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*"Connecting Cows, Cooperatives, Capitol Hill, and Consumers"*

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## **NMPF Statement on USDA's Animal Identification Announcement**

ARLINGTON, VA – "The National Milk Producers Federation has long supported a mandatory, national animal identification and traceability system as a means of safeguarding the health of the nation's livestock. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has struggled for years to create a national system that would permit 48-hour traceback and rely on currently-available technology, such as RFID tags.

"Today, the USDA said it was ready to move forward with a revised approach, one that recognizes that various types of animal identification techniques, and various approaches already in use in states and tribal areas, can still help achieve a national system of disease traceability.

"We believe today's announcement by Secretary Vilsack is an important development, one that allows the entire livestock industry, both private parties as well as the government, to collectively focus on what is possible. Rather than dwell on past efforts that didn't work out, it is vital that we now focus on a new system that will help the livestock sector be better prepared in the case of a disease outbreak.

"We look forward to reviewing the proposal and working with the USDA to ensure the dairy industry is at the animal ID forefront as a collective insurance policy in the event of an animal disease emergency."

The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's 31 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 40,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. Visit [www.nmpf.org](http://www.nmpf.org) for more information.