



POWDER RIVER BASIN RESOURCE COUNCIL
ACTION ALERT
CONTINUE PUSH TO DELETE FUNDING FOR ANIMAL ID

Please call today to protect family farms and ranches from new burdensome Animal ID regulation.

Please keep up the calls to U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis to stop the looming Animal ID rule! **The House Appropriations Committee failed to address any amendments to de-fund Animal ID on Tuesday (June 19)!**

The next opportunity target for winning an amendment on the Agriculture Appropriations Bill is from the full House with an amendment from the floor. This may be as early as next week, June 25 or 26.

Please keep the pressure on! Call today.

The USDA is on track to issue a final rule on Animal ID this summer and has not indicated that any major changes have been made from the version it proposed last year. That rule as proposed by USDA would subject all cattle, poultry and other livestock owners across the country to new tagging, paperwork and tracking requirements that could collectively cost millions of dollars, yet the agency has designated the final rule as “not economically significant.”

This animal ID rule is a solution in search of a problem. The USDA has failed to identify the specific problem or disease of concern. Instead, the real focus of the program is helping the export market for the benefit of a handful of large corporations.

The agency has also failed to account for the true cost to family and independent producers, businesses, and state and federal agencies. This creates yet another unfunded mandate. The new rule will harm rural businesses while wasting taxpayer dollars that could be better spent on the real problems we face in controlling animal disease, food security, and food safety. Our congress is dealing with a major budget deficit – adding an unnecessary, unproven and costly regulation is not in the country’s best interests.

Please help protect our farms and our right to own animals by contacting your Representative today!

TAKE ACTION TODAY, PLEASE! If you have called once, call again. Share this with your neighbors and ask them to call.

Call Wyoming’s U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis (**202.225.2311 or toll free at 888.879.3599**) or you can go to this **Hyper-Link to her web messaging page:**
<http://lummis.house.gov/Contact/>

Ask that the Animal Disease Traceability program be de-funded!

SAMPLE MESSAGE:

Hi, my name is ____ and I am a constituent from (City, Wyoming). I urge Representative Lummis to work to eliminate funding for the USDA’s Animal Traceability rule. The agency has told the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that the rule is not “economically significant,” but that is simply not true. The rule as

proposed by USDA would impose significant costs on independent ranchers, family farmers, backyard poultry owners and livestock businesses.

In a time of economic hardship, it makes no sense to spend our tax dollars on this program when USDA hasn't even properly evaluated the costs or identified specific, concrete benefits. Please work to eliminate the funding for this unnecessary and burdensome program in the Agricultural Appropriations bill.

MORE INFORMATION

Although we don't know for certain what is in the final rule that USDA has sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for final approval, we do know several things:

- 1) The proposed rule had many problems (discussed more below).
- 2) The USDA has not announced that it has made any major changes to the proposed rule. In fact, in informal statements, the USDA has indicated that the costly provisions for tagging feeder cattle are part of the final rule.
- 3) The USDA has told OMB that the rule is "not economically significant," putting it on the fast track for final approval without any serious evaluation of the true costs that it will impose.

FACTS ABOUT THE PROPOSED RULE

We have repeatedly asked USDA for data showing where the problems are in tracking animals currently. Rather than provide that data, USDA hand-picked a few anecdotes, out of the millions of animals in this country. But the agency's unsupported claims do not justify imposing broad new tracking requirements. Small farms are not the source of most disease problems in this country, yet the proposed rule will burden them unfairly.

POULTRY: Small-scale, pastured, and backyard poultry would be particularly hard hit by the rule as proposed. While the large confinement operations will be able to use "group identification," the definition of the term does not cover most independent operations. Since thousands of people order baby chicks from hatcheries in other states, these birds cross state lines the first day of their lives. Even if the farmer or backyard owner never takes the bird across state lines again, they will have to use individually sealed and numbered leg bands on each chicken, turkey, goose, or duck to comply with the language of the proposed rule.

Even if the definition of "group identification" were changed to cover small operations, the result would be new paperwork requirements on almost every person who owns chickens, turkeys, or other poultry. The agency has entirely failed to justify imposing these burdens on poultry owners.

CATTLE: Along with new identification requirements imposed on all breeding-age cattle, the proposed rule would require identification and paperwork on calves and young cattle ("feeder cattle"), even though there's no evidence that such requirements will help disease control. In addition, veterinarians and sale barns will have to keep records for 5 years, even though many of these cattle will have been consumed years earlier, creating mountains of useless paperwork.

Producers will only be able to use brands or tattoos as identification if their States enter into special agreements. State agencies will have to build extensive database systems to handle all of the data, creating problems for States' budgets.

HORSES: The proposed rule also requires that horse owners identify their animals before crossing state lines. Although most, if not all, horses that are shipped across state lines are already identified in some fashion, the proposed rule creates a new complication: Whether or not a physical description is sufficient identification will be determined by the health officials in the receiving state, leaving vets and horse owners struggling with significant uncertainty as they have to anticipate what will be allowed.

SHEEP, GOATS, and HOG: The proposed rule also covered sheep, goats, and hogs that cross state lines, essentially federalizing the existing programs which have been adopted state-by-state until now.

You can read the proposed rule at

www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/downloads/2011/Proposed%20Rule.pdf

For More Information, Contact Powder River Basin Resource Council at 307.672.5809 or email Bill at billb@powderriverbasin.org