



NAIS Database: FOIA Request for Info Submitted

Request based on criticism of the NAIS premises-registration program obtaining registrations without the prior knowledge or consent of the premises owner

10/29/2007

A Freedom of Information Act request has been filed with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

The request asks for all records contained in premises-registration database maintained by APHIS as part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

The requester is Mary-Louise Zanoni, a freelance writer and lawyer based in Canton, New York. Since early 2005 Ms. Zanoni has written numerous articles examining the USDA's questionable strategies in implementing NAIS. This information was provided by the law firm of Clymer & Musser, P.C., Lancaster, Pa., which is representing Ms. Zanoni.

The premises-registration database consists of what the USDA characterizes as "phone book" information, namely, the name of the livestock entity, appropriate contact person, street address, contact phone number, operation type, and alternative phone number.

Ms. Zanoni plans to use the premises database information to examine the authenticity, accuracy and sources of APHIS's premises information, in light of widespread criticism of the premises-registration program for obtaining registrations through datamining without the prior knowledge or consent of the premises owner.

The leading cattle-producer organization R-CALF USA has requested that the Senate Agriculture Committee place a moratorium on the USDA's premises registration program because of the USDA's use of improper, questionable, and less than ethical tactics, such as: Roll-ins to NAIS through existing disease programs without prior notification to the livestock owners; Use of 4-H and FFA programs for kids in an attempt to compel registration of their parents' properties; Compelling farmers in drought-stricken Tennessee to register their premises in order to participate in hay-share relief.