



Role of the Veterinarian in **Animal Tracing**

As the animal tracing component develops, animal owners might have questions about what movement events to report. As their veterinarian, your knowledge about animal disease incidence in the area, health status of various herds and animals, and management capabilities of producers makes you a valuable resource in advising animal owners about key animal movements. For instance, any time animals are commingled from multiple sources, the risk of disease exposure warrants reporting. NAIS will not replace existing State requirements related to certain animal movements.



Estimated Costs Associated With NAIS

The costs of developing and implementing NAIS will be handled by State/Federal Government and industry. Individuals who choose to participate in certain components of this voluntary system will bear some costs as well. For each NAIS component, the anticipated costs for producers and veterinarians are briefly explained below:

Premises Registration

- Free in all States, Territories, and participating Tribes

Animal Identification

- Free tags for use in some USDA-APHIS disease programs (scrapie)
- Variable for non-program disease tags depending on animal species and method of identification selected by the producer/owner. Examples:
 - Visual plastic eartags ~\$1 to \$2
 - Button-like radio frequency eartags ~ \$2 to \$3
 - Injectable transponders (implants), up to ~ \$20
- No additional cost if the owner has the expertise to implant the transponder him/herself
- As a veterinarian, you could provide this service to your clients for a fee; some horse owners are paying \$20 per animal.
- Again, the service associated or “packaged” with the device determines the cost that the provider of the device(s) charges.
- For a complete listing of official AIN ID tags that have been approved, visit: http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/documents/guidelines/NAIS_ID_Tag_Web_Listing.pdf.



Visual eartags must include a panel for writing or imprinting each animal's herd management number. The herd management number is typically assigned by a producer for on-farm recordkeeping. If both the management number and the PIN with which it is associated are clearly visible on the tag, and the U.S. shield is visibly present, it can be considered official; if the management number is used by itself, it is not official.

Animal Tracing

- Variable depending on what, if any, additional services the producer elects to use within the State or private animal tracking database.
- Some ATDs plan to charge per animal, others may elect to charge per record submitted, and some will not charge anything.
- Most ATDs provide other services, thus producers must examine cost and services.
 - The ATDs provide animal identification and movement information at no charge to State, Territory, Tribal, and Federal Animal Health officials.
 - The USDA-APHIS-VS Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS) became operational in March 2007. Formal agreements with the private sector and the States are in progress and will be listed on the NAIS Web site <http://www.usda.gov/nais>.

NAIS Data Storage and Retrieval

Data storage is a major component of NAIS. Since this is a cooperative Industry-State-Federal partnership, different data are stored at each level. Each partner plays a key role in the storage and retrieval of premises identification, animal identification, and animal movement data.

Data Stored at the Federal Government Level

USDA-APHIS-VS allocates the PIN and the AIN.

The National Premises Information Repository (NPIR) stores:

- National PIN
- Name of entity
- Owner or appropriate contact person
- Street address, city, State, and Zip or postal code (or latitude/longitude coordinates) of the premises
- Contact phone number
- Operation type
- Species at premises
- Date activated, date retired, and the reason retired
- Alternative phone numbers

The AIN Management System stores:

- AINs assigned to each authorized AIN device manufacturer

Data Stored by States/Private Industry

The States and private entities will operate and store information in the animal tracking databases (ATD). USDA will not hold and, therefore, cannot distribute this information. Federal law protects individuals' private information and confidential business information from public disclosure.

The ATD will store:

- Animal identification number
- Animal location (PIN)
- Date of the event
- Event itself (move-in, move-out, etc.)

If USDA needs animal movement and location information to respond to an animal disease issue, the Department will request the data only for animals involved in the animal health event of concern.

The ATDs have the capacity to store much more information for each animal if the animal owner chooses to utilize the service. This includes information such as:

- Animal-specific data (age, species, sex, etc.)
- Production parameters (i.e., carcass information, health records, expected progeny differences [EPDs])

However, while some of this information might be helpful in a traceback situation, it is not required for participation in NAIS, nor is it the purpose of a national animal identification system.



Data Stored by Veterinarians/Animal Owners

The goal of NAIS is enhanced animal health through identification and tracing. As always, veterinarians and animal owners are encouraged to keep records related to treatment, vaccinations, production data, change of ownership, and animal movements. Should a disease outbreak occur before the full implementation of all three components of NAIS, this additional information can also be useful to animal health authorities during an investigation. It could mean the difference between complete depopulation and a temporary quarantine for producers.

Data Retrieval: Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS)

Animal health officials will request only animal movement and location data from ATDs using the ATPS when there is an animal health event. Each ATD systematically checks the Web Service for an electronic “request for information” that would provide the search criteria.

It is important to understand that NAIS is not a “real-time” tracking system for animals. Animals are not continuously observed by the Government, and the RFID devices are only activated and read when exposed to an RFID reader.

The ultimate goal is to have complete information for conducting the disease investigation within 48 hours of discovery. The immediate objectives of NAIS are to advance tracing capability toward that goal.

Government agencies will not have constant, continuous access to the locations of animals in NAIS. State and Federal Animal Health Officials will use the ATPS only in the following situations:

- An indication (suspect, presumptive positive, etc.) or confirmed positive test of a foreign animal disease;
- An animal disease emergency as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture and/or State departments of agriculture; or
- A need to conduct a traceback/traceforward to determine the origin of infection for a program disease (brucellosis, tuberculosis, etc.).

ATDs and the Animal Trace Processing System (ATPS)

When private and State-held databases receive a request, it is automatically processed and a report is returned to the ATPS within 15 to 30 minutes. If records meeting the search criteria are found, the information will be contained in an encrypted electronic record and sent back to the ATPS.

The ATPS receives and compiles the information from each private and State database. In certain disease cases, additional requests to each ATD will be necessary.

For example, the cohort of the animal at Premises 1234XYZ, 840 123 456 789 012 moved to Premises ABC6789. A second request for information for animals that came into contact with this cohort animal and all others found in the first request would be sent to each private and State database. This process might need to be repeated numerous times to obtain all of the necessary information. While it takes time to process requests, the entire process of animal traceback can be completed in a 24 to 48 hour period—much more rapidly than today's system.