

USDA
USDA General Session – Louisville, KY
May 22, 2009

MS = Male Speaker; FS = Female Speaker

SO: Good morning. It's about 9:00, so if everyone could take their seats, we'd like to get started. My name is Sheri Oswald, and I'll be your moderator today. And before we start the listening session, we're going to have some opening remarks by Secretary Vilsack and then Dr. Lane from our Veterinary Services Office. So if I could get someone to turn the lights down. Thank you, Dena. And we'll see short welcome remarks by Secretary Vilsack. Thank you.

TV: First of all, I want to say welcome. On behalf of myself and the entire United States Department of Agriculture, thank you all for taking the time to be involved in this process. On April 15, I kicked off a series of listening sessions designed to gather input from stakeholders and interested parties regarding the National Animal Identification System. I understand and appreciate that there have been many conversations and debates regarding NAIS over the past 5 years. But I also have a belief that when reasonable people get around the table and have dialogue, oftentimes creative solutions can arise. We need to hear from all stakeholders as we work together to create an animal disease traceability program that we all can support.

As you may know, the current system has not gotten the outcomes that we would like to see with regard to participation or the ability to trace back quickly in the event of an animal health issue. Congress has made me aware that they are frustrated with funding a program that has not been very successful, which has given me additional incentive to find the best way forward.

I think we will all agree that we need to protect livestock markets and the livelihood of producers, and to that extent, I'm looking to hear not only your concerns but any potential solutions you might have as well. Along with these listening sessions, we've also made available the opportunity to comment in the Federal Register as part of our effort to allow everyone a chance to educate us about the problems they see with an animal identification and traceability system and the ways in which those problems could be solved or at least mitigated to a point where we have a better system than the one we have today and one that instills greater confidence from Capitol Hill.

I don't underestimate the difficulty of this. I know there are very strong feelings on all sides of this issue. But I don't want us to get to the point where Congress says they will not continue to fund the system. If that were to happen, I would doubt the reliability of our market, and that's not where we want to be. What we want is to have a system that folks believe in and that folks who have concerns about how it would be administered have been listened to and, hopefully, accommodated, and most importantly of all, a system that allows us to market our livestock as the highest quality and best in the world. We have trading partners who are watching what we do, and I'm anxious to convince them that there's no better system in the world than the one we have.

It's important for USDA to listen and to learn. I appreciate and recognize by virtue of the statements that have been made in the first listening sessions that consensus is difficult, but I want you, as you participate today, to think about the cost of a potential crisis of widespread infection and the cost to our industry. I want you to think about how well we decide things in the context of crisis when there's pressure in the stress of the moment, and I want you to think about whether or not, in the face of a significant crisis, the system we have in place would allow us to get it right. Alternatively, would we be in a better position through the process of listening to one another and respecting each other's options and opinions if we determine that the best possible option for the greatest number of people exists. I'm encouraged by the act of participation I've seen thus far in this process, and I hope that you will be too. There have been some consistent themes thus far that have given direction to my thought process on this, and I want you to know that this is the beginning of the conversation and by no means is it the end.

So we will continue to get input from across the country, and we will continue to encourage written comments which will be reviewed by myself and my staff. Our goal is to make sure that groups that are concerned about this issue and particularly those who maybe have felt they haven't had a chance to participate or be heard are given that opportunity, and our hope and belief is that we're going to try to improve the system from where we are now and establish a system that is agreeable for all producers and that will truly benefit and protect United States agriculture. So again, I appreciate you all making the effort to be here today. Thank you, and I look forward to continuing this conversation.

SO: Now I'd like to introduce Dr. Lane. He has some opening remarks also.

UL: Thank you. Good morning. I'm Ulysses Lane, and I'd like to welcome you to this listening session for the National Animal Identification System—NAIS. I'm from

Veterinary Services, Eastern Regional Office, and this Eastern Region encompasses all the states east of the Mississippi, including Minnesota. And this is a great day to be involved with U.S. agriculture and animal health. I want to thank all of you for taking valuable time away from your farm, your job, and your home to attend the meeting and to share your views. As Secretary Vilsack just said, the point of the meeting is that we are here to listen to what you have to say. We all play an important role in ensuring that our nation maintains a safe, abundant food supply, both for the American people and people around the world. We believe that the National Animal ID System is a very important tool to help us accomplish our mission of protecting our nation's livestock from disease. In the event of disease outbreak, it will give us much more timely data to use in our decision making, to speed our response efforts, to enable us to better focus our control and eradication efforts on those animals infected and exposed to disease. This should translate into shorter, cheaper, and more effective disease response programs that cause less disruption to you and your neighbors, and after outbreaks with this system, we will be in a better position to negotiate and respond to overseas markets that are critical to you and our economy.

We realize that many of you do not agree with us on these points, but let me be clear: Although we disagree, we respect you and your opinions and your ideas for moving this important program forward. This is why we are all here today. As Secretary Vilsack just said, we need a system that is in place that protects the health of the United States livestock. But he has been very clear in saying that the system needs to have the support of the majority of producers, both big and small. Our goal of these listening sessions is to stand back, listen to you, and to be ready to capture the creative solutions that will no doubt emerge on the issues that have divided us. We will be taping all of the sessions today so that we can be sure to capture all your concerns and ideas to pass back to the secretary. However, if for some reason you don't get a chance to share everything that you wanted today, we also are seeking your written comments. Your comments can be submitted through the website noted in your information sheet handout. That's that www.usda.nais.gov/nais/feedback. I personally assure you that every written comment submitted will be read and carefully considered before we move forward.

Our discussion sessions today will focus on important issues producers have often raised, such as implementation costs, impact on small-scale farmers, privacy, confidentiality, and liability. The discussion sessions will allow you to weigh in on any concerns you have regarding premise registration, animal identification, and animal tracing. But again, we want to hear your concerns and ideas for solutions, not only for these topics but in any aspect of the system. This is your meeting to tell us what you feel we need to know to understand your perspective on the system.

At the end of the day, we want to learn what program options you could support so that we can pass that information on to Secretary Vilsack. This information will be critical in helping him to determine how USDA in partnership with you can forge a more effective, successful and acceptable system to protect animal health.

Before we move to hearing your comments, I just want to say that in looking around the room, I think one thing we all can agree on—bottom line—is our desire for animals throughout America to remain healthy and free of foreign animal disease. I hope that unifying focus will be the compass that will guide our decisions today and in the future. In that spirit, I would like to echo Secretary Vilsack one more time and thank you all in advance for extending your professional courtesy and respect to everyone in this meeting. Let's all keep in mind that maintaining an open, respectful dialogue will get us further down the road toward developing an acceptable system that benefits everyone. Thank you again. I and the secretary very much look forward to hearing your thoughts, concerns, and solutions.

SO: Thank you, Dr. Lane. Before we get started hearing your comments, I just want to go over a couple of things. First of all, restrooms are right outside the door. I think the men's is right outside the door and the ladies' is a little to the left.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the packet of information you have and what's in it. Just to reiterate what Dr. Lane said, there is a page in there for submitting additional comments. The website, Federal Register portal, and you can also drop comments off at the registration desk out front. There's a box, and we will make sure they all get turned in

All sessions will be recorded. We have a court reporter here this morning. We will also be recording all the breakout sessions this afternoon. The transcripts will be posted on the web, and the secretary's office will receive all the comments and the transcripts, and he and his office will review them.

I want to talk a little bit about the afternoon sessions, the breakout sessions. When you come back from lunch, you'll be broken off into 3 different groups, and we're doing that so it's a more informal atmosphere. You'll have a chance to have more dialogue with folks in the room. There will not be a timer. Everything will be recorded. If you look on the front of your folder, there's a colored dot. It's either red, yellow, or blue. Those are to identify what group you're in. However, if you came with your family or a friend and you want to stay with them, that's perfectly okay. We don't want to separate anyone.

We're just trying to make sure that the 3 groups are about the same size. So we might move things around, but it'll be in this room and they'll be divided off. So after we finish the morning listening session, that's what we'll do. Again, those afternoon sessions are really for dialogue. If you want to continue your comments from this morning, that's fine. If you want to talk about the 7 questions that are in the Federal Register, that's fine. If you have other ideas or suggestions, that's fine too. You're really going to guide the discussion. There will be some facilitators in there just to help you make sure you get to the microphone and keep the conversation flowing, but it's really your discussion on what you want to share.

Let's see if I have anything else about this afternoon. The one thing about this afternoon: We are not trying to reach consensus. It is just collecting information, so be sure to share your comments with us this afternoon.

Based on feedback we've gotten from other sessions and to make sure that everyone gets an opportunity to speak, we've changed the morning session a little bit. We're not going to do questions and answers. We're just going to call people up. I think we have about 30 speakers. We're not going to use the tickets. I'm going to call everyone by their name. I'll call 5 people at a time. I'll ask that you come up here and sit. You'll have 3 minutes to speak. There's a little box here that will have different lights on it, and when the yellow light goes off, you'll have 30 seconds, and I'll give you an audible. I'll just quietly say to you, "30 seconds," so if you could start wrapping up your comments. When the red light buzzes, that means your 3 minutes is up, and we would ask that you wrap up your comments and allow the next person to share their comments. If you brought a sign with you and you want to speak, we'd ask that you also read your sign so that it can be captured in the transcripts, okay?

I think that's it. Let's see if I have any other notes. No. Okay, let's get started. I'm going to call the first 5 people, and because I have 3 different sign-in lists, I'm not sure if these are the order that they came in, but I'm pretty sure everyone is going to get a chance to talk today. And at the end, after everyone who signed in to talk, I'll ask if there's anyone else that wants to come up and have 3 minutes to talk. So if you think of something to say and you didn't sign up, you'll still have an opportunity, okay? So if I could have Mark Haney, Carl Lanore, Adam Barr, Dawn Oakes, and Dennis Liptrap. Just have a seat here. Mark, I'm going to give you the microphone first, and you'll be heard better if you talk close to the microphone. All right. Let me get you started here.

