

NAIS Frequently Asked Questions:

Background and General Information

Q. Many animals are already identified through private industry, disease control, and theft prevention programs—so why do we need the National Animal Identification System (NAIS)?

A. There are a number of programs that include an animal identification component (e.g., cooperative eradication programs for brucellosis and scrapie, and market-based source verification systems). And many States have information systems in place to locate at-risk animals and premises in the case of a disease outbreak or animal health event. But these systems are not uniform in nature or connected, and they do not apply to all livestock species and diseases. NAIS—a modern, streamlined information system—will enable producers and first responders to address any disease situation affecting any segment of animal agriculture in our country. And it allows for more rapid, coordinated, and efficient disease response.

Q. Why is it important to quickly find potentially exposed premises and animals?

A. The more quickly potentially exposed premises and animals are located, the more quickly a disease can be contained. The length of time it takes to gain control over an outbreak or health event dictates the extent of the economic losses, market closures, and other social harms it causes. In other words, time is money—for everyone involved.

Q. Will my private information be protected?

A. Federal law protects individuals' private information and confidential business information from disclosure. Furthermore, USDA maintains only limited premises registration information and will not have direct access to animal identification or movement records. Animal health officials will only request access to animal movement and location records in the case of a disease outbreak or animal health event.

Additional Information

For more information about NAIS, contact:

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