll notice, on the  
23 outside there's a dot. It's either yellow, red or  
24 blue. And these are for the breakout sessions in the  
25 afternoon. We'll have them set up, each of these

1 sections will be for one of the breakout sessions.

2 And the reason we're having the breakout  
3 sessions is to give you a chance to talk in a more  
4 informal setting, so that you can have an opportunity  
5 to say what you think about the program.

6 If you open it up, inside on the right-hand  
7 side, of course, we have a pen and pad. But also we  
8 have the National Animal Identification System  
9 listening sessions. That is a PowerPoint.

10 And just a note about this. This was  
11 prepared in advance of the first session that was held  
12 last Thursday, and it's been changed a little bit, and  
13 I'll tell you why we did that and how it's changed.

14 But this is the PowerPoint slides that were  
15 given last Thursday.

16 On the left-hand side there are basically  
17 four things.

18 The first is a welcome from the Veterinary  
19 Services Deputy Administrator, John Clifford. That's  
20 the first thing in the packet on the left side.

21 Next is the agenda itself. And I want to  
22 go over that in just a minute. I want to spend a few  
23 minutes on that.

24 The rest of what's in here is the news  
25 release from Secretary Vilsack announcing these

1 sessions and where they are located.

2 And then the last item is just a reminder  
3 of other ways to give your comments. We're holding  
4 these listening sessions. We encourage you to send  
5 e-mails. There's several e-mail boxes that you can  
6 send your comments to. And also we give the bottom  
7 here, is the address where you can send the actual  
8 written comment by snail mail.

9 So, let's take a closer look at the agenda.  
10 That's the second thing in the packet on the left.

11 Registration was from eight to nine. And  
12 what we've done to change the agenda, based on last  
13 Thursday's session, is that we're going to reduce the  
14 time for this first opening remark. I'm just going to  
15 give a couple remarks, and explain what's going on  
16 here with the packets.

17 Dr. Larry Granger will give a few remarks  
18 to welcome you, as well.

19 And then we're going to jump right into the  
20 public comment section of the day.

21 And, so, the way we've done this is it's  
22 sort of a lottery system. But I think based on what I  
23 just heard a few minutes ago, it looks like everyone  
24 will have a chance to talk anyway. But we're just  
25 going to call the numbers out, since we didn't track

1 by name who was interested in giving a talk. So,  
2 we'll be calling your ticket out, and we'll give you  
3 an opportunity, if we still have time, if anybody else  
4 wants to make a comment, you can do that as well.

5 We want to try to keep it to three minutes,  
6 each person's comment, to give everybody an  
7 opportunity to say their piece.

8 I have a little setup here that will allow  
9 you to sort of keep on track. It shows a green light  
10 from three minutes down to one minute. Then when you  
11 get to one minute, the green light will start  
12 blinking. And then at 30 seconds the yellow light  
13 will go on. So, to let you know that, you know,  
14 you've got 30 seconds left. And I will also say you  
15 have 30 seconds left.

16 Then when the red light goes on, and I sort  
17 of apologize for this, but there's going to be a  
18 little beep. It's not a pleasant beep. It just  
19 beeps. And that's signifying that your time is up.  
20 And I'll say, if you haven't already finished, please,  
21 you know, give your final comment, and then, you know,  
22 we need to move on to the next person.

23 So, then at lunchtime, we're going to break  
24 at noon. Instead of coming back at one o'clock, we're  
25 going to come back at 1:30 from lunch.

1           And there will be an optional half hour,  
2 actually about 20 minutes, the presentation was  
3 reduced a bit down to about 20 minutes. So, that  
4 presentation will be available now from one o'clock to  
5 about 1:20 in this room.

6           And then around 1:20 we'll pull these  
7 dividers down so that at 1:30, when you come back from  
8 lunch, or if you're already here for the presentation,  
9 we'll break out into the red, yellow, blue groups in  
10 these three separate rooms. And then we'll do that  
11 for the rest of the afternoon. From 1:30 until four,  
12 you'll have. Our experience is that's probably enough  
13 time for most groups. Some of you may finish a little  
14 early. But we'll give you plenty of time to say what  
15 you want to say in a more informal setting.

16           And the way that will work, and in fact the  
17 whole day is working, all of this is going to be  
18 recorded and then transcribed. And the transcriptions  
19 will be posted on our USDA website. And all the  
20 transcripts will be given to the Office of the  
21 Secretary for them to review.

22           So, that's kind of how the day's going to  
23 work.

24           Lunch is on your own. So, at noon, you  
25 know, there's places nearby, and I'm not totally

1 familiar with everything that's nearby. But if you  
2 can go to lunch, and then get back here by 1:00 or  
3 1:30.

4 The restrooms are just outside the doors  
5 here. The women's room is on the left and the men's  
6 room is on the right.

7 I think that's it. The transcripts are  
8 posted.

9 So, right now I'd like to introduce you to  
10 Dr. Larry Granger from Veterinary Services.

11 MR. GRANGER: Thanks, Ken. Good  
12 morning. It is a good morning, isn't it? It's good  
13 to start with a point of agreement. Thank you.

14 My name is Dr. Granger. I'm the Director  
15 for the Centers of Epidemiology and Animal Health from  
16 Fort Collins, Colorado.

17 I would like to welcome you to this second  
18 in the series of listening sessions that will occur  
19 throughout the United States. This is about the  
20 National Animal Identification System.

21 It's my job to welcome you. But it's also  
22 my pleasure. I'm happy to be here. This is the only  
23 one of these that I'll be doing. And, so, this is the  
24 only opportunity that I'll have to stand before a  
25 group of producers like yourselves and hear what you

1 have to say personally.

2 It also is a great honor to be asked to  
3 come and welcome you to this listening session.

4 While I have not yet had the pleasure of  
5 meeting Secretary Vilsack myself, I'm here to  
6 represent him and to represent the Department of  
7 Agriculture.

8 And I want to thank you for taking valuable  
9 time away from your farms, your families, your home,  
10 to attend this meeting. I know some of you have come  
11 a long way and gave up opportunities to spend time  
12 with family, on trips and so forth. And I'm glad to  
13 see that you think it's that important that you're  
14 here.

15 I'm going to keep my remarks very brief,  
16 because the point of this meeting, as Ken said, is  
17 we're here to listen to what you have to say, and I've  
18 been asked to stick very closely to this script before  
19 me. And I've already deviated from it significantly.

20 In response to concerns about increased  
21 pest and disease threats to livestock, the Animal  
22 Plant Health Inspection Service, along with its  
23 stakeholders, began about five years ago to develop  
24 this National Animal I.D. System. This system is  
25 supposed to enable animal health officials and

1 producers to respond more rapidly and effectively to  
2 foreign animal disease outbreaks in the United States,  
3 which has always been one of APHIS' core missions.

4 The long-term goal of the National Animal  
5 Identification System is to provide state and federal  
6 officials with the capability to identify all animals  
7 and premises that have had potential contact with a  
8 disease of concern within 48 hours after its  
9 discovery.

10 Despite five years of concerted effort, we  
11 have not been able to fully implement this program. A  
12 significant number of our stakeholders have been  
13 divided over this issue. And I think that we'll  
14 probably see that here today. And we recognize that  
15 many real and significant challenges remain before  
16 anyone can confidently claim that the United States  
17 has an effective animal disease traceability system in  
18 place.

19 Secretary Vilsack is aware of APHIS' many  
20 efforts in the past to engage stakeholders to support  
21 the National Animal Identification System, and he's  
22 also aware that USDA's positions on various aspects of  
23 the national system have not always been entirely  
24 consistent.

25 The Secretary strongly believes that our

1 nation needs a modern, nationwide system in place to  
2 protect the health of United States livestock. As he  
3 mentioned at a recent Congressional hearing, if at  
4 some point in the future we confirm that a sample is  
5 positive for the 2009 H1N1 influenza, for instance,  
6 APHIS and state animal health officials would  
7 immediately begin an epidemiological investigation to  
8 determine if any other herds have been exposed to  
9 affected animals.

10 Secretary Vilsack also stated that  
11 significant producer participation in the National  
12 Animal Identification System would make our  
13 investigative efforts much more effective if we do  
14 need to engage in the traceback after this or any  
15 other type of disease concern should manifest.

16 The Secretary also believes that we should  
17 strive to develop a system that the majority of  
18 producers, big and small, can support. Therefore, he  
19 instructed us to hold this series of listening  
20 sessions across the country as a way to solicit  
21 opinions and ideas from a wide range of farmers,  
22 ranchers, and other stakeholders, in order to make  
23 him -- help him make more informed decisions as he  
24 maps out the future of this program.

25 So, we strongly encourage you to express

1 your thoughts and views here today, and we especially  
2 want to hear your ideas on how to make this system  
3 better and solutions to concerns that you may have  
4 about the National Animal Identification System.

5 Ken mentioned that we'll be tape recording  
6 all of the sessions today, so that we can be sure to  
7 capture all your concerns and ideas and pass those  
8 along to the Secretary.

9 However, if you for some reason don't get a  
10 chance to say everything that you wanted to say today,  
11 he mentioned also we're taking written comments from  
12 the public and that your comments can be submitted  
13 through websites, and that's on the information sheet  
14 handout. The website address is there.

15 You have the Secretary's personal assurance  
16 that every written comment submitted will be read and  
17 carefully considered before we move forward.

18 One of our hopes in sponsoring these  
19 meetings is that through dialogue and discussion among  
20 people representing all sectors of agriculture, that  
21 creative solutions will begin to emerge on issues that  
22 have divided some of us with regard to the development  
23 of an animal identification and tracing system.

24 I think we would all rather implement a  
25 system that truly reflects our state, federal,

1 producer partnership, a system that farmers and  
2 ranchers can support and look upon as a benefit to  
3 their operation, rather than being a burden that's  
4 imposed upon them.

5 We need a system that minimizes your  
6 expense and effort, that is flexible enough to meet  
7 your individual needs, that protects animal health in  
8 a way that is sensitive to the differences between  
9 species groups, and that protects your private  
10 business information.

11 Whether you sell your livestock directly  
12 off your farm or to a major auction house, or whether  
13 your meat is sold at a country store or on  
14 international exchanges, we want to develop an animal  
15 health protection system that will allow you to  
16 confidently market your livestock as the healthiest  
17 and the best quality in the world.

18 And to create a national identification  
19 system that can realize these goals, we need to hear  
20 both your concerns and your ideas for solutions. Our  
21 discussion sessions today will focus on important  
22 issues that producers have often raised, such as  
23 implementation costs, impact on small-scale farmers,  
24 privacy, confidentiality, and liability issues.

25 These discussion sessions will also allow

1 you to weigh in on any concerns you have regarding  
2 premises registration, animal identification, and  
3 animal tracing.

4 At the end of the day, we want to learn  
5 what program options you could support so that we can  
6 pass that information along to Secretary Vilsack.  
7 This information will be critical in helping him  
8 determine how USDA, in partnership with stakeholders,  
9 can forge a more effective, a more successful, and a  
10 more acceptable system to protect animal health.

11 After lunch today Ken mentioned a  
12 representative from our National Animal Identification  
13 System staff will help to frame today's discussion  
14 sessions with a preparation on how APHIS Veterinary  
15 Services looks for, and responds to, and traces  
16 foreign animal diseases.

17 I encourage you to attend that session.

18 And, Ken, just a clarification, I thought I  
19 heard you say that starts at 1:30. But it actually  
20 starts at one o'clock.

