

NAIS Facts and Myths

Myth: There are fines for producers who do not register in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

Fact: Participation in NAIS is voluntary at the Federal level. States and Tribes may choose to keep participation voluntary or not, based on local needs. Producers should check with their

State animal health authority for existing animal identification requirements that are currently in place at the State level and are not affected by NAIS. There are no Federal penalties or other

“enforcement” mechanisms associated with the NAIS. You will not be penalized by USDA at all if you choose not to participate in the program.

Myth: USDA wants to identify every animal in the United States, including pets, for NAIS.

Fact: The focus of NAIS is animal agriculture—livestock and/or poultry. USDA, along with State and industry partners, encourages owners of the following species to participate: cattle

and bison; poultry; swine; sheep; goats; cervids (deer and elk); equines (horses, mules, donkeys, burros); and camelids (llamas and alpacas). Household pets (e.g., cats and dogs) are not included.

Myth: USDA wants to identify and track the movement of all livestock in the United States.

Fact: Attempting to record all animals and movements is not practical, and that is not the intent with NAIS. Rather, the intent with NAIS is to prevent the spread of animal disease. This, by extension, protects your animals and your livelihood, retains your access to markets (both at home and abroad), and minimizes the economic damage caused by a disease outbreak or animal health event. The only animals recommended for identification are those that are moved from their premises to locations where they “commingle,” or come into contact with, animals from multiple/other premises. Due to the nature of their movements, these animals may pose a significant risk of disease transmission or have a greater impact on the spread of a potential disease. Animals with a “lower-risk” or “lower impact” on, disease spread are not the focus of NAIS. For example, the following situations are not applicable to NAIS:

- Livestock that never leave the premises of their birth, even if they move from pasture to pasture within that premises
- Animals that never leave their premises other than when they “get out”
- Animals that are only moved directly from their birth premises to custom slaughter
- The participation of animals in local trail rides

- The movement of animals to small local parades or fairs (Many local fairs and similar events may have their own animal identification requirements that are not affected by NAIS. You should check with animal health officials or event organizers for any such existing requirements.)

Myth: USDA will use the NAIS to provide “real-time” government surveillance of livestock.

Fact: NAIS is not a “real-time” tracking system for animals. There is no constant or continuous observation of animals; comments implying otherwise are simply untrue. Rather, animal

movement records will be established when the owner or caretaker of the animal chooses to report such information. This animal location and movement data will be held in multiple, secure databases managed by private industry groups and the States. Animal health officials will only request access to animal movement and location records in the case of a disease outbreak or animal health event. Federal law protects individuals’ private information and confidential business information from disclosure.

Myth: Producers can no longer provide comments or feedback regarding the NAIS.

Fact: NAIS continues to evolve to meet producer demands, and participant input to the program is critical. USDA has established an email address for NAIS, animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov, and always welcomes comments. USDA and its State and industry partners have also enlisted the help of NAIS Species Working Groups to provide the species specific, ground level information that is necessary to create an effective system. These groups represent members of every aspect of animal industries who have volunteered their services and expertise on behalf of the NAIS, and are another way for people to provide input and help shape the development of NAIS. Producers, animal owners, and other stakeholders can submit comments to their Species Working Group through the NAIS Web site (www.usda.gov/nais), or by sending an email to animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov. Please remember to include the name of your working group in the “subject” line of the email. As leaders in the development and implementation of NAIS, State and Tribal NAIS Administrators also welcome input on the program.

Visit the NAIS Web site for your State or Tribe’s contact information.

Additional Information

For more information about NAIS, contact:

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