



Poultry Voice

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Texas Launches Premise ID Program as Precursor to NAIS

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The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) has begun its premises identification program for livestock and poultry owners in Texas. It will set the stage for national animal identification. The system employs a 10-digit "premises identification number" to be used for the rapid tracing of animals in case of problems. Dr. Bob Hillman, the Texas state veterinarian and head of the TAHC, indicates that the system has been under development for years, with input from federal, state, and livestock industry associations. Dr. Hillman indicates that regulatory agencies need an efficient method for tracking livestock and poultry during emergencies, and they want access only to age, class/type, and movement of animals for finding infected or exposed animals. Production and other confidential information will not be part of the information gathered. At the same time, federal and state agencies and the industries are seeking legislation to ensure that information is not released to the public. Dr. Hillman said the system should be fully implemented and mandatory by 2008 in order to be an effective animal disease response tool.

The national animal identification system (NAIS) will have two components. The first will be a seven-character alphabet and numbers "address" assigned to ranches and animal locations to designate their location within a state. This "address" will be accessible only to animal health officials. The second component identifies each head of livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, deer, and others), through a radio frequency identification device or electronic ear tag. For others such as poultry and swine, which spend their entire lives as a group or unit, the number will apply to the unit. In case some of them are taken to a fair, such groups will have to be individually identified under the system.

The pilot is being tested in Texas, Oklahoma, the Osage Nation in Oklahoma, and 20 other states. It is funded by the USDA. Apart from ranches and livestock facilities, equipment suppliers and computer data service providers will help test the effectiveness, durability and compatibility of equipment and the various databases.

In the Texas pilot, 80,000 electronic tags will be used for cattle, goats, and deer. The tags will be applied before animals leave farms or ranches or when they arrive at feedlots, livestock markets, or other sites. Implantable electronic devices will be used for horses. Tags will be issued for life unless broken or lost. Both electronic tags and implantable devices can be read and recorded with hand-held devices. They also can be accessed without the hand-held devices. Information on animals sold, moved, or harvested will be sent to third-party data services providers by mail, fax, or e-mail. A query for any number should reveal all premise numbers where the animal has been maintained and all related numbers for the animal. Numbers are retired when animals are harvested or die.

The project will try to identify and correct potential problems in such a system trying to integrate data from several sources into a common database. Improvements will be made when needed, and confidentiality issues addressed and resolved.

The USDA earlier this year transferred \$18.8 million to the Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to begin implementing NAIS. APHIS allocated \$11.64 million for cooperative agreements with states and tribal governments, with the remainder of the funds to be used for supporting other aspects of NAIS. USDA later added another \$1.5 million to fund more cooperative agreements. Out of more than 40 applications, APHIS selected 29 projects for funding. States that were not successful initially have been notified that they qualify for \$100,000, which may be increased by \$30,000 depending on the number of livestock operations within their states. West Virginia and Virginia received \$100,000 and \$115,000, respectively, for their programs.



The NAIS will be used for camelids (llamas and alpacas), cervids (deer and elk), cattle and bison, horses, goats, poultry, sheep, and swine. Producer participation is voluntary, but USDA will reassess the need to make all or some parts of it mandatory if necessary. The decision will be based on biosecurity issues, epidemiologic investigations, the need for regionalization and risk assessment in support of international trade, and the need for an animal identification system similar to those of the European Union, Canada, and Australia.

Producers will need to check with their state's department of agriculture or Tribe's animal health authorities

to determine if they have a registration system. If such a system is in place, producers can work with authorities to obtain premise identification numbers. Information recorded will include premise type, contact name, premise address, and phone number of person in charge at location. These will be maintained at state level, but pertinent information will be sent to the national system and will be accessible to animal health authorities. For more information visit the NAIS Web site at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/nais/nais.html> (News Release, TAHC, 12/8/04, USDA News Release, 10/28/04. Meatingplace, 12/9/04).

International News

U.S. - Cuba poultry trade threatened

A new interpretation of a 2000 trade law by the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) may jeopardize a \$61 million poultry trade with Cuba. The National Chicken Council, the National Turkey Federation, and the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, among others, have signed a letter protesting the interpretation indicating that it "endangers our reliability as suppliers." Currently, payment is received when goods are transferred to Cuban control, but the OFAC would require U.S. exporters to have payments in hand before the goods leave American ports. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND), who sponsored the law, has asked for an Inspector General's probe and plans to introduce legislation to prevent the OFAC from thwarting sales to Cuba (Meatingplace, 12/8/04).