21 MR. WATERS: Right. It does.

22 MR. GRANGER: So, I would encourage  
23 you to get back from lunch in time to see that  
24 presentation. The folks that have all those answers  
25 are sitting back there at that reserved table, by the

1 way. That's not me.

2 The point of the presentation is to bring  
3 everyone in the room up-to-speed with accurate,  
4 factual information that's factual about the National  
5 Animal Identification System, its goals, and its  
6 implementation to date.

7 Following my remarks, and I only have  
8 another page to read here, we'll move on to the more  
9 important part of the meeting, which is listening to  
10 what you have to say. And I hope that you actively  
11 participate and have time to stay for the entire  
12 meeting.

13 For my part, I'll be here all day. And I  
14 know that some of you are not comfortable speaking in  
15 front of groups, but I would encourage you to do so.  
16 We're all friends here.

17 Now, I'm sure that everyone is aware that  
18 there are strong advocates in the audience who are  
19 representing both those in favor of the current system  
20 and those that are totally opposed to it. But rather  
21 than focusing on those differences, I ask you to look  
22 around this room for a minute and consider what I hope  
23 every individual presenter can agree upon.

24 Regardless of whether you operate a small  
25 farm or a big operation, whether you raise chickens or

1 cattle or whether you run a local butcher shop, or you  
2 own a major slaughterhouse or whether you represent  
3 local, state or federal government agencies, we all  
4 know the bottom line is we want animals throughout  
5 America to be healthy and free of animal diseases.

6 I hope that unifying focus will be the  
7 compass that guides our discussions today and in the  
8 future.

9 And in that spirit, I'd like to thank you  
10 all again for extending your professional courtesy and  
11 respect to everyone at this meeting, regardless of  
12 whether you agree with them or not, and let's all keep  
13 in mind that maintaining an open and respectful  
14 dialogue will get us all a lot further down the road  
15 towards developing an acceptable system that works for  
16 everybody.

17 Thanks again, and I look forward to hearing  
18 your thoughts and concerns. And with that, I'll turn  
19 it back to Ken. All right?

20 Thank you.

21 MR. WATERS: Thanks, Larry.

22 So, the way we're going to do this, and,  
23 Larry, if I can have you move to a different chair,  
24 I'm going to sit everybody up here on these chairs to  
25 be ready to give your comments.

1           So, if you said you wanted to give a  
2 comment, you should have a red ticket. And the first  
3 five that I'd like to come up are, and this is the  
4 last three numbers, 332, 343, 348, 333 and 336.

5                           (Pause in the proceedings).

6           Okay. Here's the numbers again. 336, 333,  
7 348, 343, and 332.

8           So, after the third -- every third I'm  
9 going to call three more numbers, and if you would  
10 just come up and sit here and be ready to speak. I  
11 think that will work best.

12           So, again, I'll be here, timing the  
13 remarks, and, again, green's okay, you've got time  
14 left. Blinking green means you have about a minute.  
15 Yellow means you have about 30 seconds. And I'll say,  
16 "You have about 30 seconds left." And then when it  
17 hits red, it will buzz briefly, and I'll say, "If you  
18 could please finish up any final thoughts you have."

19           Okay. Thank you.

20           So, if you would give your name when you  
21 start your remarks.

22                           MR. WADE KING: I will try to get up  
23 here and start before he hits the button.

24                           I'm Wade King, Cattle Producers of  
25 Washington.

1           We see the NAIS program as not meeting the  
2 support requirements. It's been sold to us as helping  
3 with the support requirements. Currently there are  
4 age and source verification programs that meet those  
5 requirements. And, so, NAIS is not necessary. And  
6 there is only 3 to 5 percent of our nation herd is  
7 being exported. So, for NAIS and export requirements,  
8 it's not needed.

9           The next one was NAIS does nothing to  
10 prevent disease. It's basically a traceback system.  
11 But it does nothing to prevent it. Dr. Margaret  
12 Hamburg, a bioterrorist expert that was nominated by  
13 President Obama to oversee the FDA, Food and Drug  
14 Administration, pledged to revamp protection of the  
15 nation's food supply and help prevent future disease  
16 outbreaks. Dr. Hamburg states that she wants to shift  
17 from chasing disease outbreaks to preventing them  
18 first. NAIS does nothing to prevent disease.

19           They should focus in on -- USDA needs to  
20 focus in on preventing disease, instead of tracing it.

21           The premises registration is not necessary  
22 at all as far as location of the animals.

23           Case in point. They've had a lot better  
24 luck just getting ahold of the producers to find out  
25 where the animals are, rather than the exact location

1 of where the animals are. And the land, as far as the  
2 premises registration, it can't tell you about the  
3 animals at all.

4 So, they still need to get contact  
5 information. Premises registration is not necessary.

6 And our state has an effective state  
7 database now, with the brand registrations and the  
8 brucellosis program. We already have an effective  
9 traceback system right now. We just need more help  
10 from the USDA in that regard.

11 And our state, Washington state, shouldn't  
12 be penalized because of some of the other states that  
13 don't have this capability already.

14 The best choice for maintaining that  
15 information is at the state level. We shouldn't --  
16 the feds. -- excuse me, the USDA already wants the  
17 states to implement this, so, why isn't the state,  
18 they already have the state database, just let the  
19 states handle it. The feds. shouldn't be getting into  
20 this part of it.

21 The expense and liability to the producers  
22 makes this program cost prohibitive. The two Kansas  
23 State studies that came out, there is a big variance  
24 in just how expensive this program is, and some of our  
25 producers, Willard Wolf in particular, has lots of

1 experience in shipping thousands and thousands of  
2 cattle, and this cost estimate is not accurate at all  
3 in our opinion.

4 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

5 MR. WADE KING: Okay. He'll take 30  
6 seconds of mine. No?

7 The NAIS program, we just don't need the  
8 NAIS program. Already with the state database and the  
9 export requirements, we just don't see any need for  
10 the NAIS program.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. ED GROSS: I am Ed Gross, a  
13 cow/calf producer.

14 My comment is, we don't need NAIS. And if  
15 we do need it, we need it voluntary, the way it was  
16 intended to be.

17 And it's going to put a lot of small  
18 producers out of business because they've said  
19 already, if they have to follow government programs,  
20 they'd rather not be in business.

21 And I think the NAIS program doesn't  
22 benefit the cow/calf producers. It will only benefit  
23 the packers.

24 And we as cow/calf producers, farmers,  
25 ranchers, we're stewards of the land. We're not here

1 trying to avoid anything. We try and take care of our  
2 properties and our livestock.

3 And I do have a question. In the NAIS  
4 program, why is it always a premise, why not a  
5 property? I have a very big concern about that.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. KATHY SMITH: I'm so grateful to go  
8 at this point, and then I can relax the rest of the  
9 day.

10 My name is Kathy Smith. I am married to  
11 the great Bert Smith who has been my hero for 35  
12 years.

13 But I am very new to the cow/calf industry,  
14 but I have learned a lot. I have learned to admire  
15 all of you cow producers and property owners and  
16 ranchers, fighting for your freedom.

17 When Bert first told me about the NAIS  
18 system, I thought, you've got to be kidding.

19 The USDA's not kidding. And the USDA used  
20 to be the friend of this community and this industry.

21 And those good, well-meaning folks are no  
22 longer the friend of this industry. This National  
23 Animal I.D. System is a dangerous system for our  
24 property rights.

25 And it was a big concern to us, too, the

1 word "premise" means something entirely different I  
2 think than the word "property" and "property rights."

3 I serve on a local City Council. I know  
4 what it is to have a little bit of power to dictate  
5 what happens in your community.

6 And to have this kind of power on a federal  
7 level in the wrong hands, even if it's supposedly well  
8 intended for animal safety, those are just  
9 distractions and guises, when really the purpose I  
10 think of the NAIS is to control the industry in a way  
11 that is unconstitutional and a very big concern for  
12 us.

13 Bert and I are very proud of the people,  
14 like the calf members that have tried very hard to  
15 explain to our congressman what the animal I.D. system  
16 is all about, that the beneficiaries of this system  
17 would mainly be the packers.

18 It is not about disease control. If it  
19 were really about that, we wouldn't be importing meat  
20 from all over the world, 50 different countries, with  
21 just borders that are flung wide open, and very little  
22 real inspection going on.

23 We know that that's the case. If we were  
24 really concerned about disease control, we'd be  
25 watching those borders.

1                   We also have spoken to people, you can say,  
2                   on both sides of the fence. At the Utah Cattleman's  
3                   Association meeting, we have friends and like minded  
4                   allies that are also alarmed about the National Animal  
5                   I.D. System.

6                   But then we have others who just keep  
7                   saying, oh, it's okay, the NCBA will take care of us,  
8                   the USDA will take care of us.

9                   But we've talked to people who've said it  
10                  was a concern, we should watch it. The people who  
11                  work for the USDA. We've also talked to people  
12                  who have said it is a concern and we should watch it.

13                  MR. WATERS:     30 seconds.

14                  MS. KATHY SMITH:   Thank you, Ken.

15                  We've also talked to people in this room that  
16                  understand that things will look very different for us  
17                  as an industry if the National Animal I.D. System goes  
18                  through. I don't really even support a voluntary  
19                  system, but I think that's the only thing any of us  
20                  could completely live with, is a completely voluntary  
21                  system. Like we have mandated in the state of Utah,  
22                  thankfully in our last legislature, we passed a no  
23                  NAIS Bill.

24                  So, thank you and good luck to all of you.

25                  MR. L. D. GREEN:   My name's L. D.

1 Green, cow/calf producer. I went to the -- I and  
2 another rancher went to the Eastport border crossing  
3 in Canada and Idaho, the 13th, last Wednesday.

4 We spoke with Charles Smith, the USDA  
5 inspector. And visited with him a while. And he said  
6 that he could inspect, like, 20 loads of feeders in a  
7 day. And it takes about 30 minutes to off-load and  
8 inspect each load, and he's supposed to do this all in  
9 the morning.

10 He kind of changed his story and said,  
11 "Well, maybe I only do 16 in a day," because that's an  
12 eight to ten hour day.

13 And then he told us about how he inspects  
14 fats in the afternoon, feeder loads he says are booked  
15 two months in advance.

16 While we were there, a third truck of the  
17 day shows up, a load of fats that come in about 1:30.  
18 The paperwork had been faxed from the vet in Canada  
19 and was sitting on the counter. It wasn't even dated  
20 by the Canadian vet.

21 Minutes later it become dated, the load is  
22 inspected, the truck driver and the inspector could  
23 not come up with the same head count. The driver  
24 himself sealed the side door. The inspector sealed  
25 the back door. He also said that he does not even

1 look at the top deck.

2 So, on a load of feeders, he's only  
3 required to read 10 percent of the animals.

4 I asked him if the readers always work,  
5 regardless of the weather.

6 He said they read a hundred percent.

7 In actuality, the use in extreme weather  
8 conditions, freezing temperatures, mud, the readers  
9 are not accurate.

10 At the end of February I called John  
11 Weamers and asked him about the cost analysis study  
12 done at Kansas State University. He wouldn't  
13 acknowledge that there was even one being done. Wade  
14 King called him an hour later, told him all about it.

15 It is my understanding that the cost  
16 analysis originally come out in October 2008,  
17 according to Kevin DeRuter, with Kansas State  
18 University.

19 The USDA didn't like the results, so, it  
20 was redone and released in May, well after the  
21 proposed rule, January 13, 2009.

22 The cost analysis itself, on page 151 and  
23 152, says there is no sufficient historical frequency  
24 nor diversity of events to facilitate a detailed real  
25 world evaluation.

