

USDA-APHIS

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE  
NATIONAL ANIMAL ID PROGRAM LISTENING SESSION

CROOK COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

PRINEVILLE, OREGON

THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2004 - 5:00 P.M.

IN ATTENDANCE:

BILL HAWKS

UNDER SECRETARY, MARKETING & REGULATORY PROGRAMS

DR. VALERIE RAGAN, ASSISTANT DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR

NATALIE ROBERTS, MODERATOR

MS. ROBERTS: I have so far about eight names, and I'll start at the top. Gary Marshall, if you can come up, please. Then I've got Julie Morrison and Dr. Cheryl Blake Tillman.

MR. MARSHALL: Honorable Under Secretary, Dr. Ragan. I have comments more in the form of a question concerning premise ID.

My question is to, the location of the original primary location could be a ranch headquarters. Those animals might stay at that location for six months out of the year, and then they might relocate to a BLM allotment, Forest Service allotments. There might be two different allotments that they go to during that six-month period. One of those allotments could possibly be--you know, have other operators at those allotments. At each one of these premises, are the cattle gonna have to be re-tagged, are they going to have to be re-identified as to those particular premises? And then at some point possibly those cattle might leave those areas and go to a feed lot and at a different premises number. That's one of the questions that I wanted to ask you. Thank you.

MR. HAWKS: Why don't we go through just a little bit of procedure here. What we're gonna do is take all of the comments or the questions, whatever, and then at the end of that period Valerie and I will try to respond to those individual comments and questions.

MS. ROBERTS: Next is Julie Morrison. Please say your name and your organization.

MS. MORRISON: My name is Julie Morrison, Idaho Cattlemen Association. Thanks for the opportunity, Dr. Ragan and Under Secretary. It's great to be able to address you. Secretary Hawks, we sure appreciated you coming to our conference last week. That was great and we really appreciated it.

Just a couple of things from the ICA. We're supportive of a National ID system that is

voluntary and that is developed for animal health purposes. We see that there's benefits of having an effective ID system within those parameters that helps protect and maintain herd health not only at the local level but up to the national level as well.

We see an ID system as providing another level, assurance level, not only for our domestic consumers but also for our foreign consumers, that US beef is the safest in the world. And we also see an ID system as being a way to safeguard the overall stability and also the sustainability of our markets.

We realize the way this ID system is developed there's multiple concerns that need to be addressed. One of the first on our minds is that it's a market-driven system, that it's the least burdensome, in terms of cost and also in terms of production practices, as possible of the industry. Also, that it not hurt the economic viability of any sector of the cattle industry by imposing unreasonable costs or market disruption.

We also are concerned that the confidentiality of the data is assured both inside and outside of the industry to protect producers from abuse of that data. We also feel that the system should incorporate third-party private companies, not only in the animal identification process but also in the data matching process. And we also feel that the system should utilize existing infrastructure, such as brand systems and animal health regulations that we have in these western states as much as possible in order to accomplish that 48-hour traceability goal.

Just a side note. As part of this, the pilot projects that Dr. Ragan suggested, the ICA has been working as part of the Northwest Individual Identification Pilot Project, or NWPP for short, I guess, or not so short, to help coordinate industry's efforts in this region as a way to take advantage of the strength that we have and also to capitalize on these brand laws and try to incorporate that into this ID system.

So far we have the cattle and dairy associations from California, Oregon, Idaho,

Nevada, Utah, and Washington on board. We're working with our state partners in the hopes of helping to define the Animal ID program to be as reasonable, workable, and practical as we possibly can while still meeting your objectives of 48-hour traceability.

We also hope to demonstrate the ability to utilize those existing infrastructures, such as the brand systems, to meet the goals. We intend to address intrastate and international identification issues. Thanks for the opportunity.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you very much. Next we have Dr. Cheryl Blake Tillman.

DR. TILLMAN: I am Dr. Cheryl Blake Tillman, and I thank the Under Secretary and Dr. Ragan for this opportunity. I represent the Alpaca Owner Breeder Association of the United States, commonly known as AOBA, A-O-B-A. We are an alternative livestock that produces a luxury fiber. We're not in the commercial food chain, but agree that we do need to have some kind of ID for tracing of infectious diseases.

Right now, we are using microchips for registration purposes, and right now we are encouraging all owners by July of 2005 to have all of their alpacas microchipped for registration and also for show and any animal that is going to be sold.

