

USDA News Release

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SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM LISTENING SESSION LOCATIONS

WASHINGTON, April 30, 2009--Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will hold a series of listening sessions on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The meetings will take place next month in Alabama, Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington state.

"USDA needs to hear directly from our stakeholders as we work together to create an animal disease traceability program we can all support," said Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. "I encourage individuals and organizations to voice their concerns, ideas and potential solutions about animal identification, by either attending these listening sessions or submitting comments online."

APHIS seeks to gather not only producer comments and concerns, but also potential or feasible solutions to create a program producers can feel comfortable supporting. The listening sessions will include information about the current program, as well as an opportunity to give public testimony or ask program-related questions. Discussion sessions related to NAIS' cost, impact on small farmers, privacy and confidentiality, liability premises registration, animal identification and animal tracing will allow producers to provide their input on ways to make the program into something they can support.

The public meetings will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. local time, with registration one hour prior to each meeting. The meetings will be held in the following locations:

Harrisburg, PA
Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex and
Expo Center
2300 N Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Pasco, WA
Trac Center
6600 Burden Blvd.
Pasco, WA 99301

Austin, TX
Embassy Suites Hotel Austin Central
5901 N IH-35
Austin, TX 78723

Birmingham, AL
Cahaba Grand Convention Center
3660 Grandview Parkway
Birmingham, AL 35243

Louisville, KY
Crowne Plaza, Louisville, Airport
830 Phillips Lane
Louisville, KY 40209

Storrs, CT
University of Connecticut
Storrs Campus - Bishop Center
One Bishop Circle
Storrs, CT 06269

June 1 - Loveland, CO – TBD