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Training Sessions Provide Working Knowledge of National Animal Identification System

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Training Sessions Provide Working Knowledge of National Animal Identification System

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Abstract: One in-service and two train-the-trainer workshops were conducted by University of Idaho Extension faculty, Idaho State Department of Agriculture personnel, and allied industry representatives to increase Extension educators' knowledge and awareness of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) and related topics. Training sessions included a number of NAIS-related presentations and the distribution of NAIS materials. The percent increase in knowledge of these topics ranged from 6.5 to 140.6%. As a result of the train-the-trainer workshops, 100% of attendees indicated they were better equipped to handle questions related to the NAIS.

Introduction

For a number of years, U.S. agriculture industry leaders and officials debated the creation of an animal identification system. In January 2003, these discussions culminated as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman announced the need to implement a voluntary or mandatory National Animal Identification System (NAIS). In April 2004, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the framework for implementation of the NAIS with the goal of enabling USDA officials to identify any agricultural premises exposed to a foreign animal disease so the disease could be controlled and eliminated as quickly as possible (Umberger & Bailey, 2004).

Common to the announcement of new programs and protocols are questions from industry participants. Per their announcement, which stated "Check with your State's or Tribe's animal health authority or with your local Extension agent for more information about when you can register your premises and how to do it" (USDA, 2004a), it is clear that USDA relied on Extension faculty to answer NAIS questions posed by producers. However, at the time the NAIS framework and implementation was announced, University of

Idaho Extension faculty had received little, if any, information or training relative to the NAIS.

Project Objective

The objective of the project described here was to educate University of Idaho Extension faculty (specialists, educators, etc.) on aspects of the NAIS and available technologies associated with implementation of the NAIS in Idaho. In addition, the project was designed to equip University of Idaho Extension faculty to address inquiries related to the NAIS and its implementation and impact posed by Idaho's livestock producers and the general public.

Project Design

As a component of the 2005 University of Idaho Extension Annual Conference in Moscow, Idaho, an in-service training session was provided to keep university personnel (Extension specialists and educators, 4-H program faculty, Animal and Veterinary Science Department faculty) abreast of topics related to the NAIS. Session topics included:

1. Status of NAIS implementation and outreach efforts from a national perspective,
2. NAIS outreach efforts by Extension in Colorado, 3) NAIS outreach efforts by Extension in Minnesota
3. Status of NAIS implementation and outreach efforts in Idaho, and
4. Status of an NAIS database.

After a question and answer session, a round table discussion involving University of Idaho faculty, Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) personnel, and session speakers was held to identify the need and structure of future NAIS education and outreach efforts in Idaho. Subsequent to this initial session, University of Idaho Extension faculty and ISDA personnel met to develop a standard set of educational materials for use at future Extension faculty training sessions.

Two NAIS train-the-trainer sessions were developed for University of Idaho Extension faculty. These sessions were held in Caldwell and Pocatello, Idaho during the fall of 2005. The core topics addressed in these sessions included:

1. Epidemiological basis for NAIS,
2. NAIS strategic plan, 3) NAIS program standards,
3. Northwest Pilot Project results,
4. Electronic eartag/reader technology, and

5. Premises registration.

In addition to these topics, a presentation on the utilization of electronic identification in Idaho beef herds was given at the Caldwell location. Speakers at the events included ISDA personnel (state veterinarian and NAIS program coordinator), University of Idaho Extension faculty (specialists and educators), and allied industry representatives. Reference materials used in the development of these sessions included:

1. *The National Animal Identification System (NAIS): Why Animal Identification? Why Now? What First?* (USDA, 2004b),
2. *Premises Identification: The First Step Toward a National Animal Identification System* (USDA, 2004a),
3. *National Animal Identification System (NAIS) Draft Program Standards* (USDA, 2005a),
4. *National Animal Identification System (NAIS) Draft Strategic Plan* (USDA 2005b), and
5. *U.S. Livestock Identification Systems: Risk Management and Market Opportunities* (WEMC, 2004).

Copies of the reference materials were provided to each attendee for future reference and study.

Project Evaluation

A total of 48 (35 - Moscow, 7 - Caldwell, 6 - Pocatello) individuals participated in the NAIS training sessions, and each was asked to complete written session evaluations. Response rates for the evaluations at the Moscow, Caldwell, and Pocatello sites were 31.4%, 100%, and 100%, respectively.

