November 18, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Re: Request for Limited Use of Congressionally Appropriated National Animal Identification Funds

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We, the 100 undersigned organizations, sought to eliminate entirely all funding for the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in the Agriculture Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 2010. We were only partially successful. However, we view Congress’ decision to severely reduce the funding for NAIS as recognition that NAIS is an ill-conceived, burdensome and badly implemented solution for achieving the national objective of improving animal disease prevention and control in the United States.

We respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognize the fundamental flaws in NAIS and the public opposition to the program, and not use the $5.3 million appropriated for NAIS to further advance, in any way, this program. Instead, we recommend that your agency expressly limit the use of this money in fiscal year 2010 to: 1) Formally withdraw all pending rulemaking initiated by the agency to advance NAIS and pay the associated costs; 2) Pay all existing contractual obligations and NAIS related costs that USDA incurred prior to September 30, 2009; 3) Pay all costs associated with transferring the computer hardware acquired by USDA as part of NAIS to state animal health agencies, to enable state agencies to improve their ability to communicate among agencies in the event of a disease outbreak; and 4) Pay all costs associated with providing the people of the United States and Congress with an official, comprehensive report on all of the testimony USDA received at each of the NAIS listening sessions held throughout the country in 2009.

We appreciate your consideration of these recommendations and look forward to working with you to enhance our nation’s animal disease preparedness in a manner that builds upon our past successes and respects the interests of U.S. livestock producers and consumers.

Sincerely,

*Acres USA*  
*Adopt a Farm Family*  
*American Goat Society*  
*American Grassfed Association*  
*American Indian Horse Registry*  
*American Policy Center*  
*American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Assoc.*  
*Arkansas Animal Producers Association*  
*Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society*  
*California Farmers Union*  
*Carolina Farm Stewardship Association*  
*Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry*  
*Chez Panisse*  
*Citizens for Private Property Rights (MO)*
For more information, contact Judith McGeary at 512-484-8821 or Judith@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org