



April 2008 Registration Statistics

Registered Premises	59,245
Renewed Premises	38,293
Animals with RFID	138,256

SPECIES COUNT

Cattle	36,973
Deer & Elk	830
Emus & Ostriches	330
Equine	20,191
Fish	2,741
Game Birds	1,859
Goats	5,230
Llamas & Alpacas	1,571
Poultry	14,433
Sheep	4,205
Swine	6,986

Will a Disease Traceability Program work with Country of Origin Labeling?

The pending implementation of mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) by September 30, 2008 has gathered much publicity recently. One question asked by the industry is whether producers identifying their animals as part of a disease traceability system also will be able to simultaneously meet Country of Origin Labeling requirements? Until the final rules regarding mandatory COOL are written and approved, this question cannot be answered.

At the recent National Institute of Animal Agriculture (NAIS) annual meeting, Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer provided insight as to how this question may be answered. At the same meeting, Under Secretary Bruce Knight, who is in charge of both NAIS and COOL implementation, provided more details at a follow-up presentation.

Livestock owners will have multiple options to choose from; one option under consideration is the use of animal identification number (AIN) tags, those purchased for use in the U.S. begin with 840. These tags are assigned to premises and placed in the ears of livestock born at that location, they serve as visible evidence the animal originated from the U.S. When using these tags, livestock owners will not have to provide any paperwork when the animal leaves the

farm. If AIN tags are used, the processor would be able to read the ID and determine based on the first 3 digits the country where the animal originated. Canadian cattle already carry a unique identifier (Canadian tags begin with 124), which makes it possible to trace livestock when they enter the US.

Although other options such as group ID, lot ID, brands and paper affidavits are all under consideration, the benefit of using AIN tags at the farm of origin is three-fold. Not only will they provide the point of origin that will serve for disease programs, and country of origin labeling, they can also be used for on-farm management practices and industry value-added programs such as source and age verification.

Although AIN tags cost more than existing herd management tags, the benefits of less paperwork for the pending COOL implementation and integration with herd management systems outweigh these costs. As the rules regarding COOL are finalized, producers who wish to identify their animals for herd management programs will benefit from using AIN tags as they will serve multiple programs and purposes.





Implementation Project Update

In the past three months significant progress has been made with the implementation of various projects at the volunteer farms and county fairs. As of April 1, 2008 14,000 radio frequency identification (RFID) tags were issued to 24 farms and 3,000 RFID tags were sent to 10 county fairs. Operations interested in integrating the ID devices within their day-to-day herd management practices will receive the software and equipment needed. Six county fairs have received the data collection equipment they will use during the check-in process this summer.



Unique Animal Identification A Critical Component of Genetics Industry

- By Ole Meland

The life blood of any Artificial Insemination (AI) organization is progeny testing, for specific traits or characteristics, of young livestock to identify the genetically superior individuals. The testing allows for wide use of AI service around the world improving and preserving the economically important traits.



The traits of greatest economic interest to producers are not expressed by the bull solely but rather, the milk, fat and protein

are good examples. Therefore, the young bulls must breed with an exclusive group of cows. After raising the female offspring, their production must be compared to other animals milking in the herds at the same time (herdmates) to identify the genetically superior bulls.

In order to achieve this highly reliable genetic estimate through progeny testing, all progeny, herdmates, and dams must have a **unique animal identification**. Accurate, individual animal identification also helps to ensure highly reliable data that can be utilized with greater confidence in breed improve-

ment. As herd size has increased, accurate identification of animals involved in progeny testing is a growing challenge. We have cooperator herds in our progeny test program, of all sizes and in all parts of the country that have not only complete animal identification but perfectly accurate DNA verified animal identification. We applaud these herds for their outstanding efforts. Also, there are thousands of producers across the country who are doing an outstanding job with accurate and unique animal identification of all livestock.

These herds use unique animal identification not only to aid with progeny testing programs - but are finding it to be critically important in the managing of their operations. The complete and accurate animal identification is as economically important to producers as it is to the livestock genetics industry.



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