MH: Okay, thank you Dr. Lane and others. Thank you for allowing us to be here and participating in this. My name is Mark Haney, and I'm president of Kentucky Farm

Bureau. We are the largest farm organization in Kentucky, and we represent over 470,000 member families. We have the largest cattle herd east of the Mississippi River, and certainly the livestock industry is extremely important to the farm economy here in Kentucky. We support the establishment and implementation of an effective National Animal ID System because of the impact that it would bring to overall herd health that will further build consumer confidence in our product. We do not speak to the issue in our state policy of mandatory versus voluntary, but we do support a system. However, we do have concerns over key aspects of the program that must be effectively addressed before widespread acceptance and participation by livestock producers will occur. We believe and support development of adoption of a livestock identification, and we support the establishment and implementation of a national animal system with a 48-hour traceback capability.

According to a report from APHIS recently we saw, the cattle industry will bear the overwhelming majority of the anticipated expense of the program, representing over 90% of the estimated cost of a National Animal ID System. Our concern is who will bear this cost. The financial impact on small farms where margins are already thin could be devastating. We think the national system should be cost-effective with adequate cost share among government, industry, and producers. Confidentiality of information specific to individual livestock operations has been a concern since the concept of NAIS and premise ID was first introduced. The database that will be created will contain market sensitive and possibly production sensitive information that could be misused in a number of ways. With the numerous incidences of personal identity theft and loss of personal data, a common new item—data security—must be guaranteed. We feel the NAIS database should only be available to authorized state and federal personnel and limited to health emergencies. We have, certainly, many concerns about the confidentiality part of it and who will be paying for this and the management control, and we certainly don't want to see that get into the hands of others that it shouldn't be. We will be making recommendations in our public comments that we have submitted. Thank you very much. Three minutes is quick.

SO: Are you Carl? Could you just say your name and your affiliation?

CL: Sure. My name is Carl Lanore, and I host a syndicated talk radio show about health and longevity called *Super Human Radio*. After years of interviewing and conferring with some of the most brilliant minds in the world, I've come to realize that nothing—nothing—is more important than the unfettered access to healthy life-giving food. Agencies like the USDA have the single most important responsibility to the American

people as stewards of the land and the food, and it's with this knowledge that I make these statements.

Animal tagging using more sophisticated, more expensive electronic tags will not make our food safer. Animals are already traceable back to the farms of origin now. Since the beginning of animal husbandry, animals have worn hot brands, tattoos, ear tags and ankle tags. The issue has never been traceability. The real issue that will affect food safety is better management and inspections of processing plants where animals are slaughtered and processed. All traceability is removed once the animal is killed. Electronic tags will be removed as well. And it's at that moment that food safety becomes the most vulnerable. The contamination like the one that we are seeing right now today at Valley Meats in Coal Valley, Illinois, with their Class 1 recall of close to 96,000 pounds of ground beef that is a result of the high output, sloppy processing with little oversight, and it has nothing to do with animal identification. Current animal identification and recordkeeping is sophisticated enough to track an animal back to its origins and every point along the way. Replacing the current system with an electronic system will not solve any problems. Only more thorough and frequent plant inspections will make our food safer. The current inspection process is an insult to consumer safety and a betrayal of consumer trust. The inspection process is nothing more than a document shuffle and a brief visit that gives the processing plant the opportunity to cover its tracks. It's akin to allowing the fox to tell the farmer that the henhouse is safe. I don't blame the processors because economics dictate that they process tens of thousands of animals each day, and this high throughput increases the possibility of human error that leads to contamination. And it's not a matter of if but when. In the case of beef cattle and bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow disease, only the testing of every age eligible animal, as they do in other countries like Japan, is acceptable to the American consumer. Anything short of that is derelict of the USDA's supposed duties to protect us. The suggestion of National Animal Identification System being presented as a solution to food safety will not create anything but a false sense of security and will unfairly burden small farmers and in result will create obstacles for consumers to have access to healthy foods. It will also financially burden an already overreaching consumer. In the environment today, the American people are suspect of government agencies, and we no longer just assume that our interests are being weighed. The USDA has a responsibility to our needs and not the needs of large conglomerate and factory farms who are pushing for NAIS and have the most to gain from it. The American public is watching. Abandon NAIS and instead apply your resources to more effective oversight, inspection, and testing. That will yield safer food. Thank you.

AB: My name is Adam Barr, and I am a farmer in Meade County, Kentucky. We raise beef cattle, poultry, and vegetables for sale locally in the Louisville area. I'm also the president of Community Farm Alliance. We're a 2,000 member grassroots organization dedicated to preserving the family farm as an economically viable livelihood. We also count on a lot of consumer members and a growing trend towards a local food economy, which we call L.I.F.E.—a Local Integrated Food Economy.

So the underlying premise of these hearings today is that there is some kind of NAIS is going to be instated. I just want that to be clear. We at CFA are definitely against NAIS in any form. Part of the reason is that NAIS is an undue burden for family farmers. There's a big difference between farmers who produce for export and farmers who raise food to be sold locally. NAIS requires farmers in the local food economy to tag and track all their animals while confined animal feeding operations get one tag for thousands of animals. NAIS is clearly stacked in favor of those industrialized farmers that need NAIS to keep their export markets open. But the system will put animal producers in local markets out of business and help to destroy a growing local food movement. So corporate farms profit and family farmers lose.

The second issue is one of liability. NAIS starts at the farm and ends at the slaughterhouse. The majority of food-borne illness starts in industrial slaughter facilities, where thousands of animals are processed at a time. With NAIS, these food-borne illnesses could be tracked back to the farmer. Clearly, this program shifts responsibility away from the broken federal health inspection system and onto the farmer, who is not responsible, ultimately, for food-borne illness.

So now I want to address an issue that Mark Haney brought up, and that's consumer confidence in our food supply. With recent disease outbreaks in our food supply, something clearly must be done to improve the safety of our food. NAIS is not the answer because it destroys family farms, who are producing the healthiest food available. Family farmers are willing to sit down and help develop a food safety alternative to NAIS, but the current program as it is is cumbersome, costly, and will do nothing to prevent animal disease or improve safety

NAIS needs to be scrapped and we need to start over. The new program should look at industrial food production, which is the source of animal disease and food-borne illness. A clear distinction should be made between factory farms and those pasture-based family farms. Industrial ag may need this program. We should let them have it. Small-scale producers for a local market do not need this program, and if it moves forward, we would like full exemption for these producers.

But that brings us to the point of a voluntary versus a mandatory system. So what the USDA has said ultimately is this is—initially, they said it was mandatory, then they went to a voluntary. But this program will only work according to their documentation with 100% participation. And when I look at those words—100% participation—I think that means mandatory and that will not stand. Thank you.

DO: My name is Dawn Oakes, and I'm a farmer's wife. My husband couldn't be here because we're talking about legislation that affects farmers, but how conveniently these meetings were all scheduled at the busiest time that impact farmers and make it not possible for many of them to be here because of the season that we're in. So I'm here in my husband's stead.

If I was producing a car and the transmission was broken, I would not go to a tire dealership and ask them to perfect a tire that would help my car to run better; I would go to the transmission dealer that was able to repair my transmission. That's the dilemma that we're in with NAIS. Like Carl mentioned, if you look at all the reports recently on food-borne illnesses, there's going to be 2 root causes of the impacts on our public safety. One of them is the hygiene practices and the mass production of the slaughterhouses and the practices that go on there. The second cause is the fact that—and we can see this in our own general health ourselves—we have gotten so far into disease progression that there's been overuse of antibiotics for humans, and now we're seeing all kinds of illnesses that are antibiotic resistant. I have to ask logically, is that not what we're seeing in many of the commercial feedlots and many of the agribusinesses because of the heavily antibiotic-enriched feeds that are being employed? Are we not seeing the rise of many of these food-borne illnesses because of genetic defects that are developing in the animals because of these antibiotic-enriched feeds? Small family farmers, for the most part, don't use those because family farmers feed their children the same food they're producing. We take much more care and concern in the food that we're producing because we have 4 children that will be eating that same food. We are not going to feed that food to our families that would come out of a commercial dairy lot, which is a large reason why we continue to farm, even though it's not economically profitable for our family.

The extra burden of NAIS at this point in time in the history of our nation would destroy many family farms. If you look at the commercial dairy industry and the small dairy farmer, milk prices to the small, commercial dairy farmer are at rock-bottom lows. If they have to take another financial hit to pay for NAIS out of their pockets, it will

essentially knock them out, and maybe that's the undertone of what this legislation is about.

Further, our beef prices are plummeting because our administration has opened up the gateway to allow Canadian imports of beef into our nation, saying we don't produce enough beef. Many beef farmers are going to be struggling to survive because of this influx of beef that's coming in over the border with these regulations not pertaining to those producers that are importing food into our nation.

My closing comment would be that I know that if one of my children needed a bicycle and they had to work all summer long cutting grass, they're going to take much better care of that bicycle when they get it. Small family farmers work 12 to 18 hours a day to be able to produce healthy food. There's no way that large agribusinesses that can afford this program can produce the same quality food because their workers are not invested in producing the same quality product that small family farmers are, but yet it's the small family farmers that are going to be penalized by such a system. If this is truly an animal health traceability program, we need to look at where the causes are to the poor health in our food supply and target those. I thank you for your time.