1                   At the Pennsylvania listening session Mr.  
2 Weamers was questioned about the NAIS comment period  
3 on the Federal Register which ended March 16, 2009.  
4 He said he did not recall the comment effort.

5                   According to my research, there were 9,036  
6 comments entered into the Federal Register. I spent  
7 several hours reading the comments and saw none that  
8 were in favor of the mandatory NAIS.

9                   How much time?

10                  MR. WATERS: If you could just wrap up  
11 your last thought.

12                  MR. L. D. GREEN: How can we support  
13 the proposed rule of January 13th when we can't trust  
14 the USDA's credibility?

15                  In Washington, Idaho and Montana, we have  
16 the ability to trace and track any disease incidents.  
17 We've done it for 125 years. Why should we trade that  
18 for an extensive, intrusive and unworkable program.

19                  MR. WATERS: I'm going to call three  
20 more. The next ones to come up, 425, 335, 339, and  
21 306. That's 306, 339, 335, and 425.

22                  Let me call one more. 346. 346.

23                  MS. CAROL OSTERMAN: Thank you for the  
24 opportunity. My name is Carol Osterman. I operate a  
25 small diversified sustainable farm in Skagit County

1 with my husband. I am also a chapter leader for the  
2 Weston A. Price Foundation. I represent farmers and  
3 consumers in Skagit County, Washington, who directly  
4 interact with each other for goods and services.

5 On my own farm of poultry, horses, cattle,  
6 goats, pigs and llamas, we operate in two separate  
7 permanent locations and move livestock frequently  
8 between the two and other privately owned properties  
9 through vegetation management projects.

10 With the wide variety of livestock and uses  
11 for those animals, the National Animal Identification  
12 System (NAIS) would negatively impact our farm to the  
13 point where it would cease to exist due to  
14 implementation costs, loss of health-conscious  
15 consumers and emotional toll.

16 The closure of my farm and many others like  
17 it would put many more people into the job hunt and  
18 increasing the unemployment rate.

19 With the closure of numerous farms, there  
20 would be no need for all the feed and tack stores,  
21 farriers, veterinarians, meat processors, farm  
22 equipment retailers and other support industries.  
23 This will then put even more people out of work and in  
24 need of financial support from the government in the  
25 form of unemployment, food stamps and other low income

1 programs.

2 Our farm products are marketed to the  
3 knowledgeable health conscious consumer, as we are a  
4 small pasture-based operation.

5 With the movement of our animals, each  
6 animal would have to be individually RFID tagged.  
7 These tags have been proven to cause cancer. No  
8 consumer who is health conscious would want to  
9 purchase meat from an animal that could have cancer,  
10 and many cancers are not visible until an advanced  
11 state. Nor would, or could, we sell a product that  
12 had malignant growths.

13 For recreation, I enjoy trail riding and  
14 handspinning. Both of these enjoyments in my life  
15 would be taken away, as it would be a chore to have to  
16 report where my horses are on a trail ride and the  
17 local places that I purchase fibers from for my  
18 spinning would cease to exist for many of the reasons  
19 stated above.

20 There has been no real cost assessment or  
21 analysis of what a mandatory NAIS would have on the  
22 national, state or individual farmer or budget in way  
23 of direct costs, loss of sales tax revenue, other  
24 employment revenues and loss of monies to agencies due  
25 to lack of fee collection.

1           There would also be the cost of enforcement  
2 and levying of fines on the farms that would just  
3 disappear, which would further depress the economy.

4           In addition, at what point is it better for  
5 me to go kill the bald eagle to get back the  
6 microchips that I am supposed to return to the USDA  
7 when I lose an animal? Within a matter of a week, it  
8 actually is beneficial to go kill that bald eagle. I  
9 have a nesting pair that does take ducks and chickens.

10           Being that the BSE cow that was found in  
11 Mabton, Washington, was traced back to its origins  
12 within the proposed NAIS time frame, why do we need to  
13 put money into a mandatory program that will just cost  
14 the government money and cause many farmers and  
15 service providers to lose their jobs?

16           In the end, I recommend the whole NAIS  
17 program be eliminated at best, and at worst be applied  
18 to only CAFO's as this is where the disease problems  
19 are located. It is also from CAFO's and large  
20 processing facilities where meat, dairy and egg  
21 contamination have impacts on the health of thousands.  
22 Small farms like Akyla Farms have only a handful of  
23 customers by comparison.

24           Thank you.

25           MR. WATERS: Next?

1 MR. WALTER GUTERBOCK: My name is  
2 Walter Guterbock, G-U-T-E-R-B-O-C-K. I am here as a  
3 representative of National Milk Producers Federation.  
4 But the remarks that I'm going to give are my own  
5 opinions. I'm not going to rehash National Mills'  
6 support of the NAIS program.

7 Almost all the dairy farms in the United  
8 States, large or small, are family owned, and cattle  
9 are a large part of the wealth of those families.

10 And the export market is important, the  
11 export breeding stock is important in the dairy  
12 industry. Over half of dairy cows are now in herds  
13 over 500 head. And most of those herds have  
14 individual cow I.D., and most of them and many small  
15 herds have computer records for herd management.

16 Also dairy premises are already registered,  
17 if they ship milk commercially, because of the Health  
18 Department requirements. And most dairy cattle stay  
19 on the farm. Most movement is to slaughter, or among  
20 young stock, heifers or baby bull calves.

21 So, in dairy, most of the heavy lifting's  
22 been done. The premises are identified in state  
23 systems. The cattle are individually identified on  
24 most farms, and the computers are there. So, it's  
25 just a job of integrating those existing system into a

1 national one.

2 I.D. is essential for export markets and  
3 for traceability in the case of outbreaks.

4 So, you have the example cited of the BSE  
5 cows in Mabton. If that had been a rapidly moving  
6 contagious disease, the existing system would not have  
7 been able to work. The only reason it worked was that  
8 BSE is not contagious.

9 So, it's not realistic to think that metal  
10 ear tags are going to do the job, because people  
11 reading metal ear tags, it is too error prone a  
12 system. And I know this from experience, operating a  
13 large dairy.

14 Also many states no longer require use of  
15 those vaccinations, so many cattle are no longer  
16 tagged with the official metal tag. And brand records  
17 don't identify individuals.

18 To a dairy farm, over the life of a cow,  
19 the cost of the electronic tag is a negligible  
20 expense.

21 We have an example in the United States, of  
22 the state of Michigan, which in response to its TB  
23 emergency, put in a requirement for individual I.D.  
24 and premises I.D., and that was enforced through the  
25 sale barns and the slaughter plants, and compliance

1 was virtually instant, and it really caused no great  
2 disruption to the cattle industry, and didn't cause  
3 anybody to go out of business.

4 I think in the brand states, the brand  
5 inspection system has a role to play.

6 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

7 MR. WALTER GUTERBOCK: But it has to be  
8 integrated with the NAIS system.

9 Speaking as a veterinarian, which I was  
10 trained as, I.D. would help automate the archaic  
11 handwritten health written system and process of  
12 getting permits for animal movement.

13 We use electronic I.D. on our farm. We  
14 can't live without it now. Nobody wants to write any  
15 numbers anymore.

16 The other statement I would like to make is  
17 that USDA's original insistence that the free market  
18 determine the technology was a mistake. USDA needs to  
19 determine which technology we are going to use and we  
20 need to use it nation-wide. I think perfection is the  
21 enemy of the good. We need to make some baby steps  
22 towards this. We have been talking about it for five  
23 years. It is a necessity. And we do support it.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. WILLARD WOLF: Willard Wolf. I

1 guess I'd say I'm a cattle producer, a livestock  
2 marketer.

3 I market cattle into several states from  
4 this area and from other states. I have had a lot of  
5 experience in the industry.

6 As I was alluding to somebody else, I  
7 actually worked for USDA. I set up the Market News  
8 System here in the Western United States way back in  
9 the '60s.

10 I went to Washington, D.C. and did the  
11 National Slaughter Estimate for two-and-a-half years,  
12 and worked with the Market News System there in  
13 Washington, D.C.

14 From there I went to the export of cattle  
15 to foreign countries, with an export firm, exporting  
16 cattle into 16 different countries. I've exported  
17 cattle to Canada. I've exported cattle from Canada.  
18 I've exported cattle to Mexico. I've exported cattle  
19 from Mexico.

20 So, I want to come at you from a different  
21 light, for the simple reason that a lot of people have  
22 covered some of the points that I wanted to make.

23 But what I want to really come at you at is  
24 this: It has to be a system that works at the speed  
25 of commerce or close to it.

1                   And I can tell you this, from actually  
2     trying to make this system work, using your readers,  
3     using feedlots that are certified through IMA Global,  
4     using producers that are certified from IMA Global,  
5     and trying to make this system work, I am here to tell  
6     you that it will not work. There are way too many  
7     problems to do it at the speed of commerce.

8                   Now, if you think about a computer and a  
9     system that will work at 10 below zero, a system that  
10    will work at 105 degrees, a system that will work in  
11    dirt, rain and snow, and you really get practical, and  
12    you get logical in this industry, this system can be  
13    designed, and under ideal conditions, it is a good  
14    system.

15                  But we do not have ideal conditions in the  
16    livestock industry. And we never will.

17                  Our dairy friend just alluded to it works  
18    in their industry.

19                  But let me explain to him that our  
20    industry, the livestock beef industry and some of our  
21    other livestock species, are completely different than  
22    the dairy industry, in our everyday operations. And  
23    that has to be a big factor in designing this system  
24    that's going to work.

25                  The other thing that bothers me, other than

1 the speed of commerce or close to it, where in the  
2 world is the manpower going to come from, and the  
3 womanpower, to make this system work? It's going to  
4 take a lot of people and a lot of man hours.

5 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

6 MR. WILLARD WOLF: I'm not going to  
7 have enough time.

8 I just want to read one thing that struck  
9 me as, I guess we're probably going to hear some  
10 statements today, I'm going to say this, that may be a  
11 little off the wall.

12 But, if we get back to logic, but here's a  
13 statement, ranking minority member from Texas was at a  
14 Senate livestock subcommittee, and he said it has cost  
15 over \$200 million to this point for this NAIS program.

16 Then he goes on, and Dr. Clifford pointed  
17 out that traceability was a key issue. He noted that  
18 cases could be tracked down within 19 minutes in  
19 Canada, and it took us 199 days.

20 To me, that is a very off-the-wall  
21 statement. 19 minutes versus 199 days? I don't  
22 believe a word of that.

23 Then he goes on to say that in a mandatory  
24 system, the greatest cost is to the cattle sector.

25 We know that. And if you look at cost and

1 you look at the cost analysis that was just presented  
2 to us, what is our biggest export product? It's our  
3 off-water drop credit.

4 Is there any traceability to that to these  
5 foreign countries that buy that product? No.

6 Think about it. That's the huge dollar  
7 that they're using as a benefit in the cost analysis  
8 study, and using it as part of our export market. As  
9 it was alluded to here earlier, we only export 3, 5, 6  
10 percent of the cattle. If you looked in this room,  
11 that means that maybe somebody in this room, out of  
12 every thousand, might get to send four or five to the  
13 export market.

14 MR. WATERS: Final thought.

15 MR. WILLARD WOLF: Final thought is  
16 this: If we could make this program work within the  
17 states, state administrated, because there's no two  
18 states, just like there's no two ranches neighbor to  
19 neighbor that will be operated the same way, due to  
20 environment and the conditions around them. It has to  
21 be a state-based program, and let the states run the  
22 program.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. WATERS: Next three. 273. 289.  
25 And 305. 273. 289. And 305.