Avian influenza claims South African ostriches

An outbreak of AI due to strain H5N2, which was first detected in August, continues to ravage the ostrich industry in the Graaff-Reinet area of the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The country's department of agriculture indicates that at least 20,000 birds will be slaughtered in addition to the 25,000 already killed. The H5N2 strain is less dangerous than the H5N1 strain, and officials say there is no danger to humans. South Africa supplies about 70 percent of the world's ostrich meat, with the skin being used for clothes and accessories (Meatingplace Dec. 04).

Research News

New technology to control infectious poultry diseases

Dr. Hyun Lillehoj, an immunologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, is using a new tool to control coccidiosis in poultry. Dr. Lillehoj has completed the first chicken intestinal expressed genomic library, whose gene sequences will be used to develop genomic-based control strategies. During the next three years, Dr. Lillehoj and her team will use the database to create chicken intestinal microarray chips. The chips will be used to gauge and count gene expression patterns associated with responses to stimuli. The research is funded by an National Research Initiative competitive grant (Meatingplace, Dec. 04).

Avian flu vaccine for humans possible by 2007

Samples of the viruses collected from five human cases of H5N1 AI in Thailand have been sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, for research. Officials anticipate that the vaccine will be ready for testing in 2005, and that human clinical trials will be conducted for two years before the vaccine is available. The human AI vaccine was one of the topics discussed at a regional conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in early December (Watt PoultryUSA, 12/6/04).



Federal News

USDA reestablishes General Conference of the NPIP

In October, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman announced the reestablishment of the general conference of the National Poultry Improvement Program (NPIP). It is authorized for a two-year period. The committee provides critical advice concerning poultry health issues and is the official advisory committee to the U.S. secretary of agriculture.

The committee serves as a forum for studying poultry health problems and, when needed, makes recommendations to the secretary on how best the USDA can help the poultry industry solve them. In addition, the committee helps USDA to plan, organize, and conduct the NPIP biennial conference, evaluates comments on proposed USDA poultry health regulations, and serves as a liaison between the NPIP and the U.S. Animal Health Association.

The NPIP works with federal, state, and industry agencies to help control poultry diseases such as pullorum, fowl typhoid, and avian influenza. It also provides educational programs on the prevention and control of egg-transmitted and hatchery-transmitted poultry diseases.

The NPIP's general conference committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the International Poultry Exposition in January in Atlanta, Ga. The meeting will be held from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Jan. 26 in Room C108 of the Georgia World Congress Center. Topics to be discussed include:

- H5/H7 LPAI program for commercial layers, broilers, and turkeys;
- Preventing trade restrictions on AI-free zones;
- National animal identification program for poultry; and
- Cleaning, disinfection, and bird disposal costs for commercial poultry flocks.

Although the meeting is open to the public, time constraints prevent public participation in meeting discussions. Written statements on the meeting topics may be submitted before or after the meeting to Andrew R. Rhorer, Senior Coordinator, NPIP, Veterinary Services, 1498 Klondike Road, Suite 101, Conyers, GA. 30064, or by calling 770-922-3496. Quote Docket No. 04-117-1 when submitting statements.

In other news, the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association has approved funding for the development of an avian influenza (AI) CD-ROM. The CD-ROM will be a training tool for AI and will include such topics as the history of AI research, diagnostic procedures for AI virus, AI virus Elisa, and agar gel preparation. The NPIP also offers annual workshops for laboratory and diagnostic personnel at the Poultry Diagnostic and Research Center at the University of Georgia (USDA Release No. 0454.04, APHIS News 12/14/04, Watt PoultryUSA 11/01/04).

