

# ID/INFO EXPO 2004 Sheds Light on Animal ID Challenges

*Drs. Jose Luis Gallardo (seated) and Miguel Cordoba shared the inner workings, successes and challenges of implementing Mexico's 3-year-old identification system. Most ID/EXPO attendees agreed that a U.S. system compatible with both Mexican and Canadian programs would be best.*

**A**nimal producers, U.S. and international government officials, livestock organization representatives, ID technology companies and data service management providers came together May 18-20, 2004, in Chicago to discuss the myriad of challenges to be faced as a U.S. animal identification program is implemented.

Sponsored by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA), the ID/INFO Expo 2004 drew nearly twice as many participants (with 500 registrants) as it did the last time it was held in 2002. The trade show also grew by almost 40 percent.

"The growth of this meeting is a clear indication that animal identification and information systems are a central issue for all of animal agriculture, as well as receiving increasing interest from leading food production organizations," said Glenn Fischer, Senior Vice President of Allflex USA.

Highlight topics addressed by the more than 60 speakers at the ID Expo included: broadening the understanding of issues such as confidentiality, cost, implementation timelines and oversight; discussing further details of the NAIS (National Animal Identification System); examining established foreign systems; and exploring the latest technologies commercially available.

Clearly, USDA's requirement for 48-hour trace back for animal health and food safety programs has put energy into the equation for technology developers who have previously focused on animal production and profitability system capabilities.

While many questions remain, ID Expo participants agree that burgeoning interest from industry and government will encourage more investment in technology and development ... the key to success will be the ability of all parties to focus on implementing robust, proven systems as the market implementation of the system progresses.

For a complete review of all speakers and topics, visit the NIAA web site at [www.animalagriculture.com](http://www.animalagriculture.com)



## **Hawks Underscores USDA's Intent**

*"My message to you is that we are walking bare arm and arm in this," USDA Undersecretary Bill Hawks told ID/EXPO 2004 attendees concerning the implementation of the NAIS. He emphasized that the USDA's primary goal is disease tracking and control only, that any system be "technology neutral," that producers not be burdened, and that confidentiality be maintained. Hawks offered no specific implementation timelines, but stressed its high priority with USDA.*



*Glenn Fischer of Allflex USA (second from right) in a panel discussion on "ID Distribution and NAIS Requirements" stressed that while there is no perfect answer, the best choices should be based on the right balance of system integrity and producer convenience.*

## Key Elements of a National Animal ID System

Dr. Bret Marsh, state veterinarian with the Indiana Board of Animal Health, summarized the development of an ideal animal identification system by emphasizing nine key factors vital to its success:

1. It must be seamless across state lines.
2. It must use a common technology with the longest value and greatest usefulness.
3. It must involve a robust IT database that can gather, store and retrieve mountains of information (including the ability to develop a program to track diseases) with a 48-hour maximum turnaround, and in which states must be able to interact.
4. There must be an education and outreach component. Every producer needs to understand the program and its goals.
5. Flexibility is key, so that it can be adapted to peculiar circumstances.
6. Adaptability is vital, in order that the unique needs of individual species and markets can be addressed.
7. It must be secure, ensuring absolute confidentiality and data integrity.
8. It must be affordable. All must share the cost – not just the initial animal producer.
9. Finally, the process must be ongoing, with tweaks, modifications and refinements made as it evolves – in order to best “preserve and protect all aspects of animal agriculture in this country.”

## Individual Species ID Requirements

Each has its unique considerations



**S**ome highlights of the many recommendations made by the National Animal Identification Development Team's Individual Species Working Groups included:

### Cattle

- Identify individually
- Use ISO 11784/11785 compliant RFID ear tags (as defined by USAIP)
- Applying RFID tag responsibility of current owner of animal
- Receiving premises or person solely responsible for reporting movements

### Swine

- Commercial market swine identify by Group/Lot; show/sale pigs & some breeding stock individual ID
- ID tags to reflect Premises and Group numbers
- ISO/RFID tags preferred in future
- Premises ID identifies market pigs to last location, not owner
- Mandatory ID of swine already required in interstate commerce; individual ID on breeding stock

### Sheep/Goats

- Continue existing mandatory scrapie ID program, incorporate NAIS into it
- Use visual ear tags, metal and/or polyurethane
- Tags needed different from cattle tags
- Prefer ISO/RFID in future; implants may be desired in some cases
- Permit Group ID when sheep/goats move as unit

### Horses

- Capitalize on existing IDs: brands, tattoos, breed registrations, DNA records, etc.
- Individual & Premises ID best suited
- Ear tags not acceptable
- ISO/RFID implants would work
- Constant tracking required for highly mobile individual horses

# Traceability Infrastructure: Know the pieces and parts

**A**n animal disease outbreak calls for immediate answers. Where did the problem start? How many other animals might be exposed or infected? Can the outbreak be contained?

Federal and state government officials need accurate, timely information within an ideal 48-hour window.

Understanding the language of traceability will help producers more successfully comply:

**Origin ID:** a life-long individual identification on all animals and the identification of the premise where the animal has first received its identifier.