1 I'll do three more. 271. 331. 269.  
2 269, 271, 331.

3 DR. LEONARD ELDRIDGE: Well, good  
4 morning. I'm Leonard Eldridge, and I am the state  
5 veterinarian for Washington State, and I want to tell  
6 you first off, I provided these comments to the state  
7 veterinarian of Oregon and the state veterinarian in  
8 Idaho, and they both contacted me over the weekend and  
9 stated they were fully in support.

10 As state veterinarian, among my duties is  
11 to set entry requirements and trace reported and  
12 diseased and exposed animals, that is, where they are  
13 and where they came from. And I want to stress the  
14 need for state and federal animal health officials to  
15 be able to identify and trace livestock in these kind  
16 of activities.

17 The goal is to protect animal health and  
18 human health, and to minimize the economic impact of  
19 any disease event. This must be done very quickly if  
20 it's to be accomplished in an efficient way.

21 One example of the need for traceability is  
22 the BSE cow that was identified in our state. It was  
23 quickly traced back to Canada. However, state and  
24 federal animal health officials looked for six weeks,  
25 and weren't able to trace all of the animals, all of

1 the cows that were exposed to the same feed in Canada  
2 that entered the United States.

3 Many folks in this state are very  
4 protective of their private information, which  
5 includes their contact information, such as where they  
6 live and where they keep their animals.

7 The state has always housed that  
8 information, and when there is a need, Washington  
9 State Department of Agriculture has always shared the  
10 information it needs to trace exposed and diseased  
11 livestock with other state animal health officials.

12 In 2006 the Washington State legislature  
13 established a committee that focused on cattle, with  
14 the task of determining how animal identification  
15 should be developed in Washington State. The  
16 legislature also passed legislation that exempted and  
17 protected the information used in the animal  
18 identification in public disclosure.

19 WSDA is in the final stages of development  
20 a unified database system that uses all existing  
21 animal movement information available to date. This  
22 system has the ability when needed to capture other  
23 information such as radio frequency identification and  
24 incorporate it in existing information.

25 Recently WSDA has used contact information

1 to notify folks of the disease events and disaster  
2 events and provide information, such as the most  
3 recent H1N1.

4 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

5 DR. LEONARD ELDRIDGE: The transition  
6 to a comprehensive, integrated computer based system  
7 administered at the state level for recording and  
8 storing field data, would be maintained and updated in  
9 an efficient fashion at the state level. It would  
10 dramatically improve the ownership information and  
11 information transported across state lines.

12 Now, there's much concern about the cost  
13 associated with any NAIS program, and however, the  
14 proposed state system, while not free, it could use  
15 the existing inspections and the existing system today  
16 and reduce that cost.

17 I would like to say two things.

18 One, we need to have a flexible system.  
19 What works in Washington don't work in Texas or in  
20 Florida. And, so, it needs to be looked at, what the  
21 existing systems are and the needs for a particular  
22 region.

23 And the other deal is, we've got a bunch of  
24 small farms, folks, in this state that really are low,  
25 low risk, and really don't need to participate in such

1 a program, unless they put animals into commerce.

2 Thank you very much.

3 MS. ANDREA GREEN: I'm going to come  
4 from a whole different sector of animal ownership.

5 My name is Andrea Green, and I'm here  
6 representing the miniature dairy goat association.

7 For over 60 years I've been involved in  
8 farming in some manner. First as a child of a farmer,  
9 and now as a senior adult. I have a small herd of  
10 miniature dairy goats, which I have as therapy for a  
11 back injury.

12 I do not sell commercially. I do not have  
13 animals that go to the food chain. And I do not  
14 export.

15 Recently I quizzed the members of the MDGA  
16 as to their thoughts about NAIS. It was an  
17 overwhelming no to NAIS. Not only is it fear of  
18 losing their beloved animals, but also the loss of  
19 freedoms. Most of the members of the MDGA have small  
20 dairy goats, either for milk for their families or as  
21 4-H and FFA projects for their children. Some, like  
22 me, have these small goats for health reasons.

23 Our animals are raised as pets, and are  
24 family members for most of the time for the entire  
25 life of that animal. With a 10 percent chance of

1 cancer from the microchips, we don't want to risk the  
2 life of these animals that we have.

3 NAIS would put a hardship on these small  
4 farmers and homesteaders. The high cost of chipping  
5 would prove to be more than some could afford. Yet  
6 the commercial producers would have less expense and  
7 reap the benefits of foreign trade.

8 You are always talking about the commercial  
9 aspects and nobody addresses the pet population.

10 The government's own numbers show that a  
11 small farmer will pay twice and maybe three times as  
12 much per animal as what the feedlots will.

13 The small farmer homesteader is not the  
14 threat to the food safety. By putting small farmers  
15 out of business, it will concentrate our food supply  
16 to only a few mega suppliers.

17 The threat of food safety comes from the  
18 large feedlots who don't care about the animals, only  
19 the money that they can get, not from a small farmer  
20 who cares about the health of their animals and about  
21 their friends and neighbors who partake of their  
22 products.

23 Most of the disease comes from the close  
24 confinement in feedlots, and the unsanitary conditions  
25 in the meat processing plants. NAIS will not make our

1 food supply safer.

2 MR. WATERS: One minute.

3 MS. ANDREA GREEN: The USDA admits that  
4 our existing programs have been so successful that  
5 many have no reason to exist anymore. Some diseases  
6 that are going to create depopulation zones with NAIS  
7 hasn't been seen in this country for several decades.

8 This program has been tried in Australia  
9 and other countries, and it is not working there.

10 My opposition to NAIS is based on two  
11 principles. I believe that my rights to privacy is  
12 being violated when the government has the authority  
13 to monitor the way that I choose to manage my herd.

14 NAIS violates several constitutional  
15 amendments for no sound reason. There is no religious  
16 exemptions. It violates the search and seizure laws,  
17 and it violates due process.

18 The second is I believe that this program  
19 will force the small farmer out of business, leaving  
20 our food supply at the mercy of large scale feedlot  
21 operations.

22 How will NAIS benefit the pet owners?

23 Thank you.

24 MS. CARRIE AENK: My name is Carrie  
25 Aenk. I'm the owner of the Silver Star Ranch and the

1 Shepherd's Way Animal Rescue.

2           NAIS takes away our program. Our program,  
3 we rehabilitate abused and disadvantaged horses and we  
4 pair them with abused and disadvantaged kids and  
5 families. We offer free life and riding lessons to  
6 these kids and families. NAIS takes that away.

7           I'm not a stakeholder. I'm a property  
8 owner.

9           NAIS affects all of the rescues, not just  
10 ours. It affects any animal rescue that there is. It  
11 is not cost-effective for any rescue; dogs, cats,  
12 horses, reptiles.

13           It does away with saving the lives of the  
14 kids, the families, and horses. It does away with  
15 helping the kids that come to the ranch, like mine.  
16 We're not the only ranch in the United States that  
17 does what we do. There's 2500 ranches that do what we  
18 do to save families and kids and horses.

19           NAIS is unconstitutional and is against the  
20 rights the freedoms of our forefathers and family  
21 members that have fought hard and they have lost their  
22 lives to prevent exactly what is going on with NAIS.

23           We do not support NAIS. It has nothing to  
24 do with our program that we offer, free to our  
25 communities and free to our counties.

1                   We live in an area where we are surrounded  
2 by four major counties. We have people coming from  
3 Canada, Oregon, Montana, Northern California, they  
4 come to the ranch to learn about horses, to learn  
5 about life, and it's free.

6                   My premises, my property, and my animals do  
7 not need to be registered for any reason, including it  
8 doesn't need to be registered in order to save horses  
9 and kids.

10                  NAIS does not prevent disease, nor has  
11 there been a history of horse disease and kid disease.  
12 Thank you.

13                  MR. WATERS: I will call three more.  
14 347, 345, and 338. 347, 345 and 338.

15                  MR. MARK ELLIS: Mark Ellis, Director  
16 on the United States Cattle Association, in opposition  
17 to the National Animal Identification System.

18                  NAIS has changed its intents like we change  
19 the calendar on the month -- the month on the  
20 calendar.

21                  From the beginning of 2004, to the fall and  
22 the winter of 2008 and 2009, mandatory to voluntary,  
23 from foreign animal disease to increasing our export  
24 markets.

25                  In increasing our export markets on their

1 cost analysis, they said, well, we will increase it 31  
2 percent, we hope, until these other countries, and as  
3 with the last swine flu, you had Russia and a Middle  
4 East country coming in and saying, we're not going to  
5 take any pork from the United States.

6 NAIS won't change that. It won't get these  
7 countries to take our product if they dictate that  
8 they're going to.

9 The real truth of NAIS comes from the UN  
10 and the World Trade Organization wanted to bring  
11 everyone under their global trade management.

12 And we still see that Australia with a NAIS  
13 program or national identification program in place  
14 now for over seven years, with tracking and premise  
15 registration for over 20, they have not increased  
16 their export market. They have lost market in the  
17 world -- in the global market.

18 Premise registration is an infringement of  
19 our property rights we've heard very much.

20 And there has been no cost analysis done  
21 up-front. And what I mean is, yes, there was one done  
22 by the colleges in this last year, and it was  
23 finalized in October. Now it was released just three  
24 months ago by USDA and APHIS. 442 pages, and I don't  
25 like reading government literature. But when you read

1 that cost analysis from the college, that's even  
2 harder to understand.

3 They stated in the middle of that, on page  
4 151, that no national identification program has yet  
5 been tested to be able to stop the spread of a foreign  
6 animal disease.

7 The State of Wisconsin has mandatory  
8 premise registrations. They're having problems  
9 getting producers to renew their premise registration.

10 They have a private -- They contract from  
11 the Department of Ag in Wisconsin to a private  
12 stakeholder, if that's what you guys are calling a  
13 stakeholder, to do the work. They were -- Premise  
14 registration was mandatory. Renewal of your premise  
15 registration was going to be every year.

16 The private organization couldn't keep up  
17 with the paperwork of doing it every year, so they  
18 went to every three years. They're still having  
19 problems.

20 Now they come out and said that if you  
21 didn't renew, from the Department of Ag in Wisconsin,  
22 if you didn't renew your premise when it was due, you  
23 were subject to a fine up to \$5,000 and you would not  
24 be able to have any livestock that is covered under  
25 the NAIS program on your property.

1 MR. WATERS: Three minutes.

2 MR. MARK ELLIS: What they want to  
3 refer to it as your premises.

4 I see some major problems with this, and  
5 reverting back to the going up to the Canadian border  
6 on the 13th with L. D. Green and myself, we did a  
7 Freedom of Information FOIA here in Washington State  
8 after the border was open. And after 7,000 pages that  
9 we had gone through, there was over 2,000 mistakes of  
10 imported cattle from Canada just to Washington State.

11 MR. WATERS: Final thought.

12 MR. MARK ELLIS: I don't feel that the  
13 government can authorize and carry out the functions  
14 of what they want to try to do with the NAIS program  
15 efficiently and economically.

16 The statement to the premises, the premise,  
17 the definition is, you are tenant of the land. You  
18 are no longer a landowner. Property is covered by the  
19 United States and the State's Constitution. You have  
20 rights to your property.

21 MR. JACK FIELD: Thank you. For the  
22 record, I am Jack Field, Executive Vice-President of  
23 the Washington Cattleman's Association, and I would  
24 like to thank the USDA for coming to Pasco today.

