

National Animal Identification System (NAIS): Is there more than meets the eye?

Part 1

By Bruno Schmidt

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What is the NAIS? Will the NAIS affect me, and if so, how? Should I be concerned? ... These and numerous other questions about the NAIS have been raised over time with so-called “answers” being promoted mainly by two camps: NAIS “advocates” (Federal and State officials, special interests, large-scale livestock operations), and NAIS “opponents” (small farmers and ranchers, non-commercial owners of livestock, activists).

While these two camps duke it out, and time ticks away towards the projected mandatory participation in the NAIS by 2009, where do you stand personally, or as a farmer / rancher? Do you even have the kind of reliable, unbiased information you will need to make an informed decision?

To assist you, this and future articles seek to bridge that gap between “advocates” and “opponents”, to provide you with much-needed but little published, provable information in your quest for NAIS-related answers. After all, you have the right (and duty) to base your participation in the NAIS on well-researched facts rather than anybody’s hear-say.

Before we can even begin to explore the purported merits of the NAIS, let’s first clarify what “NAIS” actually consists of: it is a collection of USDA-promoted programs for the Federal Registration of Farm Land, Farm Property (including but not limited to animals) and Farm Operations (including but not limited to production) located in places where the Federal government does not have jurisdiction (for example inside the boundaries of the 50 states or on tribal territory).

Since implementation of the NAIS is modeled after many other Federal programs, beginning in 2004 the Federal government has entered into so-called “Cooperative Agreements” (a form of contract) with States, Tribes and so-called “stakeholders” to promote the NAIS within their respective jurisdictions, and at livestock-related venues, for the contractually-agreed purpose of enticing YOU into voluntarily enrolling in the NAIS.

What does this mean? States, Tribes, local jurisdictions and certain “stakeholders” are being financially “motivated”, for example, by way of receiving grants of Federal money, to persuade YOU into voluntarily making your farm, your livestock and your operation subject to the USDA’s rules and regulations, present and future.

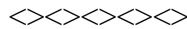
Please note, that once you’re enrolled in the NAIS, your full compliance with the USDA’s rules and regulations become your obligation as these rules and regulations preempt and override any State, Tribal or local rules and regulations to the contrary. Needless to say, the NAIS “advocates” are quite secretive about all this. But don’t just

trust these words – you can look it up yourself in Title 7 United States Code, Chapter 109 (Animal Health Protection Act of 2002), and in the Federal Register Volume 69, No. 215, Pages 64644-64651, among other publications.

To understand more fully the far-reaching effect participation in the NAIS has on your farm, livestock and operation, you have to keep in mind that “Animal Identification” is just the tip of that iceberg. Within the overall NAIS game plan, “Animal Identification” must be understood within the overall context of the NAIS as it implies A LOT MORE than just the mere “tagging” of your animals, such as...

1. Issuance of federally-controlled “U.S. Premises Identification Number(s)” for your farm land using your land’s legal description (metes & bounds) and global coordinates (longitudes & latitudes).
2. Issuance of federally-controlled “U.S. Animal Identification Number(s)” for your livestock that, once attached to an animal, are unlawful to remove until the animal’s death (i.e. slaughter).
3. By 2009, mandatory reporting of all animal “movements” or “events” within 48 hours from occurrence.

Because the above list is far from complete, we will discuss these and related topics – along with providing answers to questions submitted to the Huckleberry Press – in a series of future articles.



Bruno Schmidt is co-author of the self-published “Farmer’s Field Guide to the NAIS”. He has spent in excess of 1000 hours over the past three years researching the National Animal Identification System. For more information, please visit WWW.FARMERSFIELDGUIDE.COM