DL: Good morning. I'm Dennis Liptrap, a pork producer in Nelson County, Kentucky, and by the way, I have both of my farms, who are adjoining farms, registered with the State Department of Agriculture, so I am a premise ID facility. I am here today representing the Kentucky Pork Producer Association, which is 1 of 43 member state associations of the National Pork Producer Council. The National Pork Producer Council serves as our voice in Washington, D.C., for 67,000 pork producers and their families, who generated over \$34½ billion of gross national product in 2008 and supported 550,000 mostly rural jobs. And these are families that depend upon pork production for their livelihood.

Like many other segments of the U.S. economy, the pork industry has suffered from tough economic times over the past 20 months. Last year U.S. producers lost an average of \$22 for each hog marketed, and the industry has lost \$3 to \$3½ billion in equity in the past 18 months. More recently, H1N1 flu, mislabeled swine flu, and the media frenzy that followed caused consumers worldwide to reduce pork consumption despite assurances from all health organizations that one cannot contract H1N1 flu from consuming pork. The industry's one bright spot has been exports, which have helped to temper pork producer's losses. In 2008, the United States exported 4.4 billion pounds of pork valued at nearly \$5 billion. That was the 17th year of growth, and I want to tell you, essentially 1 in 20 hogs in this country are exported. Now, if we had to put all of those hogs back in the domestic market because of an outbreak from a foreign animal disease

or even we have countries that blocked exports because of the so-called swine flu, it would be a devastation to the market and would affect everybody, large and small.

I have 20 seconds, she says, so I guess I have to speed up. We believe in a mandatory ID. We think that the small farms will lose every bit as much as the big farms with an outbreak of foreign animal disease. This is different than food safety. We are concerned in this global economy, worldwide, of bringing foreign animal diseases that will disrupt production in our own economy. And a database of farms will speed traceback to 48-hour traceback of disease, localize the break, and eliminate spread. Thank you.

SO: Thank you. Okay. The next 5 speakers: Diana Nordin or Nolden. Diana? Okay. Stephen Bartlett. Have a seat. J. Edward Callan. Mr. Callan? Okay. David Easley. David Easley. Okay. Somebody from the Potassium Nutrition Organization. Is that you? Is that you? Okay. David Easley. Oh, you took 2. Okay, I see. I'm sorry. Shaemus Allman. He had to leave? Okay. Jerry Hart. Jerry Hart. Okay. What do we have? 3? Jane Estes. Okay. Greg Sterle. Sterley. I'm sorry. So what do we have? 4? And Karen Bergener. Okay. So when you come to the microphone, again, please speak closely to the microphone so the folks in the back can hear, and state your name and your affiliation so the transcriber can capture it. Thanks.

SB: Good morning. My name is Stephen Bartlett, proud member of the Community Farm Alliance and happy to speak at this hearing. I'd like to address the issue of what might be the best way to control disease in the animals in the United States. I think the gentleman from the National Pork Producer Council brought up the fact that he thought that the flu outbreak—that we need an identification traceability. But for me, NAIS is like putting lipstick on a pig, which you might remember that comment during the campaign. It will not, as Adam Barr said, reduce illness among animals. In fact, for example, the swine flu that recently came out of a Smithfield factory farm, we think, in Vera Cruz, Mexico, the actual DNA in that swine flu is traced back to a hog plant in the United States. So that disease actually originated in a factory farm in the United States, eventually migrated to Mexico, where it combined genetically with other avian strains and where the workers in those plants were in extremely unhygienic plants. Smithfield outsourced this operation to Mexico because they could avoid any of the environmental standards that are necessary here in the United States. That's a perfect example of what's wrong with the system, and actually, that NAIS would not have prevented at all. That's a disease that would not have been prevented at all by NAIS.

The mad cow disease—we need inspections. I agree with the second speaker today. We need more inspections. We need inspections of all the animals. That's the USDA's

primary responsibility. Why are they now trying to impose some kind of liability potentially onto small farmers for the lack of inspection at the slaughterhouse level? I think these are the basic issues of this NAIS, and I'm surprised actually that they are still holding these listening sessions after having such an overwhelming rejection of NAIS at the first listening sessions that have taken place, and I expect it will continue to take place that at least 90% or more of farmers are opposed to this. So if there's any democratic process, we should see after these listening sessions that NAIS will be completely cancelled and scrapped. Thank you very much.

EC: Greetings, Dr. Lane and distinguished guests. I am Ed Callan of Newark, Ohio. I am a manager of the Callan Cattle Company in Newark and president of the Ohio River Valley Texas Longhorn Association. We reach from Illinois to Pennsylvania and into Canada. I've taken time off from my busy 2 days to be here with you today. I am not getting paid for my travel time nor my time off, nor am I reimbursed for my hotel or meals. This is a loss of money for me today. I am shooting to make it a plus regarding my time from my perspective in the NAIS issues.

The USDA has helped us with preventative measures in the past. A good example of that was the screw-worm eradication earlier in the last century. Preventative measures are most important. USDA Secretary Vilsack said in the spirit of President Obama's call for transparency in government, now is the time to have frank and open discussions about NAIS. We need to work collaboratively to resolve concerns and move forward with animal traceability. Bottom line: many of us have been talking to the USDA over and over again already. Have they been listening to us?

Here is a plan of common sense measures that the USDA should adopt; some are already in place. To deal with the increased tainted meat products, the USDA and Congress has to reform the present hands-off inspection system of the HACCP—Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Point. This is presently failing to guarantee sanitary practices at major slaughterhouse facilities.

More funding for meat inspectors. A perfect example of waste of funding thus far has been millions spent since 2003 on NAIS promotion such as traveling expenses, security guards, hotel, food, lodging, meeting room expenses, key chains, and yucky ChapStick that they give out freely, promotions and so on. Ladies and gentlemen, the USDA or FDA could have hired more meat inspectors with the money saved to accomplish the above.

Prevent importation of serious livestock diseases from other countries by stopping the importation of livestock from countries experiencing serious disease outbreaks. Mandate all imported livestock to be permanently ID'd. Require all livestock coming across our borders to meet our health standards. Require TB testing and quarantine all Mexican cattle.

This is just 3 minutes of comments and just a few more items—minor—need presented, but there is no time here. I respectfully submit this. J. Edward Callan, Callan Cattle Company, Newark, Ohio.

SO: Thank you. Mr. Easley.

DE: Good morning. Can you hear me okay? All right. I'm Dr. David Easley. I'm a human medical doctor, and I live here in Louisville, Kentucky. I want to distinguish myself from the veterinarian Dr. Easley, who has a master's degree in nutrition science from the University of Kentucky and who is a Tuskegee Institute trained veterinarian who advised me on what I am telling you today.

Some 30 years ago here in Kentucky, our equine livestock industry had a devastating, sudden failure of health of our horses. The horses had unexplained erectile dysfunction, hypertension, and unexplained obesity. It caused a devastating effect in Lexington amongst the horse industry when they were trying to breed the horses through the winter. What they discovered was that the feed had been sprayed and was green, and it was a green grass that then they served the animals green. It had its nutrients evaluated, and it was nutrient equivalent to fresh feed. All food processing removes potassium from the resultant food and adds sodium to resultant food. The human kidney has failed to adapt to the modern diet. The human kidney is unable to adapt to a diet that has less than twice as much potassium as sodium in each meal. If a human eats a diet of processed meats, processed vegetables, genetically modified vegetables or animals, or specially fed animals that have the intracellular potassium decreased and replaced with sodium while it's still alive or the intracellular potassium or food potassium—remember, potassium only goes into things when it's alive—the pumps pump potassium and that's the difference between when they're alive and when they're killed. Humans are unable to tolerate a diet that has processed food, that has its sodium content more than half the amount of potassium per gram. The *New England Journal of Medicine* two years ago this week published an article that said the cause of the 1.2 billion individuals who eat the modern diet of having epidemic hypertension, epidemic Type 2 diabetes, and the 600 million men that have erectile dysfunction in the United States—no, in the world—that

eat the modern diet, the cause is processed food. All food processing removes potassium and adds sodium to the resultant products. Thank you.

JE: Hi. I'm Janie Estes. I'm a member of Community Farm Alliance. I'm not a farmer. You might have seen my son here earlier. He made a sign this morning. I had to send a note to his teacher saying that we were furthering his political education today so he was going to be late. He's gone, but I want to read the sign that he made himself. It says, "I love my farmers." And he wrote their names: Mr. King, Jason, Adam, Sandy, and Ray. He knows these people; these people know him, too. My son says, "I know my farmers and I trust them." Adam Barr is my farmer, Ray Strobel is my farmer, Jason Corlett is my farmer, Sandy Corlett is my farmer, Mr. Jay King is my farmer. I know these people and I trust them. I trust them with my son's life. When I shop at the farmer's market on Saturday morning, I know that I'm putting his health in their hands, and I believe in what they do, and I'm proud to shop at the farmer's market and take care of my son in that way. Thank you.

GS: Howdy, everybody. My name is Greg Sterley. I don't speak in public very often. I am very grateful to you guys for taking the time to listen today. I just have a few responses. Something Secretary Vilsack said in his speech at the beginning, he said, "Most importantly, we need to market our products as the best in the world." I grow food and this is of no importance to me, and it just kind of highlights the different constituencies we have in this room. I believe we need to farm locally, we need to have our food local, and that's where security comes from. I think you're doing things that might be valuable to somebody. He said we need to respond to these critical overseas markets, and I think if we want to improve consumer confidence in our products, we ought to stop doing things that we are ashamed of to animals; things that we have to explain away or say, "This is normal. It's okay that we do this to these animals." If we're embarrassed about that, if other countries are saying, "We don't want to eat these things that you're importing; we need to stay away from American products," it's because of things we're doing here that they realize are wrong, and I say let's stop those products and at the very least exempt the small farmers—folks like me—who have said, "I don't want any part of that. I won't buy what's in the grocery store." I wouldn't feed that to my children.