**Movements:** the systematic capture of animal identity when transiting through high-volume locations or otherwise changing premise or ownership or both.

**Endpoint ID:** the record of slaughter or export of individual animals no longer subject to further traceability.

With these basic concepts in mind, a further understanding of the logistical challenges is critical. These factors will make or break a traceability system:

- Reliable allocation of individual animal identities including controlled tag numbering and distribution
- Reliable delivery of tags to individual producers
- Reliable and correct placement of tags in animals



- Reliable, automated RFID tag readability
- Reliable transmission of information to the central database

A breakdown anywhere along the line defeats traceability with no chance for recovery.

As USDA moves forward toward a national animal identification

program, these imperatives will drive the decisions. If you'd like to weigh in on the issues being discussed, contact USDA at [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov) or your state or national livestock association.

## Web Sites of Interest

**United States Department of Agriculture** site carries up-to-date information about development of a national livestock identification program.

[www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/animal\\_id](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/nahps/animal_id)

**Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium** site explains details of the state's successful program.

[www.usaidinfo.com](http://www.usaidinfo.com)

**The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency** site shows detail of how the program works and information about 2005 country-wide adoption of RFID.

[www.canadaid.com](http://www.canadaid.com)

**National Pork Producers Council** site updates pork producers about NPPC policy and programs relative to animal identification. [www.nppc.org](http://www.nppc.org)

**Power Genetics** site shows examples of real-world producers benefiting from tracking animal performance through individual animal identification and record keeping. [www.powergenetics.com](http://www.powergenetics.com)

# Lloyd Tate: A pioneer in animal identification

**W**ith his passing Sunday, June 20, 2004, Lloyd Tate left a legacy of innovation that will continue far into the future. At the time of his death, he was Vice President of Technology and Development for Allflex.

Tate's 20-year plus career in animal health and animal identification was the perfect platform to showcase his uncanny ability to bring technology into real-world practicality. He understood livestock producers and worked to match technology with customer needs. Lloyd patiently built models, drew pictures and

excitedly explained technology to anyone who would listen. Working on visual and EID tags, he set the pace to put Allflex in the lead for EID development worldwide.

Beyond his indisputable technical skills, Lloyd had a softer side that included devotion to wife, Jamie, and his family. He was an accomplished pianist and loved all styles of music.

Allflex has honored Lloyd by establishing the "Lloyd Tate Award for Innovation" to be presented annually to leaders furthering the cause of animal identification.





# Michigan Catches EID Wave

**T**he Michigan Department of Agriculture has served as a true pioneer, leading the way with the adoption of an electronic animal identification system. As of January, 2004 there were more than 13,000 active Michigan farm premises enrolled in the National Farm Animal Identification and Records program (F.A.I.R.). Of those, 6,292 premises include animals. RFID tags are used in 1,303 of these premises representing 72,262 individual animals.

Participation has grown steadily since the Michigan Department of Agriculture introduced the program as a pilot project in November 2001. Originally adopted as part of the state's bovine tuberculosis eradication plan, it provides state and federal regulators and the livestock industry with a system for quickly tracking the movement of individual animals from farm to market.

Through Michigan's EID Program, producers in the Northeast Lower Peninsula or those with accredited herds can receive RFID tags free of charge. Each RFID tag is linked to a database that includes the animal's date of birth, sex and type or species. Locating and tracing livestock is fast, accurate and up-to-date.

Farmers can update the farm information on the F.A.I.R. database to activate the corresponding tag number for an animal. A secure internet site gives state and federal regulators access to current statistics, allowing them to verify and monitor animal movement and testing activities of participating farms and animals.

For more information about Michigan's EID program, visit [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)

*The F.A.I.R. system tracks livestock nationwide, using two unique numbers: a premises number, with a unique number assigned to each production unit for participating premises; and an animal number, which uses the American Identification Numbering (AIN) System to assign an official number for each animal. This unique animal number is comparable to a "social security number" for each animal. The place of origin for each participating animal is also recorded.*

## Allflex Staff Spotlight

New CEO Brian Bolton brings vision and experience to Allflex.



**A**s the new CEO for Allflex, Brian Bolton already has demonstrated the vision and marketing skills his appointment promised to bring to an already strong Allflex team.

"This company has an exceptional history as the leader in animal identification and traceability technologies," said Bolton. "I've seen firsthand how they can positively impact the economics, food safety and herd health of all aspects of animal production, and I look forward to being a part of it."

Bolton, a native of Great Britain, first became involved in the North American agribusiness scene in the mid-1980s exporting bovine genetics to Europe. His strong marketing and growth enhancement background on an international level served him well as his career expanded to assume a leading role in the rapid uptake of new technology in the identification and traceability industry on a global level.

"Assuming leadership for the Allflex team just as the United States stands on the brink of implementing a National Animal Identification System is truly an honor. I look forward to the opportunity to work with this remarkable company while serving the industry as we move forward together into a new era of exciting challenges and innovative technologies."



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