USDA approves Steri-Fx solution for poultry reprocessing

The USDA has approved the use of an antimicrobial solution, FreshFx, for online reprocessing (OLR) of poultry carcasses. It reduces levels of Salmonella and E. coli on carcasses and is also effective against Listeria in cooked poultry plants. It has also been used in the scalding, New York rinse, and post chilling against Salmonella. The solution may be used as a spray, mist, or dip application after dilution of a concentrate. It does not require plant or equipment modifications. It has a shelf life of two years, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved it as nontoxic. It has been approved by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) as a shelf-life extender and processing aid and by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a generally regarded as safe (GRAS) substance. FreshFx was evaluated in 2004 against more than 125 million birds in USDA trials, testing for pre- and post-Salmonella and E. coli levels on carcasses. The solution is marketed by Steri-Fx Inc. (MeatNews.com. Vol. 6, Issue 51).

ERS predicts fall in table egg prices

USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) indicates that the wholesale prices of table eggs will fall to 63 to 67 cents per dozen in 2005, the lowest since 1999. The fall is mainly due to the rapid rise of layer flocks, with a subsequent increase in egg production and a fall in prices. The rise in layer numbers was a direct result of repopulation of flocks after the breakout of Exotic Newcastle disease in early 2003, as well as favorable producer returns in the latter half of 2003 (Watt PoultryUSA, 11/29/04).

Congress approves funding for AI program

Part of the initiatives funded by the Fiscal 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Bill approved by Congress in November included a program for low-pathogenic avian influenza (LPAI). A total of \$23 million has been provided for the prevention, control, and eradication of LPAI. Part of the monies will be distributed as follows: \$12 million for indemnities, \$3 million for surveillance activities, \$2 million for reagents and costs of administering tests, and another \$2 million for disinfection of live bird markets. The initiative was funded because conferees noted that the endemic nature of LPAI in certain regions poses a potential threat by mutating to highly pathogenic forms. The omnibus bill reduced agricultural programs funding by \$3.5 billion but increased funding for APHIS (which includes the LPAI program) by 13 percent (Meatingplace, Nov. 04).





Industry News

Antibiotics in livestock and poultry not risky to humans

An FDA draft report shows that the continued use of virginiamycin in livestock and poultry feed presents no significant risk to human health. Phibro Animal Health, which manufactures the drug, indicated that the report mirrors the findings made by Dr. Tony Cox, a world leader on risk assessment. Dr. Cox indicated that by improving the health of livestock and poultry, the drug reduced the likelihood of exposure to harmful foodborne bacteria. He indicated that a ban could lead to a significant increase in the incidences of foodborne disease.

In a related study, Dr. Randall Singer of the University of Minnesota showed that the benefits of antibiotic use in animals outweighs the possible risk to man. Using the drug tylosin and the incidence of *Campylobacter*, researchers found a reduced incidence of food illnesses and illness days, which may outweigh the possibility of human risk associated with antibiotic resistance to tylosin. The researchers indicated that healthier animals translate to healthier meat and fewer illnesses in people. The mathematical model they used indicated that if the antibiotic were removed there would be an increase in the number of illnesses due to increases in cases of *Campylobacter* (Watt PoultryUSA, Nov/Dec 04).

A survey done by the Animal Health Institute found that antibiotic use in food animals in the United States declined by about 8 percent from 22 million pounds in 2002 to 20.2 million pounds in 2003. AHI president and CEO Alexander Matthews indicates that there is evidence of the importance of antibiotics in rearing food animals and also that the risks are small. In fact, he indicates that there is evidence that banning antibiotic use in animal agriculture presents a greater risk to humans (Watt PoultryUSA, Oct. 04).

Neighbors' odor complaints may cause plant closure

Due to complaints from residents of Parkchester, Bronx, New York, about odors emanating from the LSK Smoked Turkey Product plant, New York City officials are considering closing down the plant. The company, which moved to the Bronx in May 2002, produces cooked, packaged pork and turkey parts, as well as whole turkeys. Residents started complaining soon after. NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg says the company has not followed through on promises to install appropriate equipment. The company, however, insists that it will continue to operate while trying to address the problems (Watt PoultryUSA, Oct. 04).

Nicholas purchases BUTA production facilities

The British United Turkeys of America (BUTA) facilities in Lewisburg, West Virginia, have been acquired by Aviagen, becoming a part of the facilities of Nicholas Turkey Breeding Farms. With the acquisition, Ian Hamilton, group vice president for Aviagen, indicates that it will help Nicholas deliver better quality service and products (Watt PoultryUSA, Nov. 04).

Beard to retire from U.S. Poultry & Egg Association

Dr. Charles W. Beard, vice president for research and technology at the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, is retiring effective Dec. 31.

