

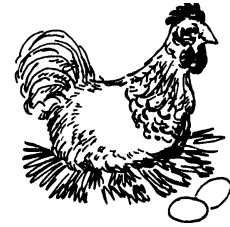


*The University of Georgia*

**Cooperative Extension Service**

*College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences / Athens, Georgia 30602-4356*

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## **COMMERCIAL EGG TIP . . .**

### **WHAT IS THE NATIONAL ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM?**

We live in a post 9/11 world and in a world facing the possibility of a bird flu pandemic. This means that we must be able to quickly eradicate serious diseases that might deliberately or inadvertently be introduced into our national food animal flocks or herds. The first step in such a process is to identify the source of a diseased animal(s) so that containment procedures can be applied. Since animal agriculture involves transportation and commingling of animals, such that a disease may show up far from the home farm, the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) is establishing a national animal identification system (NAIS) to make it possible to trace animals back to their source. Work groups with representatives from industry and government are developing plans for poultry, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, horses, bison, deer, elk, llamas, and alpacas.

The NAIS will operate according to procedures adopted within each state under national standards. Federal, state and public health officials will have access to the database when there is need to administer animal health programs at the national or state level. The long-term goal is to be able to identify all premises and animals that have been exposed to a disease of concern within 48 hours of discovery. This will involve tracing back the sick animal or group of animals to the flock, herd or premises where the original infection most likely occurred and then tracing potentially exposed animals that were moved from the same flock, herd or premises to other locations. The NAIS has three key components: premises identification, animal identification, and animal tracking.

**Premise Identification.** Premise identification is the starting point. Each facility that manages or holds animals will be given a unique Premises Identification Number (PIN). The following pieces of information will be stored in a national premises information system: premises ID number, name of entity, owner or contact person, address, contact phone number, operation type (e.g., production unit, processing plant, exhibition, etc.), date activated, date retired (e.g., date operation is sold or closed down).

#### **PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK**

The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State College, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating.  
The Cooperative Extension service officers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability  
An equal opportunity/affirmative action organization committed to a diverse work force.

**Animal Identification.** Animals will be identified individually with unique Animal Identification Numbers (AIN) or if they are managed and moved as a group, as would normally be the case with commercial poultry flocks, with Group/Lot Identification Numbers (GIN). Industry groups will have the option of using the same animal identification numbers they already have in use for other programs.

**Animal Tracking.** Reporting requirements will be tied to the movement or commingling of animals. The responsible individual at that the relevant location will report the AIN or GIN of all animals involved and the date of the event. Four pieces of information are required to document an animal movement event, and these will be stored in a national animal records database. They are: the AIN (or GIN), the PIN of the location where the event takes place, the date of the event, and the event type (movement in or out, termination of the animal, etc.).

Once the NAIS is established, it should greatly assist animal health monitoring and surveillance programs because state and federal animal health officials will be able to access the NAIS database on an ongoing basis. However, though the information in the database is intended to be kept private and used solely for the purpose of disease monitoring and tracking, producers have rightly been concerned that the Federal Freedom of Information Act would allow public access to the NAIS database if it were kept by the USDA. The USDA is presently negotiating avenues for privatization of the NAIS database with its stakeholders to protect the security of the information and encourage industry acceptance of the program.

In 2004 and 2005, USDA APHIS provided \$12 million and \$33 million, respectively, through cooperative agreements to states to implement premise identification and to refine identification technologies and animal movement data collection procedures. In this period, the Georgia Department of Agriculture was awarded a \$120,000 grant to fund a program to register premises using USDA's Standardized Premises Registration System. The USDA expects the NAIS to continue to expand in 2006. States have some latitude as to how to administer the NAIS, and the USDA intends to integrate the most successful approaches into the broader system. The APHIS website currently indicates that a total of 204,700 premises in 50 states have been registered in the NAIS.

USDA APHIS has convened species-specific working groups which include industry representatives to provide input into the NAIS development process. The United Egg Producers currently has two individuals listed as members of the poultry working group. If you wish to discuss industry-related concerns regarding the NAIS, you can contact the UEP through its website at <http://www.unitedegg.org/>. Contact the Georgia Department of Agriculture for information on the current status of the NAIS in Georgia. Further information about the NAIS can be found on the APHIS website at <http://www.usda.gov/nais/>.



A. Bruce Webster  
Extension Poultry Scientist

Extension County Coordinator/Agent

**\*\*Consult with your poultry company representative before making management changes.\*\***  
"Your local County Extension Agent is a source of more information on this subject."