

Title: FY2008 NAIS Implementation Cooperative Agreement Work Plan
for Vermont to Advance Animal Disease Traceability

Plan Administrator: Michael J. Wood, DVM

Name of State, Vermont

Address: 116 State Street

City, State, Zip: Montpelier, VT 05620

Office Phone: 802-828-2421

Cell Phone: 802-989-1453

Fax: 802-828-5983

Email address Michael.wood@state.vt.us

These funds may only be used to implement and accelerate the process of premises registration and other activities that are, in the opinion of the AVIC and Regional Directors, aligned with the strategies defined in the NAIS business plan (November 2007) to advance animal disease traceability. Special field trials, demonstration projects, or research projects which attempt to address problems or questions about NAIS implementation must be funded through a separate application to an announcement specific for that funding.

Signature of Plan Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Please complete each section explained on the following pages and maintain the format on your application.

Vermont is applying for NAIS Cooperative Agreement funding for 2008. We recognize that premise registration, animal identification and animal tracking are parts of a voluntary program that comprise the Federal NAIS program.

Background:

Vermont originally applied for and received \$100,000 NAIS funding in 2004. With the Cooperative Agreement, Vermont was able to hire a computer IT position and set up a premise registration system that was compatible with the Federal system. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, with stakeholder participation from the University of Vermont Extension and Vermont producer groups, initiated outreach and education about the importance of premise registration. Early in the process, the Agency became aware of the experience of the Wisconsin Premise System (WLIC). After a major outreach and

education effort, only 400 out of an estimated 80,000 premise (0.5%) had voluntarily enrolled. At that time, Vermont decided to adopt a rule making premise registration mandatory. The proposed rule included all species and farms of all sizes. A public hearing for the proposed rule was well attended and had overwhelming opposition to the rule. The Vermont Legislature subsequently required the Vermont Agency of Agriculture (VAA) to hold informational meetings in each of the 13 counties to discuss the rule and provide information on Avian Influenza and Pandemic Flu which were current topics of interest in Vermont at that time. Thirteen meetings were well attended often by the same core group of people opposed to the rule. Very little support for the rule was evident. About midway through the process the Vermont Secretary of Agriculture determined that he could no longer support the mandatory requirement of the rule and the rule was withdrawn. Vermont continued to support the voluntary registration of premises. Vermont currently ranks 43rd in percent of estimated farms registered (315 out of 6000). Recently, with new direction from the USDA, we have seen increased interest from our dairy and beef producer groups.

Overview of NAIS Implementation Accomplishments by Funding Year to Date

- CCC Funds in FY2004 No NAIS Cooperative Agreement in 2004
- FY2005 05-9150-0933-CA \$100,000
Expenditures \$ 84,058.62
Returned funds \$15,941.38
- Performance measures were to acquire the Premise Allocator by November, 2004 and have access to the allocator by December, 2004. A another goal was set to register 2000 premise in the first year. An outreach plan was to be developed and implemented by August 2005. The accomplishments are as follows: The allocator was obtained and producers had access in early 2005. Outreach was initiated. The goals for premise registrations were very disappointing. The total was less than 300.
- FY2006 05-9650-0722CA \$114,000
Expenditures \$104,125.37
Returned funds \$9874.63

Performance measures were to include hiring an Animal ID IT Administrator. Four regional outreach meetings and four for invitees were to be held from November 2005-October 2006. Name a NAIS Program Administrator. Thirteen public hearing were to be held in each county. All cervid farms (30) were to be registered and 300 to 500 premises were to be registered. Outcome-IT Administrator was hired. Outreach to producer groups and on individual farms was completed. Thirteen public hearings were held as part of the attempt to make premise registration mandatory. After intense public opposition, the rule was withdrawn and Vermont continued their voluntary program. Total premise registrations reached 300.

- FY2007 Vermont did not apply for 2007 funds.

NAIS Outreach Plan

Identified Risks:

The main traceability risk for Vermont is our low participation in the premise registration program. We can not proceed to animal identification and reach our "critical mass" until we do a better job getting increased participation by our producers. Critical mass for animal ID is estimated to be 70% of an individual species that would allow us to approach the goal of trace back in 48 hours after a disease event.

Another traceability risk in Vermont is our outdated and inefficient import tracking system. Manual searching of paper files is the current procedure when we need to identify and track imported animals in Vermont. We envision development of an online import permitting process to - help improve traceability and monitoring of imported animals as well as improve service and communication with importers. Information and communication gaps with industry is another traceability risk.

The inability to communicate efficiently and directly with producers concerning animal health issues and emergencies is a risk that will affect the State's ability to effectively address those issues when it may not be able to disseminate important information to the industry in a direct and timely manner.

An Advisory Committee has not been formed in Vermont. I will include the following on the invitation to join the committee:

1. University of Vermont Extension
2. USDA- Vermont VMO Dr. Todd Johnson
3. Vermont Fair Association
4. Livestock markets and slaughter plants
5. Representative from commercial poultry producers
6. Representative from Vermont Bird Fanciers
7. Vermont Sheep and Goat Association
8. Vermont Horse Council
9. Vermont Llama and Alpaca Association
10. Dairy Cooperatives and producer groups

I propose to meet quarterly initially and every six months after we have become organized.

