

The Connecticut Horse Council, Inc.

URGENT NAIS UPDATE DECEMBER 2006

CHC For Immediate Release 12/2006: The National Animal Identification Program (NAIS) is a system being implemented by USDA/APHIS primarily to track livestock movements and control disease outbreaks. It is broken into two separate issues: premise identification, and animal identification.

In 2003, the American Horse Council (AHC) determined that this issue would invariably have an impact on horses, and in response, they facilitated the creation of the Equine Species Working Group (ESWG). This group consists of approximately 30 member organizations which represent the interests of the horse industry. The ESWG has been officially recognized by USDA, and will be presenting recommendations specific to horses and how they relate to the NAIS. It should be noted that AHC is a member organization of the ESWG, and does not have oversight of the group.

In August of 2006, the ESWG issued their recommendations to the USDA relative to horses and the NAIS. You may view this report at www.equinespeciesworkinggroup.com

At the moment, the NAIS has not established final rules and regulations, however, individual states have taken various steps of their own in anticipation of upcoming federal requirements. CHC has approached the state of Connecticut about the NAIS, and we have been informed that they are not taking action until such time they receive more information & direction from USDA/APHIS.

As of December 2006, The USDA/APHIS has issued another set of draft guidelines which supersede all previous drafts. The Draft User Guide is the most current plan for the NAIS and replaces all previously published program documents, including the 2005 Draft Strategic Plan and Draft Program Standards and the 2006 Implementation Strategies.

*****It is our understanding from conversations with the USDA, that these changes include having the NAIS remain a "Voluntary" program.**

CHC has ordered copies of this draft, and will make them available to our members via our website and newsletter. A copy is also attached to this email alert. The USDA will be accepting comments about this newly revised draft through January 22, 2007. You can submit comments by e-mail to animalidcomments@aphis.usda.gov please include "NAIS Draft User Guide" in the subject line, or by mail to NAIS Program Staff.

Attn: NAIS Draft User Guide
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA
Unit 200
4700 River Road
Riverdale, Maryland 20737

CHC takes this issue very seriously, and is monitoring USDA information closely. We will continue to keep our members informed of new developments as they occur. If you have additional questions, please contact CHC President Amy Stegall stegall@snet.net or visit our website www.cthorsecouncil.org