Just in closing, I think if you're looking for accountability in our food supply, that should come from looking the grower in the eye rather than from some database with the numbers somewhere. Thank you.

SO: You'll have to tell me what to do with these at the end—the petitions.

KB: Good morning. I'm Karen Bergener, and I'm a dairy goat farmer from Portage County, Ohio, and one of the steering committee members for the Liberty Ark Coalition that was formed solely to fight the NAIS. I'm here today to speak against NAIS, but I'm speaking not just for myself but for thousands of people who have signed petitions. Judith McGeary of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance delivered copies of the about 10,000 or more signatures in Austin, and I have another thousand signatures here with me today.

The topic today for me is disenfranchisement. Though 10,000 signatures represent just the tip of the iceberg of the anti NAIS movement, these signatures were gathered without any formal signature drive and without any funding, which is completely different from the federal and state agency money that was used to convince people to register their farms. There would be many more signatures if people did not fear the USDA. Many people told me they would not sign the petition because they were afraid that the USDA would get the information and raid their farms, and veterinarians have told me they will not sign the petition because they are afraid they will lose their licenses. So I think we can reasonably say that the 10,000 signatures represent only a fraction of the people who are against NAIS. This is important because NAIS has been conceived and implemented without involving the majority of Americans, and that means people who eat as well as people who farm that are affected by NAIS. USDA's own documents state that the program was brought to them by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, otherwise known as NIAA, and we know that from NIAA's own meeting notes that the basic design of the program was completely put together by 1994 if not earlier. That included registration of properties, tagging and registration of animals, and tracking of animal movements. It's in their minutes on their website.

So, who is NIAA? They're a trade organization. Its members are state and federal agencies and large corporations and technology companies, all of whom will make money off NAIS. So from the beginning, the program has been put forward by these people and not by smaller, independent farmers. These sessions that are being held have not changed this disenfranchisement. Secretary Vilsack has admitted that half of all farmers do not have web access, but USDA put out the notices about the session on its website and in the Federal Register, which, by the way, most regular people don't read. They made no service announcements, no ads in newspapers—Liberty Ark took out an ad in the newspaper in Ohio—and they have made no other steps to reach farmers. The notice that's in your packet does not include the write-in address to submit comments, so people who do not have telephones, websites, or electronic access have been cut out of the comment process. This is not enough notice for average people, as people have commented. People couldn't take off time from farms and jobs on 2 weeks' notice.

If USDA is serious—it gave NIAA 10 years to develop the program, it's had 5 years to work on it—we need more time, a minimum of 3 months' notice, and a hearing in every state. Otherwise, it's merely window dressing. Thank you.

SO: Thank you. If you'd like to turn those in to the front desk where they're collecting the rest of the comments, okay? The next 5 speakers: John Grant. Are you going to speak? Okay. Wendell Berry. Terry Rowlett. Amy James. And Sheri Quinn.

JG: My name is John Grant. I'm a farmer from Henry County, Kentucky. I grow produce. I have no livestock, but I do help out on a dairy farm and I have a lot of friends who are in livestock. I could really just recap that what a lot of people here have said against NAIS, I agree with. I think that the USDA needs to get its head out of the sand and realize that local is the way to go. Fuel prices are just going to keep going up. Pretty soon we won't be able to export or import anything. That sounds extreme but it's true, and I think that local is the way to go. I believe that NAIS is just a way that folks can make money on the backs of small farmers, and small farmers can't afford it. The fellow I work for at the dairy, I know that he is operating on a very slim margin now, and if this is implemented, it will probably put him under, along with a lot of other people. I really think that if we truly live in a democracy, then our government needs to listen to us and just abandon NAIS. Thank you very much.

WB: I'm Wendell Berry from Henry County, Kentucky. The need to trace animals was made by the Confined Animal Industry, which are essentially disease breeding operations. The health issue was invented right there. The remedy is to put animals back on pasture where they belong. The USDA is scapegoating the small producers to distract attention from the real cause of the trouble. Presumably, these animal factories are—in a too familiar phrase—too big to fail. This is the first agricultural meeting I've ever been to in my life that was attended by the police. I asked one of them why he was there, and he said, "Rural Kentucky." So thank you for your vote of confidence in the people you are supposed to be representing. I think the rural people of Kentucky are as civilized as anybody else.

But the police are here prematurely. If you impose this program on the small farmers who are already overburdened, you're going to have to send the police for me. I'm 75 years old. I've about completed my responsibilities to my family. I lose very little in going to jail in opposition to your program, and I'll have to do it because I will be, in every way that I can conceive of, a non-cooperator. I understand the principles of civil disobedience from Henry Thoreau to Martin Luther King, and I'm willing to go to jail to

defend the young people who I hope will still have a possibility of becoming farmers on a small scale in this supposedly free country. Thank you very much.

TR: Thank you for allowing us to have comments today. Again, my name is Terry Rowlett. I am another person from Henry County, and it seems like we're well represented from our county here today. I farm in partnership with my father, who is 94 years old and is today, while I'm down here, on a tractor disking corn ground and also with my sister and my wife. We operate 130 cow dairy there, and we raise all of our replacements, about approximately 145 head. We grow a lot of our feed—not all of it. I've found out that maybe we can purchase some better than we can grow it cheaper. I also serve on Dairy Farmers of America's board of directors, and I'm president of the American Dairy Association of Kentucky.

My comments today will focus on from the dairy side of it, and our organization—Dairy Farmers of America—known as DFA—on the mandatory animal ID for the dairy sector of our industry. While identifying animals and premises cannot prevent disease any more than a licensing of an automobile can prevent accidents or theft, identification is essential in speeding a timely response and minimizing the spread of a potential devastating consequence of disease. I have submitted my comments in writing out there, so I'm just going to go through and hit a few of the high points of my comments.

A lot of our industry—when I say our industry, I mean the dairy—has already been tagged. By that, I mean we keep records of our animals. And in some cases, a lot of the dairies are using the RFID—Radio-Frequency Identification System—and it's known as 840-RFID ear tags. I do not use them, I'll admit, but I think it would be a benefit to me in helping track my animals better, their production and so forth, if I did. I've been looking at it, but yet, as Mr. Grant said, our milk prices now are devastating, down as low as they've been in years. So trying to find \$2 for each animal to tag, which is what the cost would be to put that tag in, is not there right now. And if you look over the life of a cow, that's only \$0.40 a year—a 5-year span. But in Michigan, I'll have to say that due to the tuberculosis outbreak of wildlife, they have set a model in place that they have all of their premises ID'd and they are now tracking their animals with this.

In closing, through state permits of dairy farms, production records and all, the dairy industry effectively has all farms registered and animals ID'd on those farms. The only missing link is to keep track of animal movement, and I believe that is what this system—this National Identification System—is all about; just tracking the movement in the case of an outbreak of disease. So again, I thank you, and it is truly a new era of

responsibility that we need to be mindful that preparing for a quick and effective response to emergencies lies in the heart of responsible animal health systems. Thank you.

AJ: Okay, thanks. Hi. My name is Amy James, and I'm from Louisville, Kentucky. I'm a concerned citizen, I'm a consumer, and I'm a family food producer. As far as I can see, the two main reasons the USDA gives for NAIS is the need to track meat and animals for export and to identify sources of disease. Meat exporters are big farms, and if they see the need for an ID system, then they should voluntarily participate in one. That's their business and that's their issue. Large-scale farms feed animals improperly, they raise them improperly, and they treat them improperly, and this is the main cause of disease. This rarely happens in small family farms. Families like mine raise as much of our food as we possibly can to financially survive. Hundreds of thousands of small families literally depend upon small, affordable flocks—the single cow—just to make it. Many of these families don't have phones, they don't have internet in rural Kentucky, and that doesn't make them uncivilized. What is NAIS going to do to these law-abiding, America-loving citizens? It's going to harm their family, and it's going to harm my family.

The American people want safe and affordable food, and thankfully, the two go hand in hand. They can have both from a small family farm or a homesteader. I can have it from my backyard as long as I'm not unfairly overregulated or punished for the foolishness of others.

That's pretty much all I have to say. I would like to say that keep in mind that the government paying for something instead of a big farm is still the taxpayer paying for that, and I'm a taxpayer, and I resent having to pay out the wazoo for a program that I don't agree with. And that's all I have.

SQ: My name is Sheri Quinn, and I'm a concerned citizen for this issue. I didn't really have a prepared statement, but I did want to comment on my perspective, as I am not a farmer, I don't own any animals, but I am a consumer, I am a taxpayer, and I am an American citizen.

As I sit here this morning listening to the statements and justifications for implementation of the NAIS, it amazes me the very premise on which the program is based appears to be flawed, and that's that the government can fix all our problems, that it's the government's job and that America may face any problem and the government's going to fix it. And in my mind, this is the fallacy that our burgeoning government is foisting upon the American people. One has to only look at the success of most government responses to

crises to realize that government cannot take care of the American people. Our country is currently in dire financial straits right now, and many American families are already struggling to get by, and I don't really see an end in sight right now. Nobody has the answers to fix that. So where are we at spending all this extra money? Many Americans would choose to produce their own food in the way of our forebears just to get by. The added financial burden of NAIS is too much. It's ridiculous in this economic climate. The government has no money. I think the previous speaker said, "The government doesn't have any money. The government's money is our money." So when the government produces a program, we get to pay for it. Americans need to stop expecting the nanny state to care for every need and start living with personal responsibility that is the heritage of every American.

