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### **ID•INFO EXPO 2009: Presentations Available Online**

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO—Diverse opinions and facts were voiced, shared and questioned at ID•INFO EXPO 2009, Aug. 25-27, Kansas City, Mo., when 27 speakers representing federal and state government, agribusinesses, media, industry—large producers as well as small producers—and the food industry conveyed their messages related to the current state of animal identification in the United States, obstacles, opportunities and next steps. Sponsored by the National Institute for Animal Agriculture, the EXPO included several interactive discussion sessions which allowed EXPO participants to get their to-the-point questions answered in front of the assembly while breaks provided opportunity for one-on-one conversations between speakers and attendees.

“No one was here to endorse or negate NAIS (the National Animal Identification System),” stated Glenn Fischer, chairman of the ID•INFO EXPO Planning Committee. “We gathered to listen, learn, clarify concerns and opportunities, identify next steps and collaborate on furthering animal identification in the U.S.”

“In the end, consensus was that a top-down approach to national animal identification isn’t the answer and neither is a bottom-up approach. A vast majority agreed that the best approach is somewhere in the middle with producer understanding of the program and dedicated leadership needed to make a program work.”

Dr. William Hartmann, executive director and state veterinarian, Minnesota Board of Animal Health, summarized his state animal health experiences and views quite succinctly: “A national animal identification plan is not a question of mandatory or voluntary. It’s a necessity. ”

Whether animal agriculture likes it or not, “necessity” it could become as Dr. David Acheson, formerly of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration who now serves as managing director of food and import safety practice at Leavitt Partners in Utah, pointed out that the Obama Administration “wants to make capital out of protecting the food supply.” Acheson noted that food safety efforts by the FDA under Obama will be stepped up, adding that a food traceability requirement is likely.

Issues related to confidentiality, liability and cost—obstacles often cited by producers—were addressed by Elizabeth Springsteen, staff attorney with the National Agricultural Law Center; Dr. Kevin Dhuyvetter, professor, agricultural economics, Kansas State University; and Dr. John Evans, SWV Consulting Inc. Avoiding convoluted legalese, Springsteen delivered the facts regarding the Freedom of Information Act, court subpoena power, exceptions to USC §8791—which is part of the 2008 Farm Bill—and three ways liability can be imposed. Drs. Dhuyvetter and Evans showed the dollars and cents side of the equation.

“As we hoped, presenters were open and transparent, presenting facts and opinions,” stated Victor Velez, vice chair of the ID•INFO EXPO Planning Committee. “I urge those who were unable to attend ID•INFO EXPO 2009 to go online and access the many PowerPoint and audio-video presentations that are available. It would be advantageous to each and every person involved in animal agriculture to watch and listen to each and every speaker.”

One person departing ID•INFO EXPO summarized the animal identification conference in this manner: “It stimulated a dimension of my thinking. I’m definitely thinking the solution should be industry-driven. Mandatory? Voluntary? State led with national oversight or a federal program? I need to think those over a bit more. At least I’m now armed with more information so I can make educated decisions.”

Presentations from ID•INFO EXPO 2009 are available at [www.animalagriculture.org](http://www.animalagriculture.org).

*The National Institute for Animal Agriculture provides a forum for building consensus and advancing proactive solutions for animal agriculture—the beef, dairy, swine, sheep, goat, equine and poultry industries—and provides continuing education and communication linkages for animal agriculture professionals. NIAA is dedicated to programs that work towards the eradication of disease that pose risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome from supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and well-being. NIAA members represent all facets of animal agriculture.*

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