I guess our main concern is, it sounds like we will be able to use our current system of microchipping. It is generally a nine-digit number. I just don't know how to put the premise ID number on there. Our thoughts with the industry for premise ID is to contact the registry that has all the animals in the database, that the animal's microchip would go to the owner's code, which is four digits, and then we'd have that owner's code go with the premise ID. I don't know how that would work, but right now we are encouraging all animals to be microchipped, and I think about 50 percent right now are, and the owners are very much in support of the ID system.

So, my main concern is that, are we able to use the existing system of microchipping?

Thank you.

MS. ROBERTS: Next we have J.W. Hart and Pam Hart. You can both have three minutes if you want or just one of you, whichever you want.

MR. HART: I'll speak for my wife and myself. I represent the Crook County Stock Owners Association and appreciate the opportunity to speak before you guys. I guess you know, about 98 percent of the population is dependent upon that 2 percent of the population that's producing food and fiber, and the 98 people behind me are all gaining weight and they're getting harder to pull.

The Crook County Stock Owners, basically we're for country of origin labeling. We're a little bit concerned about the identification process. I guess we get suspicious if something scratches in one place and itches in another spot, you know.

And we already have a brand system that's been in operation for many years out here in the west. I guess we pay about \$30 every two years to the state of Oregon. I guess our feeling is that the cows out here basically have a map of the whole country they've been in. If you look at the ear marks and the brands, you can tell real quick what part of the country, where that cow's been. When he moves from one pasture to the next they put another brand on him. And there's a lot of information already out there. And I guess that's our concern, is just that we don't go around making a whole new process if something is already in existence that's been working for 50, 70, 80 years. Let's not try to make it too complicated.

And the other thing that our vice-president wanted to check on is if whatever they're doing with country of origin beef they're really concerned about BSE, then it would be nice to know what beef is coming in from Canada or Australia or Mexico and bringing in all kind of diseases that are going on. So maybe down the road at least look at how all these other animals can be identified as they come into our US markets.

And that would be the main thing. Let's look at this closely. And I leave you with the Code of the West. The Code of the West is protect the land, defend the defenseless, and never spit or cuss in front of women and children. You can always tell the ones from the city, because they spit and cuss a lot.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you very much. Next we have Mickey Killingsworth, and after that Dan Joyce, and then finally Jerry Breese.

MS. KILLINGSWORTH: I'm glad you're here in Oregon. I wish we had a little more notice, but you know how the government--we always complain that you guys are slow. This time you're fast. This is not a particularly good time of day to ask farmers and ranchers to get in here, but the people that are here made a big effort to get here.

I'm gonna talk about two different aspects. I'm a sheep producer. I've been part of the National Scrapie ID program. I didn't hear that mentioned. And if you guys have about five hours, I'd be glad to share with you all the pitfalls of that program that you're gonna have if you don't go back and fix it.

And then number two is, you have a large community of 4-H and FFA kids and youth organizations. When the National Scrapie ID program came into effect, that was sort of left out of the puzzle. That's my concern about this. We cannot leave any segment out. We need to be talking to the extension agents that have to implement these, the livestock associations that sponsor the sales, all that.

It's been sort of the blind leading the blind for the last few years. We finally have improvised with USDA. It's been really nice to work with and helped us make the programs work, but that's a huge aspect. And I know they're not commercial industry, but all of that meat does go into the commercial industry. Those kids have the same legal responsibilities I do as a

commercial producer when it gets down to it.

Those are my main concerns. And the Scrapie ID program, you know, I replace my ear tags every four months in probably better than a quarter of them. And when I have to bring in my livestock to replace them, I can tell you which ones are missing, but I have to bring everybody in, and I can't tell you which new ones I put in went into the same animal. That's why you have to have a better system, as far as I'm concerned, like a bolus and something like that. We have to have something better. The visual ID tags should be for me as a producer, and something has to be developed.

Those are my main comments. And something that's workable for us to use as 4-H leaders, agents, with the operation out there that they can understand and have access to.

MS. ROBERTS: Thank you. Dan Joyce. No? Jerry Breece.

MR. BREECE: My name is Jerry Breece. I'm a fifth-generation cattle rancher/farmer here in Prineville. Just some thoughts and things from life growing up on a cattle ranch. Probably the first idea, the first concern that comes up is, who's going to be responsible keeping the information, updating the information? How is that going to be done? I've tried cow tags and retaining birth information and we did it about three years, and it was really lost and nobody knew what was going on. And that's just on the home place. I can't imagine what that might look like across the nation.