If I have a few more seconds, I wanted to read something that also concerns me about this. This is a statement from a report by Judith McGeary, and it's kind of the way I feel about the invasion of privacy. "The USDA is asked how it can address privacy and confidentiality concerns with the NAIS, but there's no solution to this issue. Requiring individuals to provide information about their land, animals, and daily activities to the government creates an unprecedented level of government intrusion into people's lives. Moreover, once that data is submitted to a database, it's vulnerable. Federal agencies have a track record of both accidental releases of information and vulnerability to hackers. Requiring individuals to submit information to private companies is not a solution to the problem. Regardless of the laws or regulations, individuals would be vulnerable to the sale and misuse of their information. How could an individual even prove that such misuse had happened, much less be properly compensated? Once collected, people's information will be vulnerable. The only solution is to not collect the information in the first place or to collect it on a voluntary basis so that individuals can choose whether or not they wish to take that risk." Thank you for listening.

SO: Thank you. The next speakers will be Richard Trites, Ralph Packard, Sue Billings. Is Sue here? Does she still—? Oh. Yes? Okay. Dana Jenkins. And Baria Ernst. Did I say that wrong? Okay. Thank you. I'm having a little trouble moving this microphone. I don't know if you can come loosen it up for folks.

RT: I'm Richard Trites. I'm a citizen. I live on a farm, although I am not a producer. I am also a consumer and I am here to speak in opposition to the NAIS.

Some may recall a few years back the so-called mad cow disease, the BSE. There were producers that I recall here in the United States that wished to have their animals tested so they could prove that their animals did not have this particular disease, and the

government forbid them from doing the testing. We're trying to implement a system here that supposedly tracks animal disease and yet when people voluntarily wished to do such tracking, they were forbidden from doing so. When it comes to registration, the Farm Services Administration already registers farms. Why do we need a duplicate system with premise ID and again, this raises privacy issues, which was just spoken about. There have been others that you've heard in the news lately—health records, tax records and others—that have been compromised and divulged to the public. To think that this information would be secure in a public age is just ridiculous. I mean, we have private FBI files and tax returns showing up on a table in the White House. So to think that this information would remain confidential is not a logical assumption.

I'd also like to speak to the issue of foreign animals. There is a significant portion of animal products that are imported into this country. Is there any proposed NAIS tracking or should I say IAIS—an international tracking of animals? There's none that I know of from the USDA. I have not heard any comments from anybody in the government that has said this. This makes moot the whole issue of a national ID. If there are foreign animals coming in, there is no way to track them.

Speaking to the people that have spoken here today, you may notice that virtually everyone who has spoken in opposition to NAIS has been just regular, ordinary people and farmers and consumers. Those that have spoken in favor of it have been bureaucrats and large industry trade groups who do not have the interest of regular, ordinary people in mind.

There's one other issue I haven't heard raised and that is cancer. Laboratory testing has indicated that implanting of computer chips into animals causes cancer. That's another concern that we need to take into consideration.

Finally, let me say I want to read this comment from this very session right here from the agenda. "These discussions will be less about concerns and more about solutions to create an NAIS that we can all live with." I object to the government's insisting upon foisting this system upon us. It seems to be a foregone conclusion of Secretary Vilsack and others that this system is going to be implemented, and the very nature of the agenda of this meeting is proof of that. We wish that the government would listen to the people. If industry groups want to have a voluntary system, I'm fine with that. But this should not be mandatory, and it should not be managed by the government. Thank you very much.

RP: My name is Ralph Packard, and I am a small farmer. In over 20 years of dealing directly with people—I'm not going to call them consumers—people—I have never had anybody come back and complain about the quality of the meat that we've sold or the quality of the produce that we grow. I have to jump through hoops like every other small farmer in here every time I take an animal to be processed. I have to drive a long ways because it's the only one still in business. They're inspected one at a time. There's no 35,000 birds an hour at the plant that I go to when I have chickens processed at S and S in Bowling Green. 300 birds a day, one by one inspection. Contamination is not an issue and it never has been when it's done by people. Technology has some severe flaws. Technology can fail. That will be in my written comments that I'll leave with USDA later on today and discuss in the breakout sessions if they wish to go that route. Mr. Berry, I'm with you. They're going to have to come after me too. Thank you very much.

SB: Good morning. My name is Sue Billings. I'm the Deputy State Veterinarian. I'm here on behalf of the Office of the State Veterinarian and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. We do support the National Animal Identification System. As the Office of the State Veterinarian, we're actually charged with the mission of protecting the health of all livestock for all producers in the state of Kentucky, large or small. We are faced weekly with situations where traceability is a problem because there is no animal ID in the animal. So animal ID has served well in the past to make Kentucky free of tuberculosis and free of brucellosis in our livestock, and we'd like to keep those statuses and it's very important that we're able to trace animals. We do support the confidentiality of this information. The state has regulations that protect confidentiality of any information that is collected. The next speaker, Dana Jenkins, is going to read a comment by the State Veterinarian, Dr. Robert Stout, who could not be here today. Thank you.

DJ: Hello. My name is Dana Jenkins. I am with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture. I am reading the letter from Dr. Stout, who is our Kentucky State Veterinarian. "Dear Secretary Vilsack: The ability to trace animals in the face of an animal disease outbreak is crucial to its control and eradication. The vital role of the National Animal Identification System has been recognized by the state animal health officials since its inception as the United States Animal Identification Plan over 5 years ago. Unfortunately, the effects of special interest groups, mistrust of the government, and the lack of focused commitment by both the government and state corridors have left us bogged down with a system that is far from workable. While no one likes to use the word mandatory, in reality it appears that making the program mandatory is the only way to attain a necessary goal for traceability. Both government and industry must decide whether or not animal identification is needed. If the answer is no, then let's stop talking

about it. If the answer is yes, then let's commit to a program that will produce results, not just rhetoric. I use premise ID registration as an example. While it is the foundation of NAIS, it should be also the most doable of the three components. Yet in over 4 years, we are far from being even close with less than 25% in most states to the critical mass of an effective system. This data is available in the public domain in virtually all states, but we will still continue soliciting applications one at a time from producers and others. Kentucky holds all of the necessary data in a public tax record, both at the county and state levels. With adequate resources and direction, premise registration could be completed in a few months. Maintaining updates for the premise database is another area not adequately addressed in current plans. I would venture that much of the current premise data is already obsolete. Using reports from property tax records can provide regular and accurate upgrading. I fear that extraneous information required within the premise registration application has produced some of the paranoia expressed by the NAIS dissenters. The key value in premise registration is knowing that where, keep it simple, phone book information. Other information can be collected when needed. Maintaining the accuracy of species data, for example, is a difficult, if not impossible, task and likely unnecessary. Animal identification devices have evolved to the level of practical, both in technology and cost. This component merely awaits a completed premise foundation and the will or mandate to fully implement. While these are cost involved as well as the species specific requirements, critical mass in the area is clearly attainable. By far, the most challenging and complex component is the animal tracking system. Functional systems exist currently within the industry, both nationally and internationally. The system demands decisions by the policyholders, whether they are government or stakeholders or both. In the absence of the decision and clear direction and commitment, progress is not possible. Technology exists today to complete this component. It will not be cheap or easy, but as an animal health official, I feel that it is not only necessary but that it is urgent to the long-term protection and promotion of America's animal industries. In summary, I implore USDA to bring NAIS to a necessary and logical conclusion before we have to face an animal disease crisis that we are not adequately equipped to manage. Sincerely, Dr. Stout, Kentucky State Veterinarian."

BE: Hi. My name is Baria Ernst. I'm a member of Community Farm Alliance, and I am not a producer but I do work with producers through Grasshoppers Distribution, which is our region's first all local distribution company, and we are working to put the infrastructure in place to build a local food system here in our area.

I can't say anything that anyone who's come before me hasn't already said and said better, such as Adam Barr and Wendell Berry, but I would like to repeat that NAIS is an undue burden for the family farmers and it is a system that benefits the corporations and

the agribusinesses and the export markets. It's not needed by the smaller producer. It should not be a burden that is put on the smaller family farm. And also, I don't think that it does anything to address the issue of food-borne illness, which starts in industrial slaughter facilities, and this program shifts responsibility away from the broken federal health inspection system and onto the backs of the farmers.

Two points I would like to elaborate on. The first is that I spoke with probably 15 producers yesterday, who would love to have come today and shared their comments, but it's the first sunny week we've had in a month, and everyone is out baling hay, as they should be: "Make hay while the sun shines." And as someone who's been planning meetings with producers for the past couple of years, I would just like to suggest to USDA that if you're really interested in a spirit of inclusiveness, that should start with structuring the hearings so that producers can make it. I would suggest wintertime hearings spread over 2 days so that people have a choice of when to come, and start at an hour that gives people time to drive in to make it who can't afford to stay the night.

And my second point is that this should absolutely not be a mandatory program. It should be voluntary, but as Adam said, if the goal is 100% participation, that is the same thing as a mandatory program, so that should not be allowed to go forward. Even if the system was put into place and we could trace animal disease outbreaks, we could trace to a hundred locations a day, but if the cause of the food-borne illness is not addressed, which is these confined animal feeding operations and improper inspection of the processing facilities, we can trace it, but it won't do anything to stop it. So instead of subsidizing the cost of this NAIS program by giving money to the agribusinesses, to have the funds to put it in place, we should take that money and do something more constructive, like do a better job of inspecting our facilities. Put the money where it needs to be. Thank you.

