

Results of Cattle ID & Traceability

by **TROY SMITH**, field editor

It's been a controversial topic of conversation among cattle folk. People have strong opinions regarding the need

for a national beef cattle identification (ID) and traceability program.

Advocates say a program is needed to mount a most effective response to an outbreak of infections animal disease and

to help U.S. beef gain new and expanded access to markets in countries that demand traceability. Opponents see such a program as burdensome and an invitation to unfriendly interference in private business.

PHOTOS COURTESY ZIMMCOMM NEW MEDIA

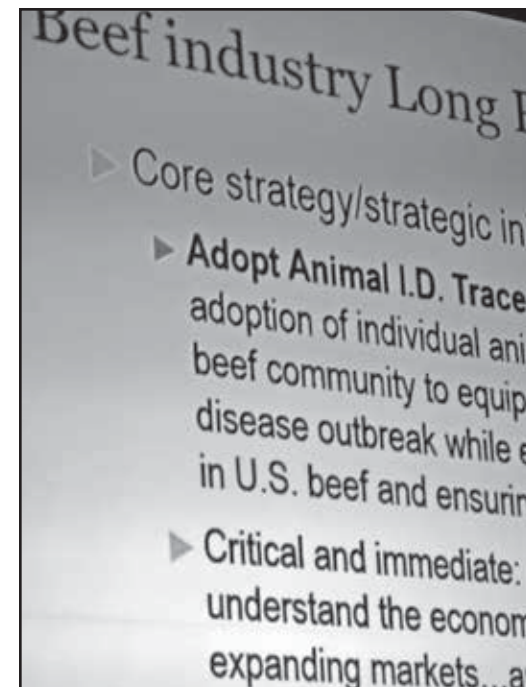


"The purpose of our collaboration with [NCBA's] project steering committee was to avoid assumptions, address misrepresentations, and reframe the debate about an animal ID and traceability system," stated David Gregg. Gregg and Dave Juday (right) of World Perspectives Inc. explained how the study was conducted and shared a summary of their firm's findings.

In an attempt to bring more clarity to the discussion, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) called for a study to determine the feasibility of a national cattle ID and traceability program. Results of that study were shared Jan. 31, during the 2018 Cattle Industry Convention in Phoenix, Ariz.

David Gregg and Dave Juday of World Perspectives Inc. explained how the study was conducted and shared a summary of their firm's findings.

The results, they said, were based on survey responses from more than 600 beef industry members plus personal interviews with more than 90 stakeholders representing all industry segments. Also contributing to the findings were reviews of ID/traceability systems implemented by nine foreign countries.



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Study

- 6) It must operate at the speed of commerce.
- 7) The system should be credible in domestic and international markets.

According to World Perspectives' recommendation, a nationally significant program for traceability would require inclusion of 68% of total annual fed cattle slaughtered in the United States, as well as

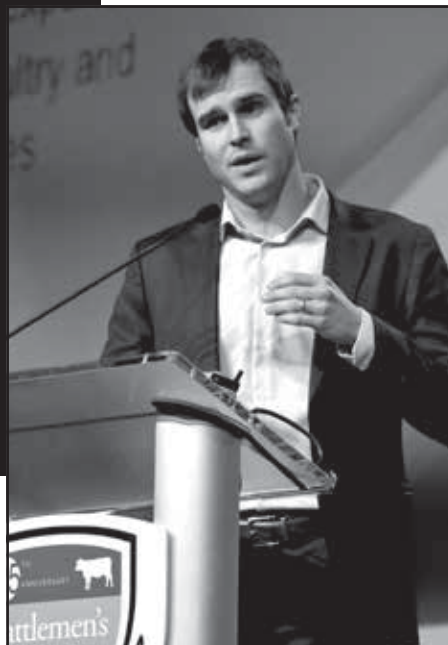
68% of the national breeding herd, with all animals traceable to their respective farms or ranches of origin.

Gregg and Juday also said that a national ID system need not be government-mandated. Like the U.S. Process Verified Program, it could operate on a voluntary basis. Additionally, it was concluded that such a system could be technology neutral, not requiring only

electronic identification (eID) tags, but incorporating a variety of identification technologies.



Editor's Note: Troy Smith is a freelance writer and cattleman from Sargent, Neb. This article was written as part of Angus Media's coverage of the 2018 Cattle Industry Convention in Phoenix, Ariz., Jan. 31-Feb. 2. See additional coverage in future issues and online at www.angus.org.



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The study results suggest that stakeholders consider the following attributes necessary to a national cattle ID and traceability system, or a coordinated network of systems:

- 1) The system should be industry-driven.
- 2) It should be maintained and overseen by an entity that includes both private and government interests.
- 3) Privacy of data must be maintained.
- 4) The system should be equitable to all industry sectors.
- 5) It must be compatible with common industry practices.

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