25 The Washington Cattleman's Association

1 would like to see the USDA maintain a voluntary  
2 National Animal Identification System.

3 We'd also like to just give a few points of  
4 information.

5 In Washington state we're a brand state.  
6 Which requires through state -- existing state  
7 statute, that at every change of ownership or any time  
8 animals are leaving our state, whether on a sale,  
9 pasture permit, you have to have a brand inspection.

10 The Washington Cattleman's Association  
11 strongly recommends that the USDA incorporate group  
12 lot brand identification into the National Animal  
13 Identification System.

14 In Washington state, as well as several  
15 other Western States, this is our effective system,  
16 this is how we identify and trade and track cattle  
17 through commerce every day.

18 The Washington Cattleman's Association also  
19 strongly recommends that the USDA allow individual  
20 states to develop, maintain and operate disease  
21 databases.

22 In Washington state we've been able to do  
23 that. Our Department of Agriculture is actively  
24 working on developing a system right now.

25 In 2006 our livestock industries worked

1 collectively to protect information that is submitted  
2 to the state for participation into a state animal  
3 identification system.

4 We would strongly recommend that the USDA  
5 and Congress act to protect any and all information  
6 that producers would put into a disease system  
7 database, if they do intend on moving forward with the  
8 system.

9 Producer privacy and confidentiality is  
10 critical. It must be protected at all expense. And  
11 that's something that we can do in the states. Our  
12 State Department of Agriculture, our state  
13 veterinarian, works very closely with industry, has a  
14 very good ear to the ground.

15 We would ask that the USDA take the  
16 opportunity, slow down and look at what the existing  
17 states are currently doing. We've got a great model  
18 of both state and federal partnerships through the  
19 brucellosis program. That's a federal program. Not  
20 all states continue to operate with a brucellosis  
21 system.

22 But it's a great example of federal and  
23 state partnership, where we're vaccinating and  
24 continuing top rate on a surveillance system on that  
25 program, which works very well.

1           If the USDA would take a look at existing  
2 system, whether it's a system like brucellosis for  
3 cattle, Scrapy for sheep, we have good existing  
4 systems that we need to take a look at what we already  
5 have, instead of creating another level or tier.

6           So, again, recommend voluntary system that  
7 must incorporate group lot brand identification and  
8 allow the states to operate disease databases and  
9 continue to work at the local level with producers.

10           MR. DAVE DASHIELL: I'm Dave Dashiell,  
11 a cattle and sheep producer from Washington.

12           The NAIS program, it isn't needed, and it's  
13 not wanted, with only 8 or 9 percent premise  
14 registrations in this state. It will be too  
15 expensive, just another layer of bureaucracy.

16           And everybody knows that bureaucracies  
17 never go away, they just manage to grow. It will take  
18 too many employees to run this deal, and there's  
19 already, as Jack said, as Wade said, as a lot of other  
20 people said, there's already programs in place to take  
21 care of all the -- everything that you want NAIS to  
22 take over. You know, brands, brucellosis, health  
23 paper, and then Scrapy program in the sheep industry.

24           I've been on a conference call or two. I  
25 didn't have anything to say, but I just listened. Any

1 of the questions that come up, you've got two or three  
2 or four different answers to the same question.  
3 Nobody seemed to know, or had a consensus on what the  
4 answer was to any of these questions. And they tend  
5 to want to make up the rules as they go along.

6 On our own deal, ours is a strictly leased  
7 land. The only land we own is where the house sits.

8 You go talking to 25, 30 different farmers,  
9 and talk about premise registration, premise numbers.  
10 They're going to say, we don't need you anymore.

11 So, you know, it's not just the small  
12 producers that might get put out of business on this  
13 deal. I don't know what a large producer, what the  
14 definition is, but, you know, we're already checking  
15 our options on what we're going to do if this deal  
16 goes through.

17 And I don't know what the economic impact  
18 of 300 cows and a thousand head of ewes is right off  
19 the top of my head, but I know it pretty well gets  
20 spent.

21 So, you know, there's that much money  
22 that's not going to be going out through the community  
23 and through the state and everything else.

24 So, in closing, there's programs in place  
25 already to take care of what we've got going on with

1 this deal now.

2 So, anyway, I guess that's about all I've  
3 got to say. Thanks for your time.

4 MR. WATERS: Three more. 340, 270,  
5 and 410. 340, 270, and 410. 340, 207, 410. We'll do  
6 one more. 330. We'll do one more. 409. Oh. Okay.  
7 Sorry. Gotcha.

8 MR. JIM WENTLAND: Good morning. I'm  
9 Jim Wentland from Spokane County.

10 I am a 4-H leader up there. And my  
11 perspective on this is the educational point. Raise a  
12 few beef cattle and goats with my grandchildren. And  
13 we use different pastures all throughout the year to  
14 raise our animals.

15 As 4-H members and FAA members do not  
16 always have a place to keep their animals, but they're  
17 positive kids, wanting to do something positive, and  
18 we cannot, as a society, condemn that. We know which  
19 way most of these kids are going today anyway.

20 A lot of the people just mentioned you have  
21 to go talk to, they're not going to be in favor of  
22 this premise I.D. thing, it's their property, and they  
23 want to keep their property. And they don't want the  
24 government control by coming in with the premise I.D.  
25 stuff.

1           A lot of them don't even understand it and  
2 they haven't paid attention to what's going on.

3           Right now it costs about \$80,000-plus to  
4 keep a kid in juvenile detention for a year. For a  
5 couple hundred bucks, we can have kids in 4-H and FFA  
6 and have them do a positive project.

7           I would like to see things stay as they  
8 are, and let us raise our kids in a positive manner.

9           MR. BERT SMITH: Now, before you start  
10 that thing, I have to argue with you. I've got a list  
11 of names here I represent. And then you start. Is  
12 that a deal?

13           MR. WATERS: That's a deal.

14           MR. BERT SMITH: All right. He is hard  
15 to deal with. This guy is beyond reproach. I offered  
16 him money, I offered him whisky, a big horned sheep  
17 hunting trip at the ranch. Hell, he's above reproach.

18           But he finally made a little deal there.  
19 I'm passing out them 30-year guarantees now. I got  
20 to the point where I can pass them out freely.

21           My name is Bert Smith from Ruby Valley,  
22 Nevada. That's just about 800 and some miles straight  
23 south, and we're a cow/calf operator. Big meadow and  
24 mountain and desert ranch. One of the substantial  
25 ranches in Nevada.

1 Well, I represent Utah Cattlemen, Nevada  
2 Cattlemen, Our Calf, Freedom 21, Sovereignty  
3 International, National Federal Land Congress and the  
4 Utah State law and 20 other states that say no  
5 mandatory NAIS.

6 That's good news, isn't it? We like to  
7 say, how are you going to get past that?

8 Now you can start the ticker.

9 All right. He's a good old boy. He let me  
10 get away with that.

11 NAIS premise. Boy, this is the last of  
12 your freedom, boys. Freedom restricted is freedom  
13 lost. Restricted freedom wields tyranny.

14 Now, I've heard some really good points  
15 here, of all the things that's wrong with this thing.  
16 And I'm going to talk about freedom, because that's  
17 what you're going to lose.

18 If anybody told you that they're going to  
19 come in and change your whole form of government, give  
20 you fascism, let you hold the ranch and they're going  
21 to operate it for you like they did the automobile and  
22 the bank and every other business, why, they'd have to  
23 walk across your dead body. And they won't mind, too.

24 I'll tell you, this is a straight point for  
25 all of us. It's over this kind of monkey business.

1 We're not going to give up these ranches for just a  
2 measly, lousy marking cattle tag business.

3 The American cattle industry is the last  
4 part of agriculture that is not controlled completely  
5 by the federal government. The farming industry, a  
6 lot of it is. Wheat men. Almost everything is  
7 controlled, been for years. You can't even eat your  
8 own product if they pulled the law down on you.

9 Our cattlemen have been the backbone of  
10 freedom, liberty, custom and culture in this country.  
11 They've stood strong, and they haven't taken no  
12 subsidies, and stood on their own feet.

13 What kind of a car would we be if we stood  
14 by and let a different kind of government throw --

15 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

16 MR. BERT SMITH: Oh, boy. That old  
17 boy, nothing will buy him off.

18 Well, anyway, I'll wind it down on the  
19 premise. You have heard about that. That is a lease,  
20 you leased your ranch to the government, and you can't  
21 get off, and there is a way to get off, and we've got  
22 that down pat, you can get off, if you want to get  
23 off. 115,000 men in Idaho has been signed up without  
24 their permission. And I'll take a half a minute.

25 MR. WATERS: Final thought.

1 MR. BERT SMITH: I'm up?

2 MR. WATERS: Final thought.

3 MR. BERT SMITH: Okay. But anyway, the  
4 cost analysis. I've got to get that one in. The  
5 cost analysis that they've put out is absolutely  
6 wrong. We have proof from Utah University. It will  
7 cost \$60 a head. That's \$9 billion it will cost the  
8 producer. I'll leave that with you, if you want to  
9 give up your freedom.

10 MR. BOB BROOKE: I'm Bob Brooke. I'm  
11 with the Back Country Horseman. I don't represent  
12 them specifically today, but I am their  
13 parliamentarian, and following that last thing, I  
14 should make a motion to adjourn. It was pretty well  
15 said.

16 You know, it occurs to me that had another  
17 country come to the United States in the '50s or '60s  
18 with this idea, we'd have nuked them.

19 I don't know much about the cattle  
20 business, except I like to eat what they produce. But  
21 I do know about recreational horsemanship. And I do  
22 know that any time you have a ranch or a farm or an  
23 individual property that owns a horse or a llama or a  
24 mule for recreational purposes, there's no need to  
25 treat that organization or that property as a

1 premises, as part of the food chain.

2 Those of us that are not raising animals  
3 for human consumption should be totally eliminated  
4 from this program. And I challenge USDA to  
5 specifically, publicly and very strongly state that  
6 this program has nothing to do with any animal on any  
7 property that is not part of the food chain.

8 MR. NEIL KAYSER: I'm Neil Kayser, beef  
9 producer. There's been a lot of interesting things  
10 said today, and I'd just like to touch on a few of  
11 them.

12 We need to use a system, if this system --  
13 if this program is going to go, use the systems that  
14 are already in place in the states. Brand, pasture  
15 permits, animal health permits, group lots on first  
16 change of ownership. All these things are already in  
17 place.

18 We do not need to reinvent the wheel to  
19 have an animal identification program. Let the states  
20 keep the information. They have the confidentiality,  
21 neutrality thing.

22 Do not put it in the hands of USDA until  
23 there's a need, an animal health event. Then they can  
24 access that information from each state that the  
25 animal health event occurs in.

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Thank you.

MR. WATERS: I will call a few more numbers. Next is 409, 272, and 304. 409, 272 and 304. We have one. 409, 272, 304.

How about 329, 334. 329 or 334. Okay. Good.

MR. MONTE McPEEK: I'm Monte McPeek from Cheney, Washington.

I'm a cow/calf producer mainly. I belong to Cattle Producers of Washington, and I pay dues to the Washington Cattleman's Association, and I'm a member of Our Calf, and the United States Cattleman's Association.

However, these are just my own feelings.

I'm opposed to mandatory I.D. system. Mostly I think what it is going to do is just create another huge bureaucracy that we really, you know, we don't need and we can't afford. We certainly don't need anymore government in our lives, I don't believe.

And, you know, you say you want us to come up here. Most of us are not really offering much of a solution to this deal.