SO: Okay. There are 4 more speakers that have identified they'd like to speak, so I'm going to call them up after they're finished. I'll give you an opportunity if someone didn't have an opportunity to speak to come up. So if we could have Brittany Strobel and Lisa Menicksma. No? Okay. Carole Bretschneider. Is Carole here? Oh, okay. And Ben Sekar. Okay, thank you. And if you talk close to the mike, they'll hear you better in the back, okay?

BS: Hi. My legal name is Brittany Annette Strobel. My nickname is Ray. Thank you for being here today and for hearing us, and I hope that you will hear us. The current National Animal Identification System is biased against small family scale farmers and towards large industrial scale farmers. The system puts an undue burden on farmers that

are already struggling to survive. It would cost small farmers time in tagging with new tags and reporting and in money, points that have already been made. Who will benefit from the system? Large factory farms and whoever is selling the microchips to go in the tags. How is this a just system if large industrial scale farms can have one tag for a huge batch of animals while small farmers must tag each animal? Of course, industrial farms want this because it will put their competition out of business. Yes, animal disease is a problem in large factory farm confinement operations, so let the factory farms have this, but don't impose it on the small-scale farmer.

Secretary Vilsack talked about a crisis. The crisis is in the current practices in industrial scale farming and in the slaughterhouses. The NAIS doesn't do anything to address the practices that make animals sick; it only tracks the diseases once they're in place. Because of the way industrial farms treat animals, there is currently and will continue to be an animal and a food crisis, and the only way to address that is to address the way that animals are treated, the way that factory farms operate.

In the comments read from Dr. Stout of the Kentucky State Veterinarian, a key word that I heard was animal industries. I didn't introduce myself in terms of who I am in the world. I am both a citizen, a person who lives in Louisville, but I'm also in transition, moving to a farm in Meade County. We have chickens, vegetables, and beef, so on that farm we don't have an animal industry. We have a farm where we take care of our animals. It's true that if industrial farms continue as they are, there is and will continue to be a food crisis, and so what's going to happen when that crisis continues and escalates and eventually crumbles? People are going to look to small-scale family farmers for safe food, and so I would hope that the USDA would do everything possible to support small-scale farmers so that people have access to safe, healthy food. Thank you.

KB: Hi. My name is Carole Bretschneider. I am a retired teacher in Louisville who spends all of my volunteer time working in the environment and in green, healthy things. Thank you for letting me speak today. I just want to ask everybody, if you have children and if you have grandchildren, and do you care what their future is like? I am on the board of EarthSave Louisville, which promotes the future health of all of us—the animals and the land—and one of my favorite research things is that this is the first generation of children that will not live as long as their parents. I want to know, do you care? Do you think about what it is? And I keep hearing about factory farms today. As I said, I'm a member of EarthSave. I'm on the board. And 20 years ago, John Robbins wrote the book *Diet for a New America* and showed us pictures of what factory farms are like, and it's still happening, you guys. We need to get it out there to our families and to the media about the food systems in America. I'm also on the Louisville Sustainability Forum in

Louisville. It's growing like wildfire. I don't know if you all noticed the *GreenList* book that's being put out every 2 months. Every 2 months it gets fatter and fatter. I think people are starting to wake up. I hope so. So I think what I'm hearing over and over today is the cause is not the small family farms; it's the factory farms. The problem is there the way they treat the animals, the bad health, the bad inspection. I want you to please try to see the movie *Processed People* that's coming out. Processing our food—and someone spoke about it—someone much smarter than me—a minute ago about taking the potassium out and then we put the salt in our processed foods. We need more healthy food from our local farmers. We need the vegetables and what we were created to eat. We need that. My son, as a Type 1 diabetic, you all, Type 2, there is a movie called *Simply Raw*, the second movie you've got to see. It's coming out. It's a groundbreaking documentary by medical doctors. My son saw it. After 24 years of diabetes, he went to a health center in Florida and he ate vegetables and fruits like you small farmers are making that didn't have any organics on them. You guys, his insulin went down 2/3 in 21 days. And the Type 2 diabetics, if any of you have it, it was gone in 3 weeks of eating what we're supposed to eat. So thank you again for letting me speak. Remember that research quote about our children and our grandchildren in case you have any. I belong to a community-supported agriculture farm for 4 years with Ben, who is going to speak next, and that is the answer: small farms and healthy food. That's it. Thank you.

BS: My name is Ben Sekar. I'm a pastor in Henry County, not a farmer, but we do have our own 5-acre place that we're hoping to mostly feed ourselves, and we've just started thinking about what we'll do in the future to maybe bring in some extra money in real small ways. This is real scary to me, thinking about what we've been hoping to do. I can't hardly believe that I could be criminalized for what I've been looking forward to doing and am just now starting out with. It reminds me, this whole thing, that story about the guy walking along the sidewalk late at night and there's a guy crawling around under a streetlamp, and he says to the fellow down on his knees, he says, "What are you doing down there?" He says, "I'm looking for my car keys." The guy is drunk obviously. "Well, where did you drop them?" "I dropped them over there." "Well, how come you're looking here?" "Well, the light's better." Right? The idea. You're not looking in the right place. You need to go to where the problem is, which is not on small family farms. No one I know that sells me the food that I buy, the food that I'm hoping to produce, none of us will ever sell to Japan or someplace else. That sort of defeats the whole point of local food. Like folks have said, when you know your farmers, when you see them face-to-face, when you invite them to come out and watch their food being grown and produced and fed and everything else, then that's the accountability you're not going to get sick stuff there because then they're not going to buy it. They're not going to eat it.

It's unfair to small family farms and detrimental. It will ruin the whole system, not just a loss of the family farm heritage we have in this country but even the criminalization of it is impossible to me to imagine. You could do what you're saying, but it's not going to fix the problems. Thanks.

SO: I think I was given 4 additional names of speakers: Charlie Hatcher, Mark Keating, Joan Roberts, and James Roberts. Just one or both? Okay. So 2 more? Anyone else interested? Do you want to come on up and sit down? I'll get 5 up here right now. Anyone else? Please come up. I have 2 or 3 coming up from the back. Okay. We're going to go ahead with this number. Do you want to go ahead, sir?

JR: My name is Jim Roberts. My wife and I are from Dayton, Ohio. I am a Weston A. Price Chapter Leader for Dayton along with my wife Joan. I'm also a board member for the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund.

I did want to start with one or two questions, and that is, why don't we just put a law in front of Congress to vote up or down NAIS. Don't sneak it in as a school lunch program deal and don't add it a little bit over here, a little bit over there. Let's have a one-up, one-down vote. Put it before Congress. We will take care of our congressmen if they do the wrong thing. Let's not sneak around. Put it in front of Congress, have them vote on it.

Now back to my comments. The NAIS program has many unintended consequences that are going to negatively impact our economy, our health, and our liberties. It will not meet the goal since it stops at the slaughterhouse. Unless we cancel it now, it will consume billions of precious governmental agricultural health dollars and increase customer food and tax cost. By USDA's own research, NAIS will force many small farmers out of business, losing many more jobs than the big auto industry downsizing that's going on right now. You haven't seen nothing yet. During the financial downturn, we learned that we must have financial— NAIS will consolidate the food resources and aggregate our exposure to massive food outages by limiting providers. A good example is the profound impact that one peanut company had recently on our nation. Enforcing the current laws would've avoided the problem. We have the laws; we don't need NAIS. NAIS discriminates against the small farmers who directly serve their local communities across the country. One size NAIS does not fit all. Due to the big businesses, the CAFO exceptions, the small farmer will pay 2 or 3 times more per animal than their big agribusiness counterparts. Any local direct consumer health issue is immediately apparent. I know who my farmer is. I know where my milk comes from. I can know his first name. If I've got a problem, I know where to go. I've never had a problem, though. NAIS will reduce the overall health, not improve it. The demand for higher quality

diversified food is increasing, pastured, free range animal products without GMOs and antibiotics. CAFOs will become our only source of post NAIS animal foods. The side benefits of CAFO beef products include Crohn's disease, early breast development, increased antibiotic immunity and becoming more evident. Our health insurance crisis cannot afford ignoring any opportunity as simple as diversified, wholesome food to prevent illness. Consumers should have the right to choose what goes in their bodies. The primary health responsibility to good health is the individual and food they choose to eat. The NAIS implementation will reduce food alternatives of wholesome foods. The Defense Department recently cancelled the F-22 program because it was ill-timed but only after billions had been spent. We have the opportunity to shut down NAIS before its expensive, unintended consequences bomb our health, our economy, and our liberty to choose. The one change that would best improve NAIS, I believe: cancel it.

MK: Good morning. My name is Mark Keating, and I live in Shelby County, Kentucky. I'm very humbled here today to be among the community of people that are speaking out against the mandatory NAIS proposal, and I do emphasize the mandatory as being a significant limitation of this proposal. I have worked in sustainable, local, organic agriculture for over 20 years, including time spent at USDA. I was a USDA employee for 5 years. I've actually sat in the very seats that you sat in as being USDA representatives at a public listening session. So we thank you for being here and for doing your work, and we thank the Department for being receptive to input from the constituency, the people. Of course, Abraham Lincoln is known for having dubbed the USDA the "people's department," and I feel with supreme confidence that what we are seeing here today across the spectrum of public opinion being expressed is the new voice of the people stepping forward and saying, "We have the right and we demand the opportunity to know where our food comes from and to source it directly from the people that we choose to provide it for us." This is a fundamental step forward in the preservation of our beloved earth, the protection of our environment, and it is an essential step forward in the protection of our health and our responsibility as was pointed out just a moment ago to the following generations. Not everybody will be called upon to be a parent or a grandparent, but we will all be called upon to be ancestors, and our obligation is to leave a better world for those who are coming ahead of us, and the way to do that is to restore animals to pasture and to allow consumers to identify and connect directly with the producers.

