

16 MARCH 2007

Further NAIS Comments Requested

On Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) posted its intention to initiate a new information collection activity for collection of species data by state as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

According to the notice posted in the Federal Register, as part of ongoing efforts to safeguard animal health, the USDA initiated implementation of a NAIS in 2004. The NAIS is a cooperative state-federal-industry program administered by APHIS. The purpose of the NAIS is to provide a streamlined information system that will help producers and animal health officials respond quickly and effectively to animal disease events in the United States.

The first component of the program, premises registration, is well underway and the second component, animal identification, is being implemented for several species. The third component, animal tracing, is currently under development with USDA's state and industry partners. Industry, through private systems, and states will manage the animal tracking databases that maintain the movement records of animals. These information systems will provide the location of a subject animal and the records of other animals that the subject animal came into contact with at each premises. Participation in any component of the program is voluntary.

To encourage participation in premises registration, there is an emphasis, at the national level, on industry organizations (pork, beef, etc.) registering premises through cooperative agreements with APHIS. To track progress that will be made as a result of these efforts, APHIS needs reports of premises registered by species. APHIS needs assistance from each state to provide "species at the premises" statistics, because this information is stored only at the state level rather than in the National Information Records Repository (NPRR).

For states that use USDA's Standardized Premises Registration System, APHIS is able to generate a report of species information by state but only with the written permission of each State animal health official. As indicated earlier, this is because the species data is kept only at the state level and not in the NPRR.

APHIS is asking states that wish to gather this information themselves to include this information in the quarterly cooperative agreement progress reports they submit to APHIS.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is being asked to approve the use of these information collection activities for three years.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. All comments received on or before May 14, 2007, will be considered. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

The complete Federal Register is located at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20071800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2007/E7-4646.htm>.