

# American Horse Council News

## Update on Animal Identification (NAIS)

In February 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) was revising its proposed National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and implementing a new Animal Disease Traceability Program (ADTP). This announcement followed the USDA's national listening tour which prompted USDA to offer this revamped approach to the former NAIS program.

NAIS was not fully embraced by the livestock community and generated numerous concerns surrounding confidentiality, liability, cost, privacy, and religion. USDA spent \$120 million on NAIS with only 36% of producer participation. In response to these concerns, the new ADTP will narrow its approach.

The new approach is similar to a national umbrella program through which USDA will provide disease traceback on an interstate level while States will provide traceback within their respective borders.

Rather than attempting to identify every animal, every premise, and every livestock movement to achieve traceback within 48 hours of a disease outbreak, the new system under discussion appears to be aimed at designing a simplified program to achieve basic interstate traceability with low-cost identification methods, including



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branding, to respond to a disease outbreak," said Dudley Hoskins, Director of Health & Regulatory Affairs for the American Horse Council.

The system will be administered by the States with Federal support and will only apply to animals involved in interstate commerce. The new program will encourage the use of lower-cost technology and ensure the traceability data is owned and maintained by the States and Tribal Nations. USDA indicated it will share the costs of the new program with the States and will implement the new system

through federal regulations and a full rulemaking process. The proposed rule is expected to be published next winter.

The level of involvement and the implications for the equine industry are difficult to determine at this point in the process. The focus of the discussions regarding the new framework for animal disease traceability centers on food livestock.

The Equine Species Working Group (ESWG), which includes over thirty equine associations, has been evaluating the NAIS and its potential affect on the horse industry for the last several years. It submitted recommendations in 2006 regarding the former NAIS program, and those recommendations remain in effect pending any further developments on the new proposed traceability system. The ESWG will continue to follow any and all developments on the new system and will continue to evaluate its costs and benefits to the equine industry as more information becomes available. The group wants to be sure that any system put in place does not adversely affect the horse industry.

Go to: [www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability) or [www.equinespeciesworkinggroup.com](http://www.equinespeciesworkinggroup.com) for more information.

## AHC's Welfare Code of Practice Continues to Garner Support

The AHC's National Welfare Code of Practice continues to garner support from the horse community. The Welfare Code outlines in generic terms what it means for an organization to be committed to the responsible breeding, training, care, use, enjoyment, transport, and retirement of horses. Many associations have undertaken studies, reviews, and initiatives that show their commitment to the welfare of their horses. This generic code is simply a continuation of that effort.

The latest groups to support the National Welfare Code include the Arabian Horse Association, Florida Thoroughbred Breeder's and Owner's Association, League of Agricultural and Equine Centers, Master of Foxhounds Association, Pinto Horse Association of America, The Pyramid

Society, U.S. Dressage Federation, and U.S. Equestrian Drill Team.

They join ten other national groups that have already endorsed the Welfare Code. They include the: American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Endurance Ride Conference, American Paint Horse Association, American Quarter Horse Association, Kentucky Thoroughbred Association, National Cutting Horse Association, National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association, U.S. Equestrian Federation, and U.S. Trotting Association.

"We are pleased with the positive feedback and continued interest we have received from a broad spectrum of equine organizations since the Welfare Code of Practice was announced this past

November," said AHC President Jay Hickey. "This latest round of endorsements further demonstrates to the public the industry's unified commitment to the welfare and safety of horses, and we hope to build upon this momentum to bring in as many organizations as possible to further reinforce the industry's commitment to safety, health, care and welfare of all horses."

The Code is not intended to replace or pre-empt any activities, rules, or regulations specific to any segment of the industry. Rather it is another indication to the public, the media, federal and state officials, and the horse community that the equine industry "Puts the Horse First."

To view the complete Welfare Code of Practice please visit the AHC website at: <https://www.horsecouncil.org/newsroom.php>.