Beard has been a member of the USPOULTRY staff since 1993, managing the association's \$1.2 million per year competitive research grant program and providing technical assistance and advice on a variety of issues, including food safety and disease prevention and control.

Beard will continue to facilitate the research activities for USPOULTRY's Research Advisory Committee over the next couple years.

"As a superb communicator on complex subjects and a scientist with impeccable character, Charlie is in a class by himself," said USPOULTRY President Don Dalton. "His contributions will continue to provide a positive impact to this industry for years to come." (Meatingplace, 12/16/04).

PETA pushes for gas stunning for Wendy's suppliers

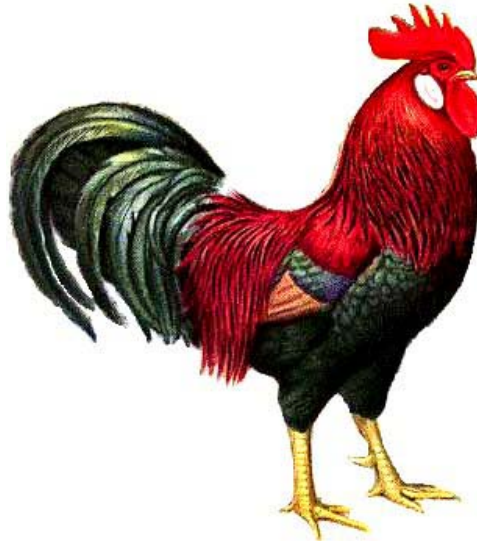
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has filed a shareholder resolution with Wendy's to have its chicken suppliers phase in controlled atmosphere stunning. PETA indicates that such a move will save Wendy's money, help workers, and "save chickens from a horribly cruel death." PETA asks Wendy's to prepare a shareholder report by October 2005 on the feasibility of such a move within a reasonable time frame. PETA owns 120 shares of Wendy's stock (Watt PoultryUSA, Nov. 04).



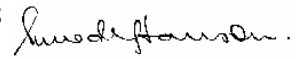


Upcoming Meetings

- Jan.**
- 24-25: International Poultry Scientific Forum**, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, (T) 770-493-9401; (F) 770-493-9257; www.poultryegg.org
- 25: National Chicken Council Technical & Regulatory Committee Meeting**, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact mernst@chickenusa.org or <http://www.nationalchickencouncil.com> or at (T) 202-296-2622; (F) 202-293-4005
- 25-28: National Poultry & Food Distributors Association Annual Convention**, Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, Ga. (T) 877-845-1545
- 26: NPIP General Conference Committee Meeting**, Georgia World Congress Center, Room C108, Atlanta, Ga. Contact A. Rhorer (T) 770-922-3496
- 26-28: International Poultry Exposition**, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Contact U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, (T) 770-493-9401; (F) 770-493-9257; www.poultryegg.org
- Feb.**
- 5-8: National Turkey Federation's Annual Convention**, Westin Long Beach, Long Beach, Calif. (T) 202-898-0100; (F) 202-898-0203; www.eatturkey.com
- 9-10: American meat Institute's Animal Care and Handling Conference**, Kansas City Marriott Downtown, Kansas City, Mo. (T) 202-587-4200
- March**
- 7-9: Pacific Egg & Poultry Association Annual Convention**, Napa, Calif. Contact: PEPA, 1521 I Street, Sacramento, CA. 95814 (T) 916-441-0801; (F) 916-446-1063; info@pacificegg.org ; www.pacificegg.org
- 9-10: American Egg Board Meeting**, Chicago, Ill. Contact: AEB, 1460 Renaissance Drive, Park Ridge, IL (T) 847-296-7043; (F) 847-296-7007
- 15-17: Midwest Poultry Federation Convention**, St. Paul, Mn. (T) 7663-682-2171; lara@midwestpoultry.com
- April**
- 25-27: 54th Western Poultry Disease Conference**, The Fairmont Hotel, Vancouver, B.C.; rpchin@ucdavis.edu



Poultry Voice is published quarterly to provide those interested in the poultry industry with pertinent production information from industry, academia, and federal and state governments to help ensure economic production of poultry in a manner that sustains the environment. *Poultry Voice* is sponsored by the West Virginia Extension Service.
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