Vermont continues to update their premise registration website. The URL has been modified to make it easy to remember and access. A link to the National Animal Identification System was removed from our site in 2006 and we are in the process of installing a new link. Work is also proceeding to add metadata search engines. Our website contains a visible link to our online premise registration with step by step instructions and contact information. An

area is provided for feedback information and news related to premise registration and NAIS. Vermont's IT Coordinator has all pages date stamped to guarantee that our content is accurate and up to date.

Constraints to NAIS Implementation

Vermont State Law guarantees confidentiality of collected information under Title 6 Agriculture

61. Information collection and confidentiality

§ 61. Information collection and confidentiality

The secretary may collect information on subjects within the jurisdiction of the agency, including data obtained from questionnaires, surveys, physical samples and laboratory analyses conducted by the agency. Such information, shall be available upon request to the public, provided that it is presented in a form which does not disclose the identity of individual persons, households or businesses from whom the information was obtained, or whose characteristics, activities or products the information is about. (Amended 1993, No. 125 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 1995, No. 128 (Adj. Sess.), § 3; 2003, No. 42, § 2, eff. May 27, 2003.)

Goals:

We would like to increase our outreach effort immediately. Our short term focus will be on our cattle industry. Currently Vermont has 1150 commercial dairies and an estimated 1100 beef operations. Vermont continues to have the highest number of dairies and dairy animals in New England. The dairy industry generates approximately \$560 million in sale of product, another \$426 million in interaction with Vermont businesses and provides 7500 jobs to the State's economy. Cattle pose other concerns. Diseases such as Brucellosis and Tuberculosis are zoonotic and although Vermont is currently considered free of these diseases, the chance of reintroduction is always possible. Diseases such as Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and their potential impact on the industry and the nation's economy make cattle a high risk species. Vermont's success in eliminating Tuberculosis and Brucellosis has decreased the participation of a large number of herds in the control programs. This leads to fewer animals being tagged and identified to their herd. For these reasons we will focus on the dairy and beef industries and consider them Tier 1 in accordance with the new NAIS proposed business plan. Vermont has only eight commercial poultry operation and we will focus on obtaining PINs from the few that already do not have one. Although NASS estimates 206 swine operations in Vermont, there are no large commercial operations. Our sheep and goat industry is well identified due to the success of the USDA's Scrapie Eradication and Flock Certification Programs. Tier 1 horses in Vermont exceed 10,000 and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture(VAA) has a database with all owners and

addresses which include a physical description of the horses from the coggins form. There continues to be great opposition in the horse industry to NAIS because of fear of ID requirements such as tagging and chipping. We will use the new NAIS Partner Collaboration Site to develop better ways to get the message out that this program is vital to protecting animal health in Vermont.

Strategy and Timeline:

We will immediately meet with the Vermont dairy cooperatives to encourage their support in promoting premise registration. Other states have successfully used mailing lists generated by coops to send an information packet to producers. Including a pre-filled application and a stamped return envelope has increased the response rate with North Carolina reporting a 14% return rate. Producers already in the system frequently are irritated by repetitive requests so it will be very important that we check any list with our existing premises. We will increase our presence at agricultural events. The first will be the Vermont Farm Show in January, 2008. The next event will be the Vermont Veterinary Medical Association's winter meeting in February. We will have a booth at the state's largest horse event, "Everything Equine". This occurs in late April. Our Animal Health Specialists have a presence at our summer fairs and will this year man a Premise Registration booth at each fair.

. In the first six months of 2008, the VAA's veterinarians with help from our USDA VMO will personally visit most large animal veterinary practices to encourage our private veterinarians to use their great influence with producers to promote PINs. The new packet for training accredited veterinarians from NAIS will be a help with this effort. We are starting a voluntary vaccination program for Johnes Disease for certain high prevalence herds. Although voluntary, premise registration and tagging to herd of origin will be mandatory. The Agency could also make an effort to create other incentives for premise registration by encouraging registration as part of access to or to become eligible for certain state programs and services. Examples may include payment for Johnes testing, reimbursements from BSE sampling, AI and Pullorum testing, enrollment in the Scrapie Flock Certification Program, access to certain relief fund.

Outreach efforts will be refocused to emphasize the value of premises registration to the producer as an important communication system and source of information for the producer concerning animal health events and issues. In keeping with this focus, the Agency proposes to put premises registration to work by putting out periodic notices of information/news to registrants concerning issues of animal health pertinent to their industry. This effort will accomplish two goals, one will be to help promote and keep the industry informed of animal health issues and the other will be to be to periodically exercise the system to ensure that it remains functional and efficient.

We need to maintain our computer capability. Our Systems Developer will continue to maintain our current Premise Registration site and is working on systems that will enable the VAA to allow disease control programs to merge with the premise program when possible. He will not be programming State systems with Federal money except for the

purposes of their integration with NAIS SPRS or between a State or private ATD, and Federal tracking system. As mentioned elsewhere, work is needed on our online site to make it more user friendly. We will consider the use of contractors e.g. marketing companies, to promote our renewed initiative. . Producer incentives will be offered to new enrollments in the Premise Registration Program. They will not exceed \$12/incentive and will bear the name of the Vermont Premise Registration Program.