One of the big concerns as well is, how public will the information be? Is it going to be something that's gonna be flashed out as fast as there's an outbreak someplace, the entire history of where that cow's been and who's owned it? And what impact is that gonna have? How much liability are the owners of the herds along the way gonna have? What's that picture gonna look like when everybody in the world knows that that cow had been at my place and now I can't do anything with the animals that I have.

My thought along that line would be, what is gonna happen to the future of my operation? Who is going to be--what kind of liability is there? Who's going to have the responsibility if I can no longer--if I can't sell anything from my herd because there's been a wrong or a false identification along the way and it's gonna track back to me, and nobody wants to take the chance that it was false.

I think it's a good idea--a PR way to sell owners and operators on using it is there being opportunities to customize your own information on this system, but again, where is that information gonna go? Who's going to keep up with it? How much is it gonna cost to have the equipment necessary to be able to upkeep that?

I thought that being able to regionalize the actual marketing or production of cattle so instead of having the commercial cattle go across the nation for their feed, maybe it would be a better use of money to be able to put feed lots and slide plants in regions so that if something happens, that region maybe is more quickly shut down and it doesn't affect the rest of the nation.

And finally, whatever system there is has to go through feed lots and all that kind of stuff, because so far ear tags and everything else hasn't worked, so, good luck.

(Applause.)

MS. ROBERTS: Did we miss anybody who wants to have three minutes? Stand up if you do, or raise your hand. Okay. I guess not. I'm gonna turn it back to Dr. Ragan and Mr. Hawks and you can say what you need to.

MR. HAWKS: Thank you. The way we've been trying to do this, I like to tell folks, and some of you have heard me say this, I fly at 100,000 feet. When I get to 75,000 feet my staff get nervous. When I get to 50,000 feet they get scared as the devil. But anyway, let me try to hit some of these points as I see them and then Valerie is going to address them.

I think the issue of the premises and the multiple locations, as far as the BLM lands, that's really something that I think will be worked out here. You'll work that out in conjunction with your state veterinarian. That's really a local issue that there obviously will be guidance. Valerie will get into that in much more detail.

With respect to the comments about the system should be market-driven, I certainly agree with that. Confidentiality is one that we'd already addressed. Issues about third parties being involved, there's absolutely no question that third parties will be involved.

The mention of the brand systems out here, the brand laws that you have, obviously those would be, you know, part of it. We don't want to throw these out and create something totally new. I think we're working down that line.

And the comments about country of origin labeling and animal ID, they're really not-- those are not really connected. Even though I have responsibility for AMS and the country of origin law implementation there, this is an animal disease management system. That is really what we're looking for. We're not looking for anything else with this. I had a question from someone that if we had a good animal ID system would it be easier to implement the country of origin labeling, and the answer to that is absolutely yes, but we're not linking those. This is an entirely different approach. It's for animal disease and management and control.

And I'm gonna let Valerie speak to the Scrapie ID system there. But I think in general that's--I think we're all on the same wavelength, and I think it's proof there that we don't have all the answers. We're here to listen to you, to take your comments, take your concerns, and try to look at them. Let's look at these cooperative groups and try to work through some of these gaps, as Valerie said, and try to work with that.

Valerie, you did a much better job of taking notes than I did, so it's your turn to respond.

DR. RAGAN: I've got a couple of things. There were several themes. Secretary Hawks

addressed a couple of them already, so I won't. But a few things I wanted to clarify. It's interesting, every time you take some questions you realize how many things you forgot to say.

Regarding the premises numbering system, and Gary Marshall had some good questions. I think they're ones that have come up a lot. We probably spent a year working on how to do the premises system. And the resolution of that is that the idea behind the premises system, the way the premises number should be allocated is based on the actual physical location of where the animals are. So if you're talking about allotments, that allotment would have a number. It's kind of like the idea of--and the question came up about, what if you buy and sell a place? Do you change the number? Try to think about it as, you buy a house and you sell the house, the house number still stays the same. You've just got a new owner. So it's the same idea with the premises. It's the location. And then if you change owners or whatever, that would be recorded in the information.

The premises number itself is not on the tag. It's connected electronically to the system. So the tag is allocated to you and you put it on your animal, electronically, in the system, you would connect that it was given to you at this location. This is where the animal started from. When it goes to a different location, you don't have to re-tag it. You can say, "It's now on this location. On this date it was moved to this location."

