

USDA starts new program to track farm animals

April 17 2013, by M.I. Johnson

(AP)—The federal government has started a new livestock identification program to help agriculture officials quickly track livestock in cases of disease.

The program replaces an earlier, voluntary one that failed because of widespread opposition among farmers and ranchers who described it as a costly hassle that didn't help control disease.

The new program is mandatory but more limited in scope. It applies only to animals being shipped across state lines and gives states flexibility in deciding how animals will be identified.

Abby Yigzaw is a spokeswoman for the federal Animal and [Plant Health Inspection Service](#). She says the program is important because it lets officials quickly identify animals that must be quarantined, and that means healthy ones can keep going to processing facilities without an [interruption](#) in the [food supply](#).

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