I'll make one last observation and that's on the nature of the expense and the cost of this proposal. I did work, as I mentioned, at the USDA for a number of years, and I have firsthand experience working in certification and compliance activities. There are two dimensions to these undertakings. There is compliance with the regulation and then there

is proving compliance with the regulation. The compliance is a set of burdens in and of itself. Proving the compliance is an additional set of burdens that often exceeds the individual's ability to meet. And I'll give two examples of well-intentioned federal proposals. The HACCP Proposal for slaughterhouse safety and the Organic Certification Proposal, and in both instances what we found is that some combination of compliance and documentation of compliance drove an enormous number of small producers, family operations, out of the marketplace. In many cases, it drove people out of business, certainly with the mandatory nature of HACCP, anybody who couldn't comply was out of business. With Organic Certification Program, it's driven enormous numbers of farmers out of certification, and it is not in the long interest of our country to continue to centralize and depend on technology when our personal choice is really the ideal way to protect ourselves. Thank you very much.

MG: Good morning. My name is Marshall Gazaway. I am not a farmer but I work with farmers daily. I was listening to the screen this morning where they said you're coming here to listen. I'm so glad you folks are here to listen today. Listening is a terribly hard job. I don't find the enemy here. Of course, the disease is the thing that attacks the food, attacks the animals and foods, what we put into it. But I did my fighting on the battlefield, from Vietnam to the first Persian War. So the enemy is what we need to do to stop people from being sick with food and the things of that nature. I work with people in the cities, where there is a growing problem—the good doctor here pointed it out so well about potassium and the sodium. I work with other friends of mine and the diabetes and the things. That is the true enemy of what the final results of what these things do. I have no gripe with the farmers or with the producers, but I just hope that we can come together on this listening situation and do the right thing. By not doing the right thing, a lot of times in America it's brought about a lot of problems that we're having in America today. So I just hope that we can sit down and do the right thing across the board. As I fought for all concerned, the fight here is the same for all concerned. And the person who consumes it, at the end when his body is all messed up, if you don't take care of animals, if you don't go to the doctor and take care of yourself, then the same thing happens to us that happens to animals. So I'm not going to take up your time. I'm very, very glad to hear a lot of people here today to express themselves to think over, but I'm going to leave something I always leave with people about food. I think the most important business relationship on this planet is between people and food, and if you don't believe it, don't eat. Thank you.

RO: My name is Ruchia Oakes. I am a 12-year-old home schooled kid that lives on a farm, and I do not feel that the microchip going into animals or that will go into animals is safe and it's not what our God that created us would want us to have because eventually, after

it goes into animals, it's going to go into pets and then eventually—it's already starting—it's going to go into human beings and you'd all have to wear it; otherwise, you'll get arrested and possibly shot. There are quite a few animals on our farm that we have to take care of and we have to make sure that they do not get sick; otherwise, the people that we give the milk and the eggs and stuff will also get sick, as well as ourselves. So it's kind of like a chain reaction where we have to take care of them so that they can take care of us so that then we can take care of them and so on. Then the consumers come in as side parts and stuff. But as a farm kid, I have learned to work to help find a way to encourage others to do the same thing that we do. And working as a farmer or a farm kid or a farmer's wife is a 24/7 thing. You don't just go and it's very rare that we ever go on any kind of vacation because we don't usually have that much money to spend because we have to go and we have to take care of our animals. We find that if we don't take care of our animals, then they don't take care of us, like I already said. This work ethic is what made America great. Game Boy and Wii, malls, and, quite unfortunately in my case, books are not what made America. It's not what founded our country. If that was it, then we wouldn't have America right now. Please help keep our small family farms in business.

RB: Hi. My name is Revonne Bouwens. Thank you for having this forum. I do agree with many of the speakers that this forum did not include the folks who ought to be here. They're out working today. My name is Revonne Bouwens. I live in southern Indiana. I'm a member of the Louisville Sustainability Forum, the Sierra Club, and the Audubon Club. I probably have what's the most energy efficient home in the Midwest to try to stop what's happening to our world. I also have a certified wildlife habitat for birds, bees, hummingbirds, and for my family's food.

The point I'd like to bring up is that sometimes it takes one straw to break a camel's back. This may be the issue. I believe that industrial processed foods have operated under the radar for too long. They're poisoning our children, they're poisoning ourselves. This is an opportunity for this generation to pull the NAIS system as the benchmark bad solution to what is the problem: industrialized food production, feedlots. Currently, we have an administration that is going to do its best to ignore the corporate lobbying from big industrial food lots, big, bad food production processed food. This is the time, I think, as Al Gore, Thomas Friedman, Wendell Berry, Bill McKibben, speak up and say, "Never have we had a chance to stop coal, oil, and those types of things in our lives that are ruining our lives." I'm distressed to hear from the veterinarians in Kentucky and Indiana. You're on the wrong side of the issue. The issue is to stop processed food, industrialized animal production. That's where your efforts should lie. That's where your time should lie. We basically have a cause and effect problem here.

The cause of mad cow disease, the cause of the health problems in the United States, is the way that we grow and process food. So now we come with NAIS, which is supposed to be the solution. What will the effect be? The effect will be that we will continue the processing of food and animals that cause the problems, and we will eliminate the solution to the problem, which is small farmers and CFAs.

I would just like to make the point once more that for those of us who oppose the NAIS, look at this as a chance to turn our veterinarians around to tackle the issue correctly, turn corporate farmers and corporate food processors around. It's the same thing that I tell coal producers: I thank you for bringing electricity to my house. I do not thank you for the vile ways that you produce it. And I say the same thing to corporate food producers and corporate animal producers. I thank you for bringing food to my house, but I do not thank you for the vile ways that you produce it. Thank you.

TS: My name is Tim Strader, and I'm a resident here in Louisville, Kentucky, and a lot of my friends are into the local food groups and things like that. Of course, food is very important—I know—to everyone. So it's got me pretty concerned also about just rights and privileges. I think you've heard a lot of passionate people speak today, and it's because you're talking about people's livelihood and you're talking about people's way of life, and these aren't privileges. It's not like we're saying, "Well, the speed limit needs to drop 10 miles per hour more because that's a privilege to drive a car," but is it really a privilege to feed your family or to have a job that would give you money to support your family? These aren't privileges; these are rights that are being attacked. So it's not that local farmers have any less of a pull in America either, a value, because the bedrock of America is that everyone gets one vote, so everyone is equal—if you make a lot of money, if you don't make money. As long as you're not a felon, you get a vote. Do you know what I'm saying? So that's really concerning, and I hope the secretary understands that this isn't something just to toy around with or something to say, "My ideal is that we don't have diseases and so I'm going to sacrifice the rights of these other people to meet this ideal."

Secondly, I hope if this goes through that it works 100% of the time because if it fails at any stage, the loss of regional food networks that this will cause will take away the safety net and the bedrock. So let's say now you have all these mega foods going around and suddenly they can't do the job. You won't have the regional suppliers that could actually save you in such a circumstance as that. Also, let's say that the jobs get worse. The farmer actually has a wonderful job. The economy can just crash, but as long as they own their land and as long as they can get seeds and keep it going, you can have a sustainable lifestyle. So the local farmer actually has the best—well, should have the

most sustainable lifestyle of anyone. But what this will do is it will take it out from them. So if we have any trouble—let's say Mexico has something worse than H1N1 come out of it and we have to shut down the borders there—hopefully, that would never happen, but if it did, we wouldn't have the regional networks to supply for us. Is that 30 seconds? Okay. I guess that's it.

KA: Good morning. My name is Keith Ashley, and first off, I'd like to thank the farm kid who spoke to us. As is so often the case, it is the youth among us who most clearly speak the truth. I know that because I'm a high school English teacher here in Louisville. I'm also apprenticing at a local farm—Foxhollow—and I eat food. Like several other speakers, my response to this question is to wonder why we don't attack the problem at its source. Let us imagine that we have a sudden outbreak of super virulent chicken pox among a classroom of Bowling Green, Kentucky, kindergartners. Placing computer chips in the children and tracking their movements might allow us to make sure that none of them fly to a foreign country for spring break. It might give you, in the eyes of an uninformed public, the appearance of actually doing something to protect public health. It will certainly mean more profits for the industry that produces the tags and computer software. But I can't see how it shows that you are truly interested in supporting the health of the children, their families, or the future health of the community. What if the outbreak of the super virulent chicken pox could be related to the gratuitous and morally irresponsible use of antibiotics in cattle that must be pumped full of the chemicals to keep them alive as a result of the unnatural feeding and tending practices factory farms use to keep their expenses low, their profits high, and their products an increasing risk to homeland security? What if the source of the problem is nothing other than the greed that drives us to value profit over public health and well-being? Perhaps you find it a stretch to compare the care of livestock with that of kindergarten children. I don't. We feed that cattle to our children and it becomes them. Humanity has known for a long time that we are what we eat. Nature has already set an excellent teaching model for us in the economy of the cow that eats the grass and produces the manure that fertilizes the grass with nothing wasted, nothing poisoned. What if the source of these problems is directly related to choosing to ignore nature's truths, choosing instead to invest in the half-truths or not-truths of the industrial laboratory and the industrial bank account? Why not attack the problem at its source with legislation that more closely monitors factory farms, that directly supports public health and local family pasture farms and local food distribution systems, not the freakish implants of more chemicals and computer chips into the food we eat. Thank you.

