

# Farmers may become much more tech savvy

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Changes in U.S. livestock identification requirements might soon make it necessary for farms of all sizes to become much more technologically advanced.

"Right now, many farmers don't individually identify their livestock at all," said Bruce Greene, associate professor of agriculture at Tennessee Technological University. But, he notes, cattle move in and out of a state rapidly, to and from various locations across the nation.

"Because a calf can move through as many as six or seven different locations before it goes to slaughter, it makes sense -- for a number of reasons -- to have a federal tracking system in place," Greene said.

"Anywhere along the way, an animal can be exposed to a contagious disease like foot and mouth, which is little harm to people, but which can decimate an industry," he said. "Being able to trace an individual animal's movements would help to significantly limit the effects of such a contagion."

Greene said other advantages of a federal livestock tracking system include possible early detection of bio-terrorism and an immediate outlet for farmers to enter and retrieve individual animal records.

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