But I guess the solution I would say is to, instead of spending this money on the way you're going with basically a glorified tagging operation, is to,

1 you know, spend that money securing our borders from  
2 disease coming in from other countries. That would  
3 probably help us, I believe, as much as anything.

4 When you get to thinking about what this is  
5 going to do to commerce, you know, it needs to operate  
6 somewhere near the speed of commerce.

7 Anyway, I was talking to a man which --  
8 that owns a sale yard here in the state, which there  
9 are very few of them left. So, I know their deal's  
10 getting pretty tough to run just as is.

11 And he said in just one word, it would just  
12 be disastrous, he thought, for their deal. He's sure  
13 in his sale barn, that well over 50 percent of the  
14 cattle that show up there will not be I.D.'d prior to  
15 getting there.

16 He says, "We're going to have to put in  
17 more facilities, you know, more crew." They're going  
18 to have to have, you know, a crew to tag, you know.  
19 And then he says, you know, they're going to have to  
20 put that on the sheet when they go to, you know,  
21 settle up, pay their bill, and they're going to have  
22 all the deductions, you know, because the producer's  
23 going to have to pay for the tag and the crew and all  
24 of that.

25 And that's just for the guys that kind of

1 didn't comply somewhere maybe at the ranch or ahead of  
2 time.

3 MR. WATERS: One minute.

4 MR. MONTE McPEEK: Then you have the  
5 group that says, okay, they did do everything at home.  
6 They're sitting out in that line, and then they've got  
7 to wait for all these other, you know. So, it's just  
8 going to be -- So, anyway, he said everybody's going  
9 to be pissed off at him, you know, because that's  
10 where the check comes from.

11 Anyway, people are what control disease,  
12 the people, the producer, the veterinarians, the  
13 people that are involved in the industry have to  
14 control -- or have to identify disease, and they have  
15 to control it.

16 You know, a bunch of numbers in a computer  
17 and a lot of tags, you know, all they get to sell  
18 isn't going to help what they're intending this to  
19 help.

20 MR. ART SWANNACH: Hello. My name is  
21 Art Swannach. I'm Region 8 Director of the American  
22 Sheep Industry Association, past president of  
23 Washington State Sheep Producers.

24 Run about a thousand head of sheep up by  
25 Lamont, Washington.

1           These are my comments more directed towards  
2 this region, because you have already heard from our  
3 national President.

4           The region's largely made up of small  
5 producers. They are people that have five, 10, 50  
6 head of sheep on their operation.

7           The high costs that I see in this system  
8 are that a 15 digit 840 number system has to be  
9 electronic, because I have a sister-in-law that's  
10 dyslexic, and if you ever tried to keep track of just  
11 a few numbers, you will know what I mean.

12           If you go electronic, USDA's cost estimates  
13 are way out of the ballpark because their estimate is  
14 27 cents a tag. Electronic tag is going to be about  
15 three bucks an animal. Multiply your tagging costs by  
16 10.

17           If you start looking at export, we were  
18 sending about 1400 head of lambs to Canada each year.  
19 Canada does not accept group lot in sheep. We have to  
20 individually tag all of the animals.

21           And, so, individual tagging is what's going  
22 to occur, no matter what. So, there's no cost  
23 reduction to group lot that I see in the sheep  
24 industry.

25           The pools, such as the shields run for the

1 sheep producers, you're going to have lots of small  
2 producers coming to a pool. They're going to be  
3 bringing small groups of animals. You're going to  
4 have an assembled load. All the animals are going to  
5 be individually tagged. You're going to be stuck with  
6 high costs.

7 You're also going to be stuck with  
8 producers in our western region that just plain and  
9 simple want to get out because it costs too much for  
10 them to do.

11 We currently have a national Scrapy  
12 program. It's mandatory. It's simple. It's a plain  
13 tag with a state I.D. number on it. It gets probably  
14 80 to 90 percent of what you want out of a National  
15 Animal I.D. System. It gets traced back to where the  
16 animal was born.

17 The last 10 percent of this system is  
18 what's going to cost 90 percent of the money. So, if  
19 we can go to keep it simple stupid, which is put a tag  
20 in them that tells you where they came from first, if  
21 we have an outbreak, then you spend the money to find  
22 it.

23 But I don't think that this intensively  
24 computerized system will work. I've loaded sheep in  
25 the weather that Willard was talking about, from minus

1 10 in snow storms, to 105 in the summer. Electronics  
2 hate that stuff, let alone the fact that some of the  
3 tags just don't work at the beginning.

4 MR. WATERS: 30 seconds.

5 MR. ART SWANNACH: Thank you. I have  
6 4-H group members. Their parents aren't going to be  
7 interested in getting readers or other complicated  
8 devices.

9 A lot of our producers are small, they're  
10 suburban, they're the link between the city and  
11 agriculture in the rural country. They're the link  
12 between the small person that's, you know, we've got a  
13 lot of sheep but we're only a couple people. There's  
14 a link between the people in the city so they have  
15 some idea of what ag is really about.

16 I think this system, improperly done, could  
17 sever that link.

18 Thank you.

19 MS. TONI MEACHAM: I am Toni Meacham,  
20 and I am the Executive Director of the Washington Ag  
21 Legal Foundation. I'm also a cow/calf producer. And  
22 I also raise horses.

23 First, from a legal standpoint, because I'm  
24 also an attorney, I'd like you to really evaluate the  
25 impact that making this a mandatory system will have

1 on land values. I think you are going to see a huge  
2 impact. Even if this is kept voluntary, I think it  
3 will be a very big impact on property price -- private  
4 property rights and land values.

5 I think that's something that hasn't been  
6 very much talked about, but I think in the long run  
7 you'll see a big impact.

8 I also would like to say this: I'd like  
9 everybody to look around the room. How many people in  
10 this room are under the age of 30? Not many. And  
11 you're asking the cow/calf producer for another input.

12 You've already had so many inputs. You  
13 have gas, you have the price of the ground, you have  
14 the price of getting a good bull.

15 Now you are asking an individual under the  
16 age of 30 who has student loans from getting an  
17 education, that has to buy their parents' property  
18 because their parents can't retire otherwise, you are  
19 asking them to have another input. They cannot  
20 afford.

21 People of my age cannot afford to be a  
22 cow/calf producer. Especially if you make this system  
23 mandatory, especially if you put another input into  
24 the inputs that we already have today.

25 There are not many people that are coming

1 up and saying, I'm man or I'm woman enough to be a  
2 cow/calf producer, especially with the hard winters  
3 and the hot summers, and now you are asking them to do  
4 one more thing. And we simply can't afford it.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. CARL LAUTENSCHLAGER: My name is  
7 Carl Lautenschlager. I am a cow/calf producer from  
8 Whitman County.

9 I really had no intention of speaking  
10 today. But the more I hear, the scarier it sounds,  
11 and the madder I get. And I don't think that the  
12 actual intent of this NAIS is what we're being told.

13 And it reminds me of when I was a little  
14 kid, my mom used to tell me stories about stuff like  
15 this happening, and I didn't really believe it. But  
16 she talked about the -- in this case -- She was born  
17 in 1936 in a place called Germany, and it was being  
18 led by a person named Hitler.

19 And soldiers would come around and count  
20 the chickens and the eggs, and if you had more than  
21 your quota, you had to give them up.

22 And I'm just glad she made it out of that  
23 country and made it here, or else I wouldn't be here  
24 today. And you all really need to think about what  
25 you're trying to do here. That's all I've got to say.

1 MR. WATERS: Three more, 344, 341, and  
2 249. And how about 337? 290.

3 MR. ALEX MATTILA: Well, good morning,  
4 ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here with  
5 you today. I certainly consider farmers and ranchers  
6 to be the salt of the earth.

7 NAIS is not about disease control or the  
8 protection of export markets. Disease control and  
9 protection of export markets is a smoke screen. It's  
10 a false premise. It is a flat-out lie.

11 USDA officials, you need to start telling  
12 the American people the truth.

13 The intelligent, responsible livestock  
14 industry is able to see right through the lies of the  
15 NAIS smoke screen.

16 NAIS is an assault on the livestock  
17 industry that eliminates freedom and creates more  
18 taxes and unnecessary regulation.

19 NAIS is a government-created solution to a  
20 problem that does not exist. There's no discussion  
21 when it comes to whether we will compromise our  
22 freedoms or not.

23 Our freedoms were bought by the blood shed  
24 and death of our forefathers, and as Americans we  
25 don't have the option or authority to compromise that

1 freedom. The only choice we have is the obligation to  
2 defend that freedom.

3 Ronald Reagan said, "Government is not the  
4 solution, it is the problem." And that's what brings  
5 us here today. What he was talking about is what  
6 we're facing today.

7 The biggest threat the livestock industry  
8 faces today is from none other than USDA. USDA  
9 continues to allow diseased cattle to be imported into  
10 the U.S. from Canada. The USDA continues to promote  
11 the importation of FMD at risk cattle into the US from  
12 Argentina. And USDA continues to push on the American  
13 livestock producer an NAIS program against their will  
14 that will only further tax, regulate and eliminate our  
15 industry through bureaucratic suffocation.

16 USDA is supposed to serve the livestock  
17 industry, not oppress the livestock industry.

18 MR. WATERS: One minute.

19 MR. ALEX MATTILA: USDA is creating  
20 confrontation between itself and the people it is  
21 supposed to serve. And it is time for the USDA to  
22 back off because we, the American people, will not  
23 tolerate this assault on our freedoms nor will we  
24 compromise or sell the sacrifice our forefathers gave  
25 so we can stand here today and call ourselves

1 Americans.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. WATERS: What was your name?

4 MR. ALEX MATTILA: Alex Mattila.

5 MR. MICHAEL COE: Okay. My name is  
6 Michael Coe. I work for a company called Global  
7 Animal Management.

8 And as Bert and Kathy both know, I guess  
9 maybe we probably may be considered the enemy in this  
10 thing, because we sell tags. We help provide several  
11 states with the solution to provide premises  
12 registrations within the states, under state control.

13 And also we are one of the approved animal  
14 tracking databases for the independent portion of it.

15 And I guess the point I want to bring out  
16 is that at least USDA, I am going to give them a  
17 little bit of a bump here, because they have gotten  
18 pretty beat up pretty good, at least they're here  
19 listening to your concerns, and these sessions are  
20 trying to come up with a solution.

21 And I think if you've been watching, if  
22 you're focused on USDA, you may be looking at the  
23 wrong place, because our Congressmen are basically  
24 delivering a message that this is going to be a  
25 mandatory program.

1                   That's not USDA's decision necessarily.  
2                   That's being handed down from our Congressmen. So,  
3                   there's another route that you need to keep in mind as  
4                   you look at these things.

5                   I have a whole bunch of credentials I could  
6                   put behind my name, but the most important one is that  
7                   I was raised on a dairy farm in northeast Kansas, and  
8                   my dad and brother still milk a hundred cows, and have  
9                   implemented the program fully, and it hasn't put them  
10                  out of business at this point in time.

11                  So, I think low milk prices will do that,  
12                  not a national animal I.D. program.

13                  The point I really came up here to make is  
14                  that we work, as a company, work primarily with two  
15                  groups of people. One is cow/calf producers that are  
16                  trying to put their animals into export markets, to  
17                  bring value and increase the value of their product  
18                  that they're selling them to help them stay in  
19                  business.

20                  The other group that we work with are state  
21                  animal health officials, to implement brucellosis  
22                  programs, TB testing, the kinds of programs that we  
23                  are talking about that are already in place.

