

# Care to Comment?

## USDA seeks comments on proposed rule for animal disease traceability.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued a proposed rule Aug. 9 to establish general regulations for improving the traceability of U.S. livestock moving interstate when animal disease events take place.

“Through the past two years, I have listened carefully to stakeholders throughout the country about how to reach effective animal disease traceability in a transparent manner without additional burden,” said Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We are proposing a flexible approach in which states and tribes can develop systems for tracing animals that work best for them and for producers in their jurisdiction. This approach offers great flexibility at the state and local level and addresses gaps in our disease response efforts.”

Under the proposed rule, unless specifically exempted, livestock moved interstate would have to be officially identified and accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection or other documentation, such as owner-shipper

statements or brand certificates. The proposed rule encourages the use of low-cost technology and specifies approved forms of official identification for each species, such as metal eartags for cattle. However, recognizing the importance and prevalence of other identifications in certain regions, shipping and receiving states or tribes are permitted to agree upon alternative forms of identification, such as brands or tattoos.

“We believe reaching our goals on traceability will help save the industry and American taxpayer’s money in the long term,” said chief veterinary officer for the United States, John Clifford. Animal disease traceability, or knowing where diseased and at-risk animals are, where they’ve been, and when, is very important to make sure there can be a rapid response when animal disease events take place. An efficient and accurate animal disease traceability system helps reduce the number of animals involved in an investigation, reduces the time needed to respond, and decreases the cost to producers and the government.

The notice was published in the Aug. 11 *Federal Register*. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before Nov. 9. You may submit comments by:

- ▶ Visiting the federal eRulemaking portal, [www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2009-0091](http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2009-0091).
- ▶ Mailing your comment to Docket No. APHIS-2009-0091, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Supporting documents and any comments received on this docket may be viewed at [www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2009-0091](http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2009-0091) or in the reading room located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th St. and Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call 202-690-2817.



**Editor’s Note:** This article was provided by USDA.