



## USDA Hears Disease Traceability Concerns

**The USDA will hold three meetings this month to gather public feedback on the new animal-disease traceability framework.**

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Courtesy USDA/ ARS

The USDA will gather feedback on the new animal-disease traceability framework.

As the USDA takes its final steps toward implementing a new animal-disease traceability framework, it will host a series of meetings in August 2010 to gather feedback to the approach from livestock industry representatives and the public. The meetings will be held in the following locations: Aug. 18: Madison, Wis. Aug. 20: Atlanta Aug. 24: Pasco, Wash.

During the meetings, the USDA will share current information and plans for the new framework that will replace the current National Animal Identification System. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack first announced the creation of the new framework in February 2010 as a less costly and more flexible alternative to tracking diseased and at-risk animals. The August meetings follow five other public meetings hosted by the USDA in May, June and July 2010, attended by an average of 60 people per meeting.

In the meetings to date, the public has voiced concerns over the cost of the program and market disruption, says Abby Yigzaw of the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. These and other concerns will be considered for the proposed rule after the meetings commence. The USDA expects to publish the proposed rule in April 2011, followed by 60 to 90 days to gather comments from the public.

However, Yigzaw says many of the concerns of animal-disease traceability will be alleviated through the new framework.

"The framework only requires traceability for livestock moving interstate," Yigzaw says. "Producers that raise livestock for their own consumption and process them at custom slaughter facilities would be exempt from the federal traceability regulations. However, other state regulations would remain applicable."

She also said the new framework will not require electronic tags and assures the use of low-cost tags for traceability.

To learn more about the new animal-disease traceability framework, and to obtain more information on this month's meetings, visit the APHIS website.