What we want to really do--and you all hit on it a lot here--is to minimize the impact on producers. We definitely don't want to re-tag. For sure we don't want to re-tag. So that ID number, that 840 number, individual animal number, would stay with that animal no matter where it goes. And then as it goes to the different premises it would be either recorded again or scanned at the livestock markets where they can have a reader--as the animal goes to the chute, the animal walks by and it picks up the number and the date that it was there. So it's done very quickly and downloaded automatically into the database.

So you don't even have to write--you know, one of the problems with banks tags, brucellosis tags, was--besides the fact that they fell out, was you couldn't read them after a few years. They'd get dirty and scrunched and whatever and a lot of times it got easier at the market to just stick another tag in, so you'd have three or four tags in the ear and you lose the traceability. So we don't want to do that.

So, it wouldn't be re-tagged, it would be that now you're moved from here to here. The definition of premises is a big question mark too that's come up a lot. Let me see if I can clarify a little bit the concept of how this is gonna be set up. I said it's a certain location, recognizing fully that many people, maybe most people, have their animals on--they own this property and may have six pastures, six locations where those animals are moved around. They very often don't stay in one pasture their entire life and never go anywhere.

So the way that the premises system is designed is, we have some guidelines on how those numbers should be assigned. And those guidelines should be that--or those guidelines, rather, are that the number goes again to the physical location where the animals are. If they move to another pasture that you own and don't commingle with other animals, you don't need a separate number for that pasture. You don't need to write how many times they go from one pasture to another. That wouldn't make sense.

What we would do is have a number of pastures, for example, that the animals would move around in--the key being that they don't come in contact with other animals that are owned by somebody else. They're your own operation. You can have one number, and the system would just record that there are other places that these animals would go as well.

The thought process here is, again, back to what we would do if we had a disease outbreak situation. What we would do is, if those animals are moved around and commingled, moved to different properties that are owned by one person, for disease purposes they're

essentially one herd. They're all commingling with each other, and we would need to still go to all of those premises where those animals are.

On the other hand, if, for example, you had a commercial operation and a purebred operation that are managed completely separately, managed completely differently, and don't mix the animals, you might want two numbers, because that way if you had a disease traced back to one of those premises we wouldn't need to bother the other.

So it depends on--the thought process is, where would we have to go if we had a disease outbreak? That's the design of how this is set up. Recognizing that as we work through this discussion there are thousands of scenarios that are coming up. "Well, I do this with my cattle or my swine or whatever."

And so rather than trying to explicitly define a premises down to the nth degree, recognizing that they're so different--the operations are so different across this country--we're putting the guidelines out here with some flexibility so that if there are some unusual situations and you're not sure if that should be numbered or whatever, that that decision would be made by the state animal health officials in conjunction and discussion with the producers.

So, in other words, the animal health officials would have a better idea where, if this is your particular situation and I, being an animal health authority, had to come in, what would I need to know? How would we best label this so it would work best? So there is some flexibility built into that.

There are standard guidelines based on disease response, essentially, with the flexibility left to try to make it make sense. Yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Say I have 100 cattle and I ID them, and then I take five cows to the sale. One cow lost her tag. Will she fall in with the other five, or will she be eliminated, saying, "She's not an ID'd cow. We don't know her origin." Is she gonna be

marketed down lower on the sale slot if she's not ID'd? Can you answer that?

DR. RAGAN: Part of that question is going back to what the market's gonna drive. We're not gonna--first of all, we're not even thinking it has to have a tag. You can use whatever system the industry decides to use. But I think what we need to do, we've got a commodity group working to answer some of those questions, what would work best in the marketplace. I think everybody recognizes that if a tagging system is used, animals are gonna lose tags. That's a given. So, in my mind, what we would need to do in this case--this is not a final answer. This is strictly me speculating. You need to recognize that. But I think that what we would probably do, if you brought those animals in and you had four out of five tagged, it's obvious one lost one. We would record in the system that this is your animal from this place, put a new tag in it. If the market tagging system is used, identify it was put in at the market at this time and carry on. So I'm assuming that that is what would make sense because we would know that you brought it in, this is your cow. We would have that in the system, this is where it was tagged. That's the best we can do with those type of systems.

Let me address just a few more things here then I think we're pretty much through. The market-driven comment, that is exactly the way we're trying to do this. Let the market decide what the best way for the system to work is.

