

USDA Ups Funding for Cattle Fever Tick Prevention

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced mid-January that it will make an additional \$4.9 million in emergency funding available to support the Cattle Fever Tick Eradication Program (CFTEP). These funds will help address the emergency cattle fever tick situation in Texas.

The eradication program was initiated in 1906 and was initially funded

by Congress in 1907 as a cooperative federal/state/industry disease and pest eradication effort. Due to these efforts, cattle fever ticks were eradicated from all 14 states that comprised the fever tick's historical range and were pushed across the Rio Grande River by 1943. A permanent quarantine area was established along the Texas side of the Rio Grande River in 1938 to prevent re-

establishment of fever ticks from Mexico into Texas.

Despite the success of the program, since 2005 the level of tick infestations has been trending upward. Tick incursions from Mexico are increasing, resulting in a historically high number of infested premises as well as temporary expansions of the permanent quarantine buffer area in Texas.

Ticks enter the United States periodically from other countries, causing a significant threat to cattle and wildlife. The ticks are vectors for diseases that could cause great economic hardships to the cattle industry and agriculture, in addition to posing a threat to foreign trade. The increasing incursions of tick infestations in Texas, the increasing level of acaricide-resistant ticks in Mexico, the identification of some acaricide-resistant ticks in Texas, and the increasing role of wildlife (especially white-tailed deer, elk and nilgai) in the spread and maintenance of fever ticks in Texas are of great concern.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) supports the cooperative efforts of the USDA and Texas Animal Health Commission regarding the CFTEP and USDA's National Strategic Plan for the CFTEP for FY 2006-2011. This strategic plan has never been funded. NCBA urges immediate funding to adequately address the emergency situation from the outbreak areas of South Texas, as well as full implementation and funding of the National Strategic Plan.



Editor's Note: Release provided by NCBA.

APHIS Proposes Rule on NAIS

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has proposed a rule to amend domestic livestock regulations with respect to the National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

The proposed rule — published in the *Federal Register* Jan. 13 — would require that when animal identification numbers are used, only those numbers beginning with the 840 prefix will be recognized as official for use on all animal identification number (AIN) tags applied to animals one year or more after the date on which this proposed rule is finalized. In addition, the rule would require all new premises identification numbers (PINs) issued on or after the effective date of this rule to use the seven-character alphanumeric code format.

Official ear tags using a premises-based numbering system issued after a one-year phase-in period would be required to use the seven-character alphanumeric code format as well. The rule further proposes several changes pertaining to the

use of the U.S. shield on official ear tags, numbering systems that use such ear tags, and the correlation of those numbering systems with the PIN.

According to APHIS, the proposed changes are intended to achieve greater standardization and uniformity of official numbering systems and ear tags used in animal disease programs and to enhance animal traceability.

The proposed changes are in keeping with the NAIS business plan, which outlines the program's goals and strategies for the next three to five years. The plan's immediate focus is increasing the quantity of animals identified and traceable to their premises of origin. The plan is available online at http://animalid.aphis.usda.gov/nais/naislibrary/documents/plans_reports/TraceabilityBusinessPlan%20Ver%201.0%20Sept%202008.pdf.

Editor's Note: Release provided by NCBA.