



**VETERINARY SERVICES MEMORANDUM NO. 575.19**

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Animal and Plant  
Health Inspection  
Service

Veterinary Services

Washington, DC  
20250

**TO:** Veterinary Services Management Team (VSMT)  
Directors, VS

**FROM:** for John R. Clifford  
Deputy Administrator  
Veterinary Services

DEC 22 2008

**SUBJECT:** Administration of Premises Identification Numbers in  
Veterinary Services Animal Disease Program  
Activities

**I. PURPOSE**

This memorandum defines the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS), policy for the use of premises identification numbers (PIN) in the administration of animal disease program activities.

**II. CANCELLATION**

VS Memorandum No. 575.19 dated September 22, 2008, is hereby canceled.

**III. TERMINOLOGY**

The *Code of Federal Regulations* provides two PIN formats. One format, the State PIN, uses the two-letter postal code of the State in which the premises is located, followed by a number assigned to the premises by a State animal health official. No field length or number of digits is defined. The second, more recent, standardized PIN format is a seven-character alphanumeric code, with the right-most character being a check digit. The check digit number is based upon the International Organization for Standardization's (ISO) check digit algorithm (ISO 7064 Mod 36/37).

A. The term "premises identification number (PIN)" will apply to all location identifiers issued for VS disease program activities. The two formats are referred to as the State PIN and standardized PIN.

B. All written and verbal communication must clearly define "PIN" as a reference to a premises identification number to avoid confusion with the phrase "personal

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identification number.”

C. Identifiers used for other reasons, such as flock identification, should be described in communications to avoid confusion about the use of the PIN as the standard for identifying the location of animals. Flock identification, a herd number to define a group of animals, and other numbers remain necessary to reference or identify certain groups of animals.

### IV. BACKGROUND

In the event of a disease outbreak or other animal health incident, first responders need to quickly determine its size and scope so that adequate resources can be obtained to contain it. Premises identification is of critical importance in providing the information about the location of the affected livestock and the livestock within a high-risk zone. With this premises data, VS can generate area maps and employ geospatial data analysis to determine control strategies.

Premises identification is also the foundation for traceability, enabling the agency to link the unique animal identification number (AIN) to an animal's birthplace and subsequent locations. We define traceability as the ability to document all relevant elements needed to determine the movement history of an animal. Traceability is accomplished by uniquely identifying animals, either individually or by group/lot, and recording their movements within the production chain from one premises to another. The more quickly this can be done, the less impact the event will have on the general public and the livelihood of producers.

VS animal health programs have used premises identification for many years. For example, premises information was used in the early 1980s to support the eradication of brucellosis and tuberculosis in cattle. Historically, APHIS animal disease programs were administered as separate programs, each with their own methods, data standards, and definitions for animal and premises identification. In some cases, the premises identification did not reflect the location of the animals; instead, it was linked to the herd or group of animals or sometimes the owner of the animals.

Differences in the information systems have historically existed among the Federal and State animal health information systems. The separate disease-based programs and incompatible information systems used distinct herd, flock, and premises identification protocols that were not based on common data standards, thus were not compatible or capable of being integrated across systems. Therefore, multiple identification numbers have been issued to identify both animals and premises.

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Duplicate identification numbers for the same premises will corrupt information in the database and compromise the accuracy of reports from information systems, thus making it impossible to determine from the reports which animals were commingled at a given premises. Animals that come in contact with an infected animal could be shown to be at a different premises. Without extensive, time-consuming manual review, exposed animals could be excluded from the disease investigation.

The overall lack of standardization of data elements and integration within U.S. animal health data systems has been one of the most significant challenges today in conducting successful animal traceback and controlling animal disease. Establishing standards for database elements, such as premises identification, and processes that eliminate the duplication of premises records is essential to ensure that animal health officials, and others involved in disease programs, have access to accurate information. Without compatible databases and accurate information, the time required to complete a disease traceback increases resulting in greater spread of the disease and detrimental economic impact.

### V. UNIFICATION OF THE PIN

The National Animal Identification System (NAIS) provides data standards and processes to improve the quality of data through the standardization of identification systems to improve efficiency and reduce redundancy. Since 2004, USDA has been working to establish the standardized PIN as the standard format for location identifiers. On November 8, 2004, APHIS published in the *Federal Register* (FR) the interim rule on Livestock Identification; Use of Alternative Numbering Systems (69 FR 64644–64651) to establish the seven-character PIN as an official numbering system. Additionally, the rule recognized the AIN and the group/lot identification number as additional animal numbering systems. The final rule was published on July 18, 2007 (72 FR 39301–39307), and considered all public comments received during the comment period.

The premises number allocator (PIN allocator), a software application, provides a systematic process to identify locations in the United States where livestock and poultry are raised or housed using the standardized PIN. The system receives electronic records from premises registration system and other VS information systems that use PINs. The PIN allocator provides various checks to support the objective of having a single PIN assigned to each location to avoid duplication of premises numbers.

Premises registration provides the opportunity for producers and animal owners to register their premises. When individuals choose to register their premises, they complete the premises registration process for their State. The data is entered by the State into the Standardized Premises Registration System or Compliant Premises Registration System. Both systems interface with the PIN allocator to obtain a

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standardized PIN for the location. Veterinary Services has an established procedure for producers who request their premises record be removed from the NAIS premises databases. Upon receipt of the request from the State or Tribe responsible for the premises record, VS will examine other Federal animal health information systems to determine if the standardized PIN has been used for other Federal animal disease programs. If no activity exists for the premises number, the entire premises record, including the PIN itself, will be deleted from the National Premises Information Repository (NPIR) and the Standardized Premises Registration System, (SPRS). If the standardized PIN has been associated with a Federal animal disease event or program activity, the personal information on the NPIR (contact name, phone numbers, email address, etc.) will be deleted from the NPIR. However, the PIN and its associated address (or location description when no valid address is on record) will be maintained on the NPIR.

### VI. PIN for Program Use

All locations involved in the administration of VS animal disease program activities conducted by VS personnel will be identified with a standardized PIN. To enhance traceability, the PIN obtained through the PIN allocator will be used in the administration of VS disease program activities. In general, examples of the activities for which the issuance of a standardized PIN is applicable include vaccinations for disease programs; certification programs; surveillance programs; disease investigations; or inspections of import-export locations, quarantine facilities, livestock markets, slaughter plants, rendering plants, or licensed garbage feeding operations.

The issuance of the standardized PIN will be administered as follows:

- A. Animal health officials will collect the defined data fields for submission through the Emergency Management Response System (EMRS) or the Animal Health and Surveillance Management System (AHSM) interface with the allocator to obtain a PIN for the premises. The premises record processed through the EMRS, AHSM, or other VS systems will be provided to the State so the records may be added electronically to the State's premises registration system.
- B. Accredited veterinarians, while not directly involved in the issuance of the PIN, will collect the defined data fields on official disease program forms, including forms for VS National Animal Health Laboratory Network laboratories, for submission to the State or Federal office in that State.

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VII. Other

APHIS is considering rulemaking to establish the standardized PIN as the sole premises identification number, when a PIN is otherwise required or assigned. In the meantime, the State PIN will be issued in the administration of animal disease program activities when the State or producer, or person responsible, for the premises elects not to have a standardized PIN assigned to the premises.