To gauge the effectiveness and the benefits of the NAIS training sessions, participants were asked to document their change in knowledge (before and after sessions) of the topics presented using a Likert scale (1 = low, 5 = high). Percent change in knowledge was calculated as follows: % change in knowledge = (knowledge change / knowledge before) x 100. Using the same scale, individuals were also asked to rate the value of the information shared and the quality of the meeting. Additionally, participants at the train-the-trainer sessions in Caldwell and Pocatello were asked if they felt better equipped (yes, somewhat, or no) to handle questions about the NAIS.

Evaluation results from the Moscow in-service, Caldwell train-the-trainer, and Pocatello train-the-trainer sessions are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively. It is clear from the evaluation results that participants' knowledge of NAIS-related topics increased as a result of the workshops.

Table 1.
Knowledge of NAIS^a Gained by Participants^b at a Moscow In-Service Session

Knowledge of:	Before	After	Change	% Change ^c
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- National NAIS status	2.8	3.9	1.1	40.4
- Colorado NAIS efforts	1.8	3.9	2.1	117.2
- Minnesota NAIS efforts	1.7	4.1	2.4	140.6
- Idaho NAIS efforts	3.1	3.3	0.2	6.5
- NAIS database, youth projects	2.2	3.5	1.3	57.0
Average	2.3	3.7	1.4	61.1
<p>^aNAIS = National Animal Identification System. ^bNumber of participants providing responses = 11. ^cTopics evaluated on 1 to 5 (1 = low, 5 = high) scale. Percent change = (change/before) x 100.</p>				

Table 2.

Knowledge of NAIS^a Gained by Participants^b at a Caldwell Train-the-Trainer Session

Knowledge of:	Before	After	Change	% Change ^e
- Epidemiological basis for NAIS	3.7	4.3	0.6	15.4
- NAIS strategic plan	3.3	4.3	1.0	30.8
- NAIS program standards	2.7	4.1	1.4	52.6
- Northwest Pilot Project results	3.0	4.0	1.0	33.3
- Current EID ^c / reader technology	2.3	4.1	1.9	83.3
- EID ^c use in Idaho beef herds	3.0	3.4	0.4	12.5
- ISDA ^d premises registration	3.4	4.3	0.9	25.9
Average	3.0	4.1	1.0	33.5
<p>^aNAIS = National Animal Identification System. ^bNumber of participants providing responses = 7. ^cEID = Electronic identification. ^dISDA = Idaho State Department of Agriculture. ^eTopics evaluated on 1 to 5 (1 = low, 5 = high) scale. Percent change = (change/before) x 100.</p>				

Table 3.

Knowledge of NAIS^a Gained by Participants^b at a Pocatello Train-the-Trainer Session

Knowledge of:	Before	After	Change	% Change ^e
- Epidemiological basis for NAIS	2.9	3.8	0.9	31.4
- NAIS strategic plan	2.5	3.7	1.2	46.7

- NAIS program standards	2.2	4.2	2.0	92.3
- Northwest Pilot Project results	2.2	3.5	1.3	61.5
- Current EID ^c / reader technology	2.3	4.0	1.7	71.4
- ISDA ^d premises registration	2.2	4.0	1.8	84.6
Average	2.4	3.9	1.5	62.6
^a NAIS = National Animal Identification System. ^b Number of participants providing responses = 6. ^c EID = Electronic identification. ^d ISDA = Idaho State Department of Agriculture. ^e Topics evaluated on 1 to 5 (1 = low, 5 = high) scale. Percent change = (change/before) x 100.				

Knowledge of the topics prior to the training sessions ranged from 1.7 to 3.7. This is similar to results of the study by Patent, Roe, & Fluharty (2006) in which 60% of survey respondents (primarily youth livestock exhibitors) indicated they were somewhat aware of the NAIS. Knowledge of the topics after the training sessions ranged from 3.3 to 4.3. Percent change in knowledge ranged from 6.5 to 140.6%. When asked to evaluate the value of the information shared at the meetings, participants gave ratings of 4.0, 4.4, and 4.3 for the Moscow, Caldwell, and Pocatello sessions, respectively. Similar evaluations (Moscow = 3.9, Caldwell = 4.2, Pocatello = 4.3) were given when participants were asked to rate the quality of the meetings. One-hundred percent of the individuals (13 total; 12 = yes, 1 = somewhat) attending the Caldwell and Pocatello train-the-trainer sessions cited they were better equipped to handle questions related to the NAIS.

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