

Fighting for the U.S. Cattle Producer!



R-CALF
USA

R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
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October 7, 2009

Re: 2010 Agriculture Appropriations bill and the National Animal Identification System

To the Honorable Members of the U.S. Senate:

The Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America (R-CALF USA) is deeply disappointed that the Agriculture Appropriations Conference Committee (conference committee) has granted the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) \$5.3 million to continue carrying out the ill-conceived National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

In the conference agreement, the conference committee stated:

Given the \$5,300,000 investment in this conference agreement and the \$142,000,000 that Congress has already provided for NAIS, the conferees expect APHIS to make demonstrable progress in effectively implementing the animal identification system. If significant progress is not made, the conferees will consider eliminating funding for the program.

The foregoing language implies that Congress is encouraging USDA to proceed with the ill-conceived NAIS program – a program that Congress itself has never formally considered, debated, or authorized with any explicit legislation.

The opposition against the ill-conceived NAIS program by U.S. livestock producers has been widespread, fierce and intense, and U.S. livestock producers are perhaps more united in their opposition to NAIS than they have been on any preceding issue that has affected the livestock industry. The numerous listening sessions held throughout the country this spring by USDA bore this out, with opposition among the large crowds of attendees running well above 85 percent.

We implore you to take any and all necessary steps to stop USDA from proceeding with NAIS as quickly as possible so U.S. livestock producers can begin working with the agency to establish a sorely needed national disease strategy that protects our livestock herds and our consumers from the introduction and spread of animal diseases without infringing on the rights and privileges of the men and women who have been producing the safest food in the world from their livestock – all the while without the encumbrance of NAIS.

We urge you to withhold support of the 2010 Agriculture Appropriations bill until you obtain an absolute commitment from USDA that it will not continue to force upon the U.S. livestock industry this ill-conceived National Animal Identification System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'R. M. Thornsberry DVM'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

R.M. (Max) Thornsberry, D.V.M.
R-CALF USA President of the Board