

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)

Colorado Independent CattleGrower's Association
 Community Farm Alliance (KY)
 Constitutional Alliance
 The Cornucopia Institute
 Dakota Resource Council
 Dakota Rural Action
 Davis Mountain Trans Pecos Heritage Assoc. (TX)
Edible Austin
 Edible San Marcos (TX)
 Empire State Family Farm Alliance (NY)
 Equus Survival Trust
 Fair Food Matters (MI)
 Family Farm Defenders
 Farm Aid
 Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
 Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund
 Farmers Union of Adams County (ND)
 Food and Water Watch
 Food for Maine's Future
 Freedom 21
 Gun Owners of America
 Idaho Rural Council
 Independent Cattlemen of Iowa
 Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
 Independent-Beef Association of North Dakota
 Innovative Farmers of Ohio
 International Texas Longhorn Association
 Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
 Kansas Cattlemen's Association
 Land Stewardship Project (MN)
 Local Harvest
 Maine Alternative Agriculture Association
 Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Assoc.
 Marshall County Citizens for Property Rights (AL)
 Massachusetts Smallholders Alliance
 Michigan Farmers Union
 Michigan Land Trustees
 Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance
 Mississippi Livestock Markets Association
 Missouri Rural Crisis Center
 Missourians for Local Control
 Monroe/ LaCrosse County Farmers Union (WI)
 Montana Cattlemen's Association
 Montana Farmers Union
 National Association of Farm Animal Welfare
 National Family Farm Coalition
 National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Assoc.
 Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
 North Carolina Contract Poultry Growers Assoc.
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - Connecticut
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - Massachusetts
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - New
 Hampshire
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - New York
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - Vermont
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. Interstate
 Council
 Northern Illinois Draft Horse and Mule Assoc.
 Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association
 Northern Plains Resource Council (MT)
 Ohio Farmers Union
 Oregon Livestock Producers Association
 Oregon Rural Action
 Organic Consumers Association
 Organization for Competitive Markets
 Ozarks Property Rights Congress (MO)
 Paso Fino Horse Association
 Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY)
 Progressive Agriculture Organization (PA)
 Property Rights Congress
 R-CALF USA
 Regional Farm and Food Project (NY)
 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
 Secure Arkansas
 Small Farmer's Journal
 Small Farms Conservancy
 South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
 Sovereignty International
 Stop Real ID Coalition
 Sustainable Food Center (TX)
 Texas Landowners Council
 Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
 US Boer Goat Association
 Virginia Independent Consumers & Farmers
 Assoc.
 Virginia Land Rights Coalition
 Western Organization of Resource Councils
 Weston A Price Foundation
 Wintergarden Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
 (TX)

For more information, contact Judith McGeary at 512-484-8821 or Judith@FarmAndRanchFreedom.org