The comment about the scrapie system, one of the first things we did when we tried to activate this with the different species, we realized we needed to do things differently. I've said this many times before too, a cow is not a pig is not a sheep is not a fish. That's what the species working group is supposed to be doing, is looking at what is currently used in these different species and how can we either dovetail or modify it to this universal architecture of this system. One of the first things I did early on was talk to Dr. Diane Sutton, who heads up the scrapie program, and one of the first things I asked Diane is, "Tell me what you did wrong

so we don't do it again."

So there is a sheep working group and a goat working group, and obviously the focus of their activity is what's being done currently with the scrapie system or as a result of the scrapie system and how that can best be modified or dovetailed into the system. So that group's working on that. But again, we don't want to be reinventing the wheel, we don't want to be re-tagging them. So we're gonna have to grandfather things in. As the systems change, we want to grandfather as much in as we can so we don't have to be re-doing things that are already being done.

As far as the branding, several comments on the brand system. That has been a lively discussion for quite a while. I think that Julie Morrison from the Idaho Cattle Association, your former state veterinarian, Bob Homan, is on our ID steering committee and has been working on this for a while, as has--and your current one is too, as a matter of fact. The whole brand issue has been a hot topic. It's a lively part of the conversation with the cattle groups now. We're not gonna make these decisions on how best to incorporate those. The industry groups will with defining how to best do that, incorporate those systems.

I think it's recognized that those brand systems have been out here for a very long time, and I think that the folks who have knowledge are working on these groups to help us decide what the best way to come to a resolution is that makes sense for that industry.

I want to also make the point that when animals cross the international border and come into this country, they are identified when they come in. We have that record when they cross our border. What we're trying to do is enhance that system. We're working with Canada and Mexico to try to harmonize our systems so that animals going either way retain that tag and recognize the tracing. As I said earlier, we don't want to be re-tagging the animals. So we do have that identification now, but we want to make sure that we can be retaining it both ways.

The comment about don't forget the 4-H and FFA kids, I appreciate that. I think in trying to get every segment of the industry, no matter what you do you always leave somebody else. We've had a lot of discussion on fairs and how to best incorporate those, recognizing that, as I said earlier, it doesn't matter who owns the animal. What does matter is if the animal has come in contact with the other animals and the possibility of disease transmission, and obviously fairs and shows and that type of thing is an ideal of situation for that. So that is being considered as part of this, and I appreciate you bringing that up.

There was a question about who's responsible for updating information, how it would be done, how public will the information be. I think Secretary Hawks addressed the confidentiality of data issue, which is the crux of a lot of the question. As far as who's responsible for updating the information, the intent is to have this system designed so that ultimately data will be captured as the animals go through different segments of the industry.

I agree that a selling point would be to have the opportunity for the farmers to customize and utilize the system, and that's kind of the idea of having the third party involved in this, and actually we have a number of third-party companies that are out there collecting information, production information, and they're working on this project as well to try to help us figure out how to best maximize that as well.

As far as the data and what level it would go to, the production data and that kind of information that you would use on the farm would be retained at your farm level. The production data and all that kind of information is not information that we would be gathering. We just need a key, actually, minimal, amount of information. The movement information, the birth information, and the official work that's been done, such as brucellosis testing or vaccination, et cetera.

MR. HAWKS: Yes, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Recognizing the fact that there are differences in numbers, we do know in Oregon that you can--we can trace a cow of Canadian origin or an animal of Canadian origin fairly rapidly. I just wonder, have you spent any time at USDA working with the people in Canada to find out how their system works?

MR. HAWKS: Yes, ma'am. Not just in Canada. We have had a lot of discussions with a lot of different countries - Australia, Canada, Switzerland. We have actually been engaged with a lot of different countries, looking at it to see how their system works, because obviously we cannot reinvent the wheel. But I'm more concerned about what works for you here in the northwest, or in the southeast. That's my biggest concern, not what Canada does. We can look at what Canada does or New Zealand does or Australia does or Switzerland does just simply to get that information and see how applicable it would be to ours.

But, as I said, I'm really concerned about whatever system we put together working collectively with you, that it does work. I have a phrase that I always use that working together works. We're here to work with you to make sure that whatever we do will be to the benefit of all of us.

There was one question about the alpacas and the microchip, and I think Valerie says we've got a working group working with that. Obviously, there should be a way to make that system work with the premise ID as well. Valerie, did you want to add something?

