



## Montana Legislature

### Senate Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Committee

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March 26, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baucus:

As members of the Montana Legislature's Senate Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation, we have heard much testimony this session from a variety of Montana livestock producers regarding the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). We want to express our concerns, and theirs, about any effort by Congress or the U.S. Department of Agriculture to make NAIS a mandatory program. We would respectfully ask that you oppose any federal effort to force producers to participate in NAIS. Several market-driven age and source verification systems that use individual animal traceability are already being developed, and these systems give producers an economic incentive to participate. We support giving producers the option of participating voluntarily, and we urge you to resist any effort to mandate participation by ranchers and feeders in NAIS.

In addition to their concerns about maintaining the voluntary nature of NAIS, a number of Montanans who testified before our committee stressed the importance of maintaining confidentiality of the information that is collected in any animal identification program.

We know that you also hear those same concerns from producers, but we wanted to emphasize them, in our position as Montana lawmakers, on behalf of those who have spoken before our committee this session.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and for all you do on behalf of Montana agriculture.

Sincerely,

Sen. Donald Steinbeisser, Chair

Sen. Terry Murphy, Vice Chair

Sen. Gary Branae

Sen. Ken Hansen

Sen. Taylor Brown

Sen. Verdel Jackson

Sen. Brad Hamlett

Sen. Cliff Larsen

Sen. Rick Ripley