

## 3/05/2004 Mandatory Animal Identification Reviewed By House Agriculture Committee

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Houston Hearing Looks at USDA's Animal Identification Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jerry Moran today participated in a House Agriculture Committee field hearing in Houston, Texas, to review the development of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Identification Program. Animal traceability has become a priority in the wake of the recent finding of a single case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Washington State. Among the witnesses testifying before the committee was the President of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Jan Lyons from Manhattan, Kansas.

"As the USDA and Congress work to develop an ID system, we must ensure that it is done in a way which does not burden our producers," Moran said. "Implementing the system should be based on common sense, and it should be flexible to meet producers' needs and allow for new technology. The system also should not place a tremendous financial burden on our producers or expose them to a liability that could shut down their operations."

Moran questioned both public and private sector witnesses on the costs of implementing a mandatory national program and the costs for producers to adopt to new regulatory requirements. Other issues highlighted during the hearing were producer liability and the ability for the various available technologies to communicate.

"Even though the United States has the safest food delivery system in the world, recent events require additional measures to improve that system and to reassure foreign and domestic consumers," Moran concluded.

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