

Dear _____:

I am a _____ (small farmer, consumer of local foods, horse owner, taxpayer. Tell them a little bit about yourself and why you care about this issue). I am writing to ask that you support _____, which would prohibit the establishment of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in Washington.

You may have seen news reports that USDA made the NAIS voluntary. However, USDA's goal is still 100% participation by 2009. USDA is pressuring states to achieve this goal by conditioning federal funding on reaching "measurable goals," which creates incentives for states to implement mandatory or coercive programs. If it is made mandatory, NAIS would require that every person who owns even one chicken, horse, cow, sheep, goat, pig, or other livestock animal:

1. Register their premises in state and federal database(s).
2. Identify each animal with an internationally unique 15-digit number when they are moved from their herd of origin or commingled with other animals. For many species, the preferred identification is electronic. Integrated poultry and swine producers may use "group numbers," but most small farmers and pet owners will not qualify. Scientific studies have linked the microchip with cancer.
3. Track their animals: The owner must report, within 24 hours, events such as tagging the animal, death or slaughter, public and private sales, and regional shows.

NAIS is an unprecedented expansion of the government bureaucracy into people's private lives and infringes on our property rights. NAIS will impose heavy burdens on livestock owners, driving many small and medium-size farmers and ranchers out of business and discouraging people from owning horses and other livestock as pets. This in turn will drive related businesses, such as feed stores, slaughterhouses, and auction barns, out of business. The economic effects will be wide-reaching. Despite spending million dollars on NAIS since 2004, the USDA has cannot "sell" the program but must stoop to bribery, via financial incentive's.

USDA has produced no scientific basis for its disease-control claims. Existing programs and systems, such as the scrapie program, branding, and metal tagging, have been sufficient to track disease. If anything, NAIS will increase disease threats because it will criminalize ownership of livestock without registration, and lead to black market livestock ownership and sales. Disease programs must be designed for each specific disease and animal. A one-size-fits-all program is useless.

NAIS will not increase the safety of our food supply. Most food-borne illnesses are from organisms that contaminate food due to poor practices at slaughterhouses or in food handling and preparation. NAIS tracking ends at the time of slaughter, so it will not address these issues or increase our ability to trace contaminated meats once they are in the food supply chain.

By driving small farmers out of existence, NAIS will increase the consolidation of our food supply into a small number of large companies, destroying consumers' food purchasing options. Small, local producers provide protection against mass contamination of food produced by mass production. Also, reduction in competition inevitable increases prices, even for food. The only winners in this program are the microchip manufacturers, the associations that will manage the databases, and the government employees.

I ask that you support _____ to stop NAIS in our state.

Sincerely,
Your Name
Street Address

Town, State Zip code
Email if you have it