24                  And then the other group in the states are  
25                  the state brand departments.

1                   And, so, I guess my message that I wanted  
2                   to deliver to the USDA is state animal health  
3                   officials need to have the authority to maintain these  
4                   programs, because they're the ones that know how their  
5                   states need to run, and we need to allow producers the  
6                   choice of what programs they want to participate in to  
7                   meet the requirements that get handed to us through  
8                   these programs.

9                   And I guess a warning maybe to everybody  
10                  here, if we just fight it, we're going to get handed  
11                  something we may not like. I mean, we're being handed  
12                  something, and it's probably up to us to help form  
13                  what that is that is going to be handed to us.

14                  Thank you.

15                  MS. JEAN AMUNDSEN: Thank you for the  
16                  opportunity to speak. My name is Jean Amundsen of  
17                  Kelso, Washington.

18                  I represent -- I'm also representing the  
19                  Lewis County chapter of the Back Country Horse of  
20                  Washington.

21                  I am a 75-year-old grandmother and I have  
22                  been raising and training horses for about 40 years  
23                  now. High school in the late '40s required reading  
24                  George Orwell's 1984. It sounded like unbelievable  
25                  fiction then.

1 I never could in my wildest dreams have  
2 imagined that 55 years later our freedoms would be in  
3 such jeopardy. Pardon me. That it would be forced on  
4 us by USDA.

5 That's big brother, to trade our freedoms  
6 for a very questionable safety. I for one will not  
7 give up my constitutional property rights so that my  
8 horses can become part of a national herd.

9 I will not subject my horses to possible  
10 health risks with chips so that USDA can keep track of  
11 me.

12 I will not register my personal property so  
13 that it can become a premise subject to warrantless  
14 search and seizure.

15 I predict that you will have wholesale  
16 riots if you try to implement NAIS as it now stands.  
17 Dr. Aaron Thornsberry, veterinarian and President of  
18 Our Calf has presented an eight point alternative  
19 course to prevent the importation of serious cattle  
20 diseases and pests from foreign sources.

21 I would recommend that you implement his  
22 eight point plan and avoid introducing disease to this  
23 country.

24 President Bush was able to back out of the  
25 Kyoto Treaty. I see no reason that we cannot back out

1 of this onerous W-20 treaty and its old i.e.  
2 regulations.

3 It is a very bad deal that the USDA has  
4 made in our names.

5 In this country where millions have been  
6 spent to eradicate infectious diseases, are we now  
7 going to be required to open our borders to animal and  
8 meat trade countries who have not eradicated those  
9 contagious diseases?

10 I'm sure it's easy to be swayed by large  
11 corporate interests, meat packers, import/exporters,  
12 but we ask you to consider the interests of Main  
13 Street farmers.

14 One very important point to consider is, if  
15 you lose your small farms across America, and an  
16 epidemic strikes the big mass producers, who will you  
17 have to fall back on?

18 NAIS will virtually wipe out small farmers  
19 with its cost and regulations, while making criminals  
20 of noncompliant citizenry.

21 NAIS is a complicated, expensive and  
22 intrusive and burdensome system that is the solution  
23 to a problem that does not exist in our privately  
24 owned and pasture-raised animals, animals being raised  
25 as God and nature intended.

1                   My horses, for example, are individually  
2 loved and cared for, receiving their shots and regular  
3 veterinary care.

4                   There is not and has been no health problem  
5 in this country that cannot be addressed by existing  
6 programs.

7                   Are you going to listen to conscientious  
8 small farmers and hobbyists, or to the feedlots,  
9 packing houses, import/exporters to raise their  
10 animals in crowded, unsanitary conditions in  
11 stockyards and have created past problems by using  
12 feed contaminated by body parts.

13                   Are you going to permit a system that  
14 allows importation of questionable stock that is not  
15 properly monitored or inspected?

16                   These are the questions of the day.

17                   Thank you for hearing me.

18                   MR. CRAIG GRUB: I am Craig Grub. I  
19 represent Spokane County cattlemen.

20                   I beg to differ with the gentleman that  
21 preceded me. We need to beat up on the USDA a little  
22 bit.

23                   I think our politicians wouldn't be so  
24 eager to jump on this deal if they knew the true cost  
25 and the cost the USDA has given us aren't even close.

1                   If you look at what the USDA did with Cool,  
2    which is a law, they tried to subvert that for the  
3    past eight years, I believe. It is still not being  
4    implemented properly. And that's why we need to talk  
5    to the USDA a little bit in probably tougher terms.  
6    If they were interested in disease control, they would  
7    be controlling our borders, with the import of live  
8    animals as well as boxed feed.

9                   Our brand records and brucellosis tags are  
10   enough to identify sources of animals here in  
11   Washington state. And no country in the world has a  
12   workable animal I.D. system.

13                  And if you look at Australia, talk to some  
14   of the ranchers down there, find out true cost, the  
15   gentleman that said the U.S. -- or the U.S. cost would  
16   be around 60 bucks, I didn't believe it. Because a  
17   number of years ago, Australia had, they figured that  
18   \$37 per animal per year, and that was U.S. dollars,  
19   not Australian dollars, and that was a few years ago.

20                  The word premise and the tags. The U.S.  
21   used to brand their horses and mules when they used to  
22   -- well, they still have a small horse herd, I think  
23   it's in Kentucky on one of the historical forts. They  
24   always branded them with U.S. brand, that 840 tag, the  
25   first three digits indicates the U.S.

1                   Basically that's a brand, because that's  
2                   the only recognized animal identification that the  
3                   U.S. Government intends to use. So, basically they'll  
4                   own the cattle, or whatever animal.

5                   Your premise. I challenge everyone to go  
6                   home and look in the dictionary and see what the word  
7                   premise means. You'll find out.

8                   Thank you.

9                   MR. BOB SCHOESSLER: I am Bob  
10                  Schoessler. I am a pure bred cattle breeder from  
11                  Ritzville.

12                  I wasn't planning on speaking but someone  
13                  made -- asked me if I would. And I noticed that just  
14                  about everyone, Toni and Carl I think showed up here  
15                  with a notebook, so I brought mine, too. But I don't  
16                  have anything written on mine.

17                  However, I think these people today have  
18                  pretty well hit on a lot of topics that we're all  
19                  concerned about. And the bottom line is that this  
20                  program will never work this way.

21                  I only have two points to talk about. When  
22                  I was younger, I always thought the USDA was for  
23                  American agriculture. But the older I got, the more I  
24                  found out they weren't.

25                  Number two. Carl sort of stole my punch

1 line when he was talking about Hitler and his mother  
2 being raised in Germany. Because I always thought, I  
3 wonder what Hitler told the people before they were  
4 headed for the gas chamber.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. WATERS: Last three. 308, 342,  
7 337. 308, 342, 337.

8 MS. JULIE DASHIELL: Hi. My name is  
9 Julie Dashiell, and my husband spoke a little earlier.

10 And I'm going to talk a little bit more  
11 about the sheep industry and the sheep part of it.  
12 I'm on the Board of Directors for the Washington State  
13 Sheep Producers.

14 Right now our sheep are lambing at Benge.  
15 And I'm going to tell you how many times we move a  
16 year. And this would be generating approximately 1800  
17 to 2000 numbers to keep track of.

18 In three weeks from now we'll be moving to  
19 our summer range, which is up at Hunters. And there  
20 we will work our lambs and we will get a summer count.  
21 From there the -- And right now I should say that the  
22 coyotes and the ravens are working on our lambs, and  
23 they are quite fat.

24 We will lose approximately a hundred lambs  
25 this summer to bears, cougars, bobcats, coyotes, and

1 of course now wolves.

2 When we tag our lambs, if we do, we don't  
3 tag them right now, we will lose a hundred of those.  
4 And I don't know how this I.D. system is going to  
5 change that.

6 If there is one tag that I could tag my  
7 lambs with and they wouldn't get ate, I would  
8 certainly do that.

9 You know, our great state of Washington has  
10 taken away our ability to track, snare, treat and  
11 poison these animals that are killing our lambs.

12 The Wildlife Services has no funding. I  
13 called them the other day, after nine coyotes I saw  
14 out eating our lambs.

15 In September they will go to bluegrass in  
16 the Odessa, Lind and Eltopia areas, and they will be  
17 in those fields until about -- well, almost all  
18 winter, here and there. But sometimes we will move  
19 them every three days, sometimes every 10 days.

20 I can imagine the paperwork of trying to  
21 keep track of all those moves. And whoever in Olympia  
22 will be calling, I will be calling and telling them  
23 all of these numbers, and the ones that are missing.

24 In December the sheep go to the Eltopia  
25 area and they will be moved approximately every 10

1 days. Then again in March they will be back at Benge.

2 So, I just can't see how these numbers are  
3 going to keep track of my lambs or help in any way.

4 The pen number, premise I.D. number,  
5 whatever it is. Two years ago we purchased a piece of  
6 property and built a house, a home on it, because  
7 before that all of our property was leased. We didn't  
8 own one piece of property in our name. And we asked  
9 some of these guys about our pen, and they said, well,  
10 we would be exempt.

11 And I thought, well, that's great. But I  
12 didn't think that was going to be for sure.

13 Anyway, our sheep have not set foot on that  
14 70 acres in the two years we've owned it, because they  
15 are out doing grazing on other places. And I feel if  
16 we had put them in there, then we would be called a  
17 feedlot, and then we would have other issues.

18 MR. WATERS: Your time is up.

19 MS. JULIE DASHIELL: Thank you for your  
20 time.

21 MR. ROGER AMUNDSEN: My name is Roger  
22 Amundsen.

23 Before I get started, we've had one  
24 dairyman that was for this, we had one tag seller that  
25 was for this, and we had one politician who was on the

1 fence. We've had 23 no's, and here's another no.  
2 24. In case the statistics get mixed up in the  
3 translation.

4 Okay. I live in Kelso, Washington, with my  
5 wife and three horses that we trail ride. I belong to  
6 several riding clubs. One being the Back Country  
7 Horseman of Washington, Lewis County chapter.

8 My wife and I have been active in logging  
9 against NAIS because it is intrusive in personal  
10 privacy and redundant and regressive in its purpose.

11 The imputation of NAIS is from a World  
12 Trade Organization treaty and an organization of  
13 international episodic regulation setting that  
14 obligates first world countries through a system of  
15 individual animal identification.

16 The United States will soon be forced to  
17 accept animal and meat product trade with countries  
18 that have not eradicated contagious diseases as has  
19 the U.S.

20 The USDA will now rely on animal  
21 identification to close the barn door after the  
22 infected animals and tainted meat products have been  
23 allowed to enter our borders.

24 What should happen is for USDA to continue  
25 to inspect, quarantine and reject unsavory, diseased

1 animals and meat products. We should also aid these  
2 three -- these third world countries to help them  
3 eradicate the diseases we have taken the time and  
4 treasure to eliminate within our borders. An ebbing  
5 tide lowers all boats.

6 The Bush Administration scuttled the Kioto  
7 Treaty because they thought it was harmful to  
8 business, but it would have been beneficial to our  
9 country and the world's environmental situations.  
10 NAIS will be beneficial only to big agri-businesses  
11 because they won't be hindered by the cost of  
12 individual animal tagging, as will small operations  
13 and hobbyists.

14 NAIS will also be detrimental to the health  
15 well-being of our animals because it will again expose  
16 them to contagious diseases we have eradicated. This  
17 is a big step backward in the name of corporate profit  
18 and greed.

19 I would hope the Obama administration, who  
20 is working to control financial health and energy  
21 geronauts, to become respectful citizens of society,  
22 would heed the same forewarning we have heard and head  
23 off similar greed and self-serving actions in the  
24 animal and meat industry.

