



News Release

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**FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE OUTBREAK IN BRITAIN
INDICATION OF ONGOING NEED FOR ANIMAL I.D. SYSTEM IN U.S.**
National Animal Identification System is Insurance Policy Against Disastrous Disease

ARLINGTON, VA – The recent reappearance of foot and mouth disease in Great Britain is a reminder that the U.S. needs a national animal identification system in order to be better prepared in case a similar outbreak ever occurred here, according to the National Milk Producers Federation.

Although it now appears that the outbreak of FMD in the U.K. has been confined to two farms near London, “the fact that history has repeated itself just six years after a devastating FMD epidemic in England and other European nations should give U.S. livestock producers pause for thought,” said Jerry Kozak, President and CEO of NMPF. “We need to learn from history that having the ability to identify farms, and animals, is a key bulwark of our biosecurity system. And right now, we have more work to do to improve that system.”

NMPF and other dairy organizations involved in the IDairy coalition will be working in the next year to spur the voluntary registration of dairy farms as part of a national system identifying where livestock are located.

Absent such information, “state and federal health experts would be hampered in their efforts to confine the spread of a highly contagious disease like foot and mouth, which can spread by the wind, by trucks and cars, and by wildlife.

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“Part of the reason the British government was able to contain this latest outbreak is because they established quarantines and surveillance zones around the initial site of the outbreak. That only works if you know which farms to quarantine – and that is information our government is lacking,” Kozak said.

“There are basic steps that individual dairy producers can take to improve their farm’s biosecurity, including monitoring the movement of animals and people around their farm,” Kozak said. “But collectively, what livestock producers can do is identify their farms with the appropriate state organization so that if we were to be in a similar situation as the U.K. is right now, we have the ability to know where farms are located.”

“A national animal identification system is an insurance policy for U.S. agriculture, and it’s one without expensive premiums. In fact, the one expense we can’t afford is blissful ignorance, as a foreign animal disease arrives and spreads on our shores,” Kozak said.

NMPF is working with five other organizations: the American Jersey Cattle Association, the Dairy Calf & Heifer Association, the Holstein Association USA, the National Association of Animal Breeders, and the National Dairy Herd Information Association, in the IDairy coalition to promote the need for dairy farmers to register their premises with state agencies. Farmers can do so by visiting IDairy’s website: www.idairy.org/where.html.

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 32 cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 50,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

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