MS: Hello. I hasten to add at the beginning here I'm certainly not a great fan of Leon Trotsky, the Marxist revolutionary; however, I think he made an observation which may be

apropos to this; namely, that in a society where the means of production are controlled by the state, dissent means death by slow starvation. Of course, for Trotsky and many of his fellow travelers, this is an ideal to be sought. And of course, this was put into practice in Russia, in the Soviet Union, where the Soviet government effectively waged war on their own people. The Kulaks, who were these despicable, awful, often referred to as bloodsucking people who had the shocking gall not to want to have their land, their property, collectivized, made part of the great and glorious progressive system, and so they were killed by the millions. Now, of course, this may seem like a bit of a stretch, but those of you who are familiar, for example, with the story of the Land Between the Lakes down in Western Kentucky, may be aware that it's not quite so ludicrous. There have been cases in the history of this country where people, communities, minding their own business have just been told, "Get the hell out. We need this. We are the managers who have the wisdom and the knowledge to know how things should be done, so you get out." The great irony of that situation was that that property, that land, was given to those people's ancestors 6 generations before as payment because the fledgling American government didn't have any money to pay veterans of the Revolutionary War, so they paid them in land and then 6 generations later, I guess it's a case of what the Lord giveth, then the Lord taketh away, except some people are a little unclear about what the subject of that sentence actually refers to.

All I can really say is that I think the direction things are going— The politics we see on TV is rubbish. Democrats, Republicans—I've lived in the D.C. area. It's a big racket; it's a scam. If you care about your families and communities, then the only people who are going to be able to look out for them are you yourselves. Don't look at anybody else. Alexander Solzenitzen, towards the end of his life, one of his observations was, "Don't fear them, don't ask anything from them, just look out for your own people because nobody else is going to do it for you."

SO: Thank you. Anyone else who would like to speak? Let's get a last round in. Anyone else? Pardon me? Looks like you're it. Okay.

SG: Hi. My name is Scott Grass. I'm a member of a CSA, and Ralph and Adam here are the farmers that provide the food for my family and myself. Just a little thing I'm kind of concerned about is most of what I hear about is this is for trade. Other countries are concerned about our food. If our food was local—I know where my food comes from. I don't have to be concerned. I don't need a barcode to tell me where it came from. All I've got to do is just go to Ralph and say, "Where are these from?" "Oh, those are the ones we picked two days ago," or "That one was slaughtered two weeks ago." It seems like we're addressing this as a result of we're putting burden on the local farmers here,

and they're not the problem; they're the solution to the problem. The mega processing facilities, that's where the food is contaminated at. It's not contaminated at the growing sites other than these large factory farms, feedlot sort of things. It just seems like this is not going to solve the problem that we have here. It's going to put burden on these guys. It's going to put a lot of these guys out of business. And it's just going to compound the whole issue. It's not a solution. It's just compounding the whole problem. We can't solve this. This industry is too big to fail. If it does fail, then where do we go? The small farmer, just the local, seems like where we need to be going. We've got to realize that oil is not going to get any cheaper. These factory farms have got to ship this; they're shipping to Japan and China and overseas markets, but that's not going to become feasible at one point. At some point, you're going to have to buy local because you're not going to be able to take this ground beef and drive it 2,000-3,000 miles around the country before you deliver it to somebody. If this becomes necessary to track my food, I'm not sure that's going to solve the problem because the tracking is after the problem. That's finding out where to point the finger at. We need to make sure that that doesn't happen to start with, and that's where these guys come in. That's pretty much all I've got to say. In full disclosure, I work in the software industry, and we actually—the RF tag is one of the things that we do. So I'm up here actually talking myself out of work, so hopefully, in the long run I still can feed my family without having to put this burden on these guys, especially if we're going to put one tag in a feed lot. Is that going to fix the problem? How do we know that one cow didn't go out of the pen that day? When they decide to move all the rest of them and 3 decide to stay in the pen and now you've cross-contaminated these lots again, it's not going to fix the issue by just tracking the end problem, saying, "Okay, we know it came out of this farm now," but it's already halfway across the country and we've contaminated half the food supply with it. If we get an outbreak here of something, maybe one farm gets it because we're not spreading it all around. That's it. Thanks.

RH: Good morning. My name is Robert Hawes. I am a dairy farmer from Owen County, Kentucky. First, I want to thank you sincerely for being here today to listen to what we have to say. I did not plan to speak this morning, but there's one topic that I haven't heard mentioned. One of the justifications for the NAIS has been national security, an effort to track back any disease outbreak that might be brought to this country by perhaps an international terrorist, perhaps hoof and mouth disease or something like that that is very serious. The answer to national security is not a better tracking system; the answer is local food, local production. Then a foreign enemy wouldn't have enough assets to deploy to put some contaminant in Terry Rowlett's milk tank and some in my milk tank and my neighbor's. The only way that becomes feasible for them is when a large

quantity of some food product is concentrated in one place. Then one or two individuals can make such a terrorist attack. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

KJ: Good morning. I'm Kent Yeager with Indiana Farm Bureau. I actually live on a farm in southern Harrison County, very near several of you who are from Meade County, and I wake up every morning—I'm home at least—looking at Meade County on the other side of the river. I did not intend to make any comments today and really came to listen and appreciate the opportunity to do that and certainly know of the concerns that are expressed or have been expressed here. I really need to learn a lot more about the program.

First of all, I just want to say that I am very supportive and very encouraged by the local foods movement, and those of you who are involved in that, I think it is a wonderful thing, and the whole idea of connecting consumers with producers is just absolutely heartwarming to any of us in agriculture. I want to do anything we can to encourage that.

Now, having said that, I guess as I've tried to understand the proposal for the program, on page 12, one of the things on there is, "No need to trace animals that are moved to custom slaughter in the same state or don't leave the premises." I guess in a lot of what I've heard it seems to me like maybe that would be one thing to address a lot of the concern that's taken place here for a lot of commercial operations that are competing in the marketplace with countries that do have animal ID systems in place, especially when you look at Canada and you look at Australia and a lot of the other countries that we look at. But anyway, that would just be one question that I'd have is maybe a little clarification of actually where we're at with the proposal and how some of these issues may be addressed. Thank you.

MS: Good morning. My name is Maria Sallier, and I, like several of the others performing, did not plan to speak today. I was born in the former Soviet Union, and my parents brought me here when I was a young child, seeking the freedoms that are in this country and the ability to know what they were going to feed me, where our food would come from—all these things that America stood for. I was born in Russia; Russian was my first language. I was bombarded from my first moments by propaganda against America: "America is evil." And my parents knew better; they brought me here. And I'll be honest. When I hear about programs such as tracking our property because the animals that the farmers own are private property, something that was only done in the black market where I'm from, I'm very thankful that the USDA has these public forums. That's also something that was completely unavailable where I was from. The Soviet government never bothered to ask us what we thought. Thankfully, that broke apart.

And I hope that all of these things that were brought forward before me—and I hope somebody else will come speak after me because I really don't want to end—are taken seriously because these are grave concerns, and I want my child—I'm a new mom; my baby is 8 months old—to grow up in this country that my parents foresaw for me. I don't want her to have to grow up with undue government regulations that seem to be growing bigger and bigger each day. It seems that our concern should be to try to minimize the intervention that our government has on the local level to private citizens, private farmers. I'm not a farmer; I'm a consumer, and I consume the products that all these farmers who are up here today spoke about, and I want my food to be safe for my child, very much so. But at the same time, I would like for our government to think about asking what interventions are really necessary, and it seems that this program right now, there may be other solutions and perhaps there needs to be some more brainstorming on other solutions that might be possible. Thank you.

SO: Thank you. That's a perfect segue into the afternoon session—the brainstorming and thinking up other ideas. If there's no one else that wants to speak, I'm going to make a couple of announcements and then we're going to break for lunch. Last call for speakers for the morning session. Okay.

Just a couple of announcements I have. Someone was concerned that the address for sending in actual written documents wasn't in the packet. It is in the packet. It's on this double-sided page where it tells you the different ways to submit comments. Down in the bottom section that says, "Note," is the actual physical address of where you and your friends and partners can mail in comments. So it is in there; you just have to look for it. Sorry about that. I also wanted to let you know that the Federal Register announced today 6 additional listening sessions. I don't have the times. I'm assuming they're going to be set up the same way. But just so you know, we have copies of it out front but I'll give you a quick rundown: June 9 in Jefferson City, Missouri, June 11 in Rapid City, South Dakota, June 16 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 18 in Riverside, California, June 25 in Raleigh, North Carolina, and June 27 in Jasper, Florida. And if you check at the registration table, I'm not sure if they have enough copies for everyone, but I believe at least one copy is out there.

Okay. We're going to break now for lunch. Meet back here, please, at 12:15. That's just a little over an hour. The rooms will be divided in threes again. I think the back part is blue, the middle is red, and this front area will be yellow. And again, if you came with a family or a small group, feel free to go to one room together, and we might ask you to move around just to balance the groups out. But that's the only reason we put the dots on the folders, okay?

FS: The original schedule was for lunch until 1:00. There are community people who understood that to be the schedule, and we really cannot well accommodate a change.

SO: That's fine. We'll go a little later in the afternoon if that's going to be an issue for folks. I'm very flexible.

FS: We just need to have some sort of answer.

SO: We can start breakout sessions now if you want to push through and not take lunch early. That's fine. We just need a few minutes of a break to set the rooms up and then—

FS: I know some people planned on a break at noon, so that's the issue.

SO: Okay. Would anyone have heartburn over pushing through a little bit now and then breaking for lunch at noon? Okay. We do need a few minutes to get the hotel folks up here to break the rooms out, so if you want to stretch your legs, get a glass of water, use the restroom, please do that.

MS: What time will we start back in?

SO: Give us 10 minutes. Look, I don't have a watch on, so I would say around 25 after 11:00 if you could be back in the room in your breakout groups and we'll go ahead and start.

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