DR. RAGAN: Yeah. I think that's one of the reasons for the technology neutral. Again, if a system is being used and works well, then certainly we can incorporate that and that is what we intend to do. The microchip, I think I said it--I know I thought it. I don't know if I said it. The number itself is not going to be put on--it can be, but it's not required to be put on the tag and the microchip, et cetera. So the individual animal number doesn't need to be on that tag--the premises number, I mean. There does need to be the individual animal number, obviously,

but the premises number doesn't need to be written on that tag or the microchip.

MR. HAWKS: Yes, sir. We're running ahead of time. We normally wouldn't take additional, but yes, sir.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I have a question on the animal number system. I think Valerie said that 840 was a standard for the United States. Is there any breakdown available of what the intended other numbers would break down?

DR. RAGAN: Yes. The question is, for the numbering system, the 840 means US, but is there any breakdown for the rest of it? The rest of it is a--it doesn't tie the animal anywhere. There was a lot of discussion--again, these are discussions that come around from a large group of people working on this. There was a lot of discussion about whether we should have a state code on there or something else indicating where the animal came from.

A lot of discussion pro and con on that. Some people felt there should be; others felt just that really ease of knowing where the animal came from. There were other concerns that no, we don't want to identify it on there because that's tied back to the original producer, and if there's a problem we don't want it tied back to the original producer if it's not his fault.

And then another concern was that some people felt it's best to have an animal be sold on its merit and not because of the state he comes from. I'm just telling you some of the conversations that occurred around that. So the rest of that would be random.

And the same for the premises numbering system. That's a random number. It doesn't mean anything. And the reason for that is, there was concern with privatization, privacy concerns. But there were some privacy concerns about if the number for the premises says something about the premises where the animal is, that means the public's gonna know something about where that premises is. There was discussion about using lat/longs, specifically saying where the place is. And that evolved to, "Well, you know what, we really

don't want them to look at our number and know where our place is, so let's use a random number." The same thing with the individual animal number.

The other thing is, when you're talking about on a basis across the country, that randomization process helps. But the last digit of that number--don't ask me to explain how this works. I'm not a techno wizard. I am a veterinarian. I don't know all this technical stuff. But the last digit on that number is a check digit, and I'll tell you how that means. Don't ask me how it works. What that means is that when a digit is--it's on the premises system. It's got a technical check digit. If you put the wrong number in, the computer will tell you it's an invalid number, so it helps with the integrity of the system.

So we have a technical--a bunch of really good technical people who've been working on the technical details of the numbering systems and how they've worked through a lot of the glitches with these numbering systems already to get us to this point. That being said, we still need to go through some of these trials try it out. That's why we're starting the trials. We're certainly open to modifying it based on what works.

MR. HAWKS: Yes, sir.

MR. MARSHALL: I just want some clarification on this. Is there a reporting requirement each time they move from one premise to another? If I take--if I'm on my home premises and I take these cattle out to an allotment, 500 head of cows, do I have to report those and to what do I report them to? Is there a central databank that I report this into? And then when I change allotments again, is there another reporting requirement? And then when I bring them home, is there another reporting requirement?

DR. RAGAN: If you're moving them to an allotment where there are other animals, then you should be reporting it. And again, because that's where the disease transmission could potentially occur. As a matter of fact--Idaho probably knows this, but the last brucellosis

outbreak there, the animals had been moved to a grazing location where they were with other animals. We need to track these animals because they've been exposed at that time.

So the bottom-line answer would be if they're moving to a different premises where they would commingle with other animals that you don't own, that should be reported. You would report it to your animal health authorities. The reporting system is designed to go from the producer level, and if third parties are working there and the production information, that would stay there. You would report just basic information to the state animal health authorities, and they would have it in their systems.

99.9 percent of disease tracking is done through the state animal health authorities, not the federal officials coming in. We only come in if there is some federal emergency, although we have worked together for years with state and federal cooperative efforts. So if you report it to the state animal health officials, then the key information that we need would go up to the national level.

So, what you should do in that case--and again, as we continue to work through this we're gonna develop a lot of information for you on how to do it and who to report. One of the things I failed to mention is that \$18.8 million, \$3 million of that will be put into development of information and communication so we can start getting some of the how-to information out to you.

So the guidelines would be pretty much if they're going to another premises where they're gonna be mixing with other animals, then that should be reported, because that's where the potential exposure to disease is occurring.

MR. HAWKS:I think you can see from that discussion where it's all about disease control, and that's really the issue. I'd like to say once again that we really appreciate you being here. Thank you.