25 We have experienced Chinese leaded toys and

1 Chinese poisoned dog food.

2 And with NAIS, we will again experience the  
3 same in animal meat product industry.

4 So, say no to NAIS and avoid future  
5 foreseeable cost to society and taxpayers because  
6 greedy actions taken to shortcut and short circuit our  
7 present effective practices of contagious disease  
8 control.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. DICK COON: Good morning. My name  
11 is Dick Coon, and I am currently President of the WCA.  
12 And I appreciate the opportunity to talk this morning.

13 Our Executive Vice-President, Jack Field,  
14 did a great job of articulating the WCA position,  
15 advocating a voluntary NAIS system.

16 And I would like to add a couple of  
17 personal notes, if I could. I became convinced a  
18 number of years ago that the threat of a disease  
19 outbreak in this country was significant, and with  
20 400,000 head of cattle being transported at any one  
21 time, and the speed of commerce that we move cattle  
22 around this country, that the danger was pretty  
23 significant.

24 I also started putting the I.D. tags in my  
25 own herd as a means to do inventory control. It makes

1 it very easy to catch weights, and track individual  
2 animals, also the opportunity to make 25, currently  
3 \$25 a head on these cattle as they are going to  
4 export.

5 I also understand the dilemma that  
6 everybody's facing when you have a program that asks  
7 everybody to register a premise, everybody to have  
8 their address essentially in a database.

9 We've seen in the Cool legislation  
10 something that was well intended but may have the  
11 unintended consequence of alienating our two largest  
12 beef export partners, how things can sometimes go  
13 sideways past what their original intention was.

14 And I don't have any illusion about the  
15 cost of this system. I know personally it costs about  
16 three bucks a head to put a tag in, and essentially  
17 that's all really a producer needs to do.

18 However, if you want to add more, you're  
19 going to have more cost to it, to the computer or  
20 readers, any of those other things, to make the system  
21 work properly.

22 I would not under any circumstances  
23 advocate pushing that on anybody that didn't want to  
24 deal with it.

25 I also feel that a voluntary system, while

1 it may not be perfect, when you add that to our  
2 existing record keeping, our brands, our other means  
3 of tracking these cattle, that we've got a pretty darn  
4 good system.

5 Our state veterinarians do a tremendous job  
6 of knowing what's going on in their states, and the  
7 job that the USDA does, trying to protect the borders,  
8 I think is pretty darn good. Nothing's going to be  
9 perfect. But I appreciate the fact that that's what  
10 they're working for.

11 I don't view the insidious nature that I  
12 hear coming out about this program. To me a premise  
13 I.D. is an address. I don't know how many databases  
14 we're all in, but believe me, it's dozens, and it's  
15 just an address, there's no property rights attachment  
16 to it that I can find out. So, I don't view that with  
17 any kind of hesitation.

18 I don't think that the mandatory I.D. would  
19 get participation.

20 And as you've heard here, it is just one of  
21 those things, it is a denial of human nature. If  
22 people have that strong of reaction to it, I think  
23 we're going to end up doing more damage to ourselves  
24 making it mandatory than what the potential benefits  
25 would be in a possible animal disease outbreak.

1                   So, I would advocate keeping the system  
2 voluntary, do everything you can to protect the  
3 borders, work with our state veterinarians, let them  
4 do their job in the local area, and if something  
5 happens, that will be our first line of defense.

6                   Thank you very much.

7                   MR. WATERS:     We have one more.   250.

8                   And if anybody who has not spoken who wants  
9 to now, if you would just go outside and get a ticket,  
10 we have more time if you're interested in speaking, if  
11 you have not already spoken.

12                   So, we have one more, 250.   I just got this  
13 ticket.

14                   UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:   I have a 305.  
15 Could that fill that slot?   It hasn't been used.

16                   UNIDENTIFIED MALE:     He's in the  
17 bathroom.

18                   MR. WATERS:     Oh.   Okay.

19                   MS. MARY GILMORE:   My name is Mary  
20 Gilmore.   I am from a little dinky town called George,  
21 Washington.

22                   And I hadn't planned on speaking today,  
23 simply because so many times when we've gone over the  
24 past three years to testify in Washington state in  
25 front of our Department on animal health issues,

1 despite their best efforts, we've come out of there  
2 pretty kicked around and beat up.

3 And that plan that they had was going to be  
4 implemented anyway. It didn't matter what we had to  
5 say.

6 And I'm not pointing fingers or making  
7 accusations. I'm just stating observations.

8 We spent the weekend down in a little town  
9 called Jordan Valley, Oregon. That has got to be one  
10 of God's prettiest places, outside of Alaska. And the  
11 people that were there were there for the Big Loop  
12 Roping, and these were boys and family and men that  
13 came in after spring work to have some fun in town,  
14 and to see friends that they rarely get to see.

15 And, you know, as I've heard so many people  
16 say, that if this thing is too expensive, that the  
17 small producer will quit.

18 Well, this is one small producer that will  
19 fight instead of quit. Because it doesn't matter if  
20 there's two head or 200 head standing in my backyard.  
21 I have the right to feed my family and to feed my  
22 neighbors a good product. Despite what the federal  
23 government wants to tell me to do. If that sounds a  
24 little radical, then I guess that I am.

25 But someone also said that Congress wants

1 to see this happen.

2 Congress cannot make this happen, because  
3 they are constitutionally barred from forcing an  
4 individual into a contract.

5 However, the USDA does not have that bar.  
6 And they can through animal health regulation  
7 supposedly force you.

8 But all you have to do is say no. You  
9 teach your kids to say no to drugs. You teach your  
10 kids hopefully to say no to sex before they are  
11 married. What's wrong with this? We can't say no? I  
12 don't know.

13 On our way to Jordan Valley, I would have a  
14 lot of other things to do and had a lot more fun  
15 weekend, but instead I was studying things that  
16 pertained to this question and this issue. And, you  
17 know, I haven't been to college. But I learned how to  
18 read. Once you learn how to read, the whole world is  
19 open to you.

20 And as I've read, I've read a lot of legal  
21 things. And some of it had to do with irrevocable  
22 contracts. Irrevocable trusts, to be exact.

23 You enter into this, which is what NAIS is,  
24 an irrevocable trust which you enter into voluntary.  
25 The federal government is the overseer. They have

1 full control and can change the contract at any time.  
2 They determine the use and value and what happens to  
3 the assets that it controls.

4 The state's the executor. For the same  
5 sake, we will just call them middle management for  
6 right now.

7 You are the beneficiary. You have no  
8 control over your property or assets. Yet you  
9 maintain all responsibility, liability and maintenance  
10 of the property and assets with no say in the use or  
11 sale of such things. That's a little food for  
12 thought.

13 As for me and my house, we're saying no to  
14 NAIS, and what grows up in my backyard and my pastures  
15 and my gardens isn't anybody else's business except  
16 mine and who I want to sell it to or give it to by  
17 private treaty, and private contract.

18 So, good luck, gentleman.

19 MR. WATERS: 250. No? Any others  
20 gone out to get tickets? Yes.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Could I come up?

22 MR. WATERS: Sure.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I was raised on  
24 a farm, too. And I'm against what they're doing. I  
25 now live in town.

1                   The other day someone doing the census come  
2 around with a little device that they were reading  
3 where my house was. You know, I told her I didn't  
4 want to participate. I said, "Erase it." She backed  
5 out of my driveway and erased it.

6                   My son, the Sunday afterwards, says a  
7 person from that department was over on the porch  
8 doing it, recording it.

9                   You know, that's something that we all  
10 might be facing in this census coming up.

11                   Thank you.

12                   MR. WATERS:     Anybody else?   Yes.

13                   MS. GINGER SCHOESSLER:   I'm Ginger  
14 Schoessler, Ritzville, Washington. A small rancher by  
15 most standards. Around a hundred cow/calf operation.

16                   I have a son who's shortly going to be  
17 turning 23. I'm not going to participate in NAIS.  
18 And what do I do about my son? I guess that will be  
19 his decision when that time comes.

20                   We've had a little issue in my household  
21 regarding Social Security Numbers lately. That being  
22 that on my Social Security card it says "not for I.D.  
23 purposes."

24                   Everywhere you go, whether it's the doctor,  
25 whether it be a State Patrolman, wherever it might be,

1 they're asking for your Social Security Number.

2 I relate that to the premise I.D. number.  
3 What will that be used for? It's just an adjunct. I  
4 have serious doubts regarding that.

5 I know earlier today it was alluded to the  
6 cattle as the last industry that isn't under  
7 regulation.

8 Wheat farmers are under that regulation.  
9 Unfortunately I also fall into that category. And  
10 that's where the Social Security Number just came up.  
11 If you're going to be involved in the federal crop  
12 insurance, it doesn't matter if you're a farm  
13 corporation or what you might be. They want every  
14 individual's Social Security Number. Premise I.D.

15 I lease a huge amount of my pasture ground.  
16 Are they going to give me permission to have a premise  
17 I.D.? I don't think so.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. WATERS: Any one else?

20 MS. ELAINE SMITH: I got in here late.  
21 I didn't have time to get here and hear anyone else's  
22 comments, and I didn't have time to prepare comments.  
23 But, so, there is just a few little comments.

24 I'm Elaine Smith from Prairie City, Oregon.  
25 I'm a rancher. I've been involved in the cattle

1 business and cattle politics with government entities  
2 for many years. We ranched for 47 years. And it  
3 doesn't look like my sons will be able to continue  
4 this.

5 Over 1,000 small family farmers and ranches  
6 go out of business each month due to economic factors  
7 and excess government regulations.

8 And registering my property as a premise  
9 which would be premise in Black's Law Dictionary is  
10 just a method of transference rather than my private  
11 property ownership, I just won't do that. We won't do  
12 that. It's getting pretty scary.

13 And I guess my final question would be to  
14 the USDA people, what part of no animal I.D. do you  
15 not understand?

16 MR. WATERS: Any one else?

17 (Pause in the proceedings).

18 MR. WATERS: Okay. It's about 10 after  
19 11. And here's what I propose that we do. Make a  
20 little adjustment for the rest of the day.

21 If we take lunch now and come back at a  
22 quarter to one, that will give us an hour-and-a-half.

23 We'll have the NAIS presentation right now.  
24 So, if you want to stay for that, you can. If you  
25 don't want to, that's fine, too. And that will be

1 from about now until about 20 of.

2 And that will give everybody at least an  
3 hour to get lunch. And then get back here about a  
4 quarter to one. And we can move things along, get you  
5 out of here a little earlier. So, is that all right?

6 Okay. So, we're going to set it up in  
7 here. And that will take just a few minutes. So, if  
8 you want to just take a quick break, or if you want to  
9 go to lunch, whichever way you want to do it. We'll  
10 be setting up the presentation.

11

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(11:15 a.m.)

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STATE OF WASHINGTON )  
 ) ss.  
County of Benton )

I, William J. Bridges, do hereby certify that at the time and place heretofore mentioned in the caption of the foregoing matter, I was a Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public for Washington; that at said time and place I reported in stenotype all testimony adduced and proceedings had in the foregoing matter; that thereafter my notes were reduced to typewriting and that the foregoing transcript consisting of 91 typewritten pages is a true and correct transcript of all such testimony adduced and proceedings had and of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand at Kennewick, Washington, on this 26th day of May, 2009.



William J. Bridges  
CSR NO. 2421  
Certified Shorthand Reporter  
Notary Public for Washington  
My commission expires: 11-1-11

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