Measurable Outcome:

We intend to increase our number of registered premises in the cattle industry during 2008 from the current 168 to 400. Specific numbers can be seen in the enclosed charts.

Measuring Traceability for Prioritized Species

Table 1: Premises Identification Goals for Achieving PIN Critical Mass by December 2009

Primary Species at Premises	Estimated # of Total Premises	# of Premises with PIN as of 12/1/07	Total Premises Registration Goal for 12/31/08	Total Premises Registration Goal for 12/31/09	Estimated # of Premises with $\geq 70\%$ of Animals	Critical Mass Premises Registration Goal for 12/31/08	Critical Mass Premises Identification Goal for 12/31/09
Tier 1							
Beef Cattle*	1100	Combined with dairy					
Dairy Cattle*	1150	168	400	800	900	300	600
Chickens**	6	1 (71)*	6	6	5	6	6
Turkeys**	2	0	2	2	2	2	2
Swine	206	22 ***	40	60	140	28	42
Sheep	500	27 (210)**	300	350	300	300	350
Goats	100	17 (30)	60	70	50	40	50
Equine	2000	41****	100	200	400	100	200
Tier 2****							
	* backyard flocks	** Have SFCP # or Prem #	*** VT has no commercial swine	**** Premise on record on coggins			

Table 2: Premises Identification Goals for Achieving PINs for Critical Location Points by December 2008 and 2009

Type of Location	Estimated Number	Business Plan Goal	# Possessing PIN as of 12/1/07	Projected Goal for Possessing PIN as of 12/31/08
Exhibition and Sporting Venues	13	>90% by September 2009	0	4
Import/Export Facilities	2	100% <i>See individual target dates in Business Plan</i>	0	2
Markets & Dealers	2 markets 119 livestock dealers and transporters	70% by October 2009	0	20
Harvest facilities (Federal)	8	100% by July 2009	0	4
Harvest Facilities (State)	4	>90% by January 2009	0	4
Semen Collection and Embryo Transfer Facilities	1	100% by January 2009	0	1
Veterinary Clinics	38	>90% by October 2008		
Licensed Food Waste Swine Feeding Operations	0	100% by October 2008		
Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories	1	100% by October 2008	0	1
Renderers	0	100% by July 2009		
Appropriate University or Government Research Facilities	1	100% by January 2009	0	1

**Table 3: Animal Identification Goals for Achieving USDA Official Identification
Critical Mass by December 2009**

Primary Species at Premises	Estimated # of Animals	Critical Mass Estimate (≥70%) of Animals	Estimated # of Animals Officially ID'ed as of 12/1/07	Estimated # of Animals Officially ID'ed to a Birth Premises as of 12/1/07	Goal for # of Animals Officially ID'ed by 12/31/08	Goal for # of Animals Officially ID'ed to a Birth Premises by 12/31/08	Goal for # of Animals Officially ID'ed by 12/31/09	Goal for # of Animals Officially ID'ed to a Birth Premises by 12/31/09
Tier 1								
Beef Cattle*	11276	7893	2819	300	5638	600	6500	1000
Dairy Cattle*	145000	98000	136300	7250	136300	10875	140000	15000
Chickens**	325000	227500						
Turkeys**	80000	56000						
Swine***	2019	1413						
Sheep	10000	7000	6900	6900	7000	7000	7500	75000
Goats	3000	2100	1200	1200	1500	1500	1750	1750
Equine****	10118	7826	100	0	****			
Tier 2*****								

****Equine numbers refer to those needing an official test for Equine Infectious and all have physical and premise identification on current coggins forms at the Vermont Agency of agriculture

Table 4: Suggested Budget Organization for Developing Budget Narrative

	Personnel	Fringe Benefits	Travel	Equipment	Supplies	Contractual	Other	20% Matching
Advisory Committee	500	130						126
Website Updating	13498.88	3646.64						3429.10
Data Entry	5000	1300						1260
Industry Collaboration	1000	260	250					302
Accredited Veterinarians	1000	260	500					352
Premises Identification	5000	1300	500	3090.79*	3000*	1,282.40*	5000*	3969.48
Prof. meetings			2000					400
Educational Meeting Rooms etc.							2500	500
Misc., Mailings/Newsletter							2500	500
				*Electronics – Laptop/Projector	* Tags	*Incentives		
Sub-Total	25998.88	6896.64	3250	3090.79	3000	1,282.40	9500	
Indirect@15.3% Equipment and contracts are not included	3977.83	1055.19	497.25				765	
TOTAL	29976.71	7951.83	3747.25	3090.79	3000	1,282.40	10765	10001.48

Total Federal Request -- \$60,579.00

***Not included in Indirect calculations**

Categories	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr	4 th Qtr	Total
Personnel	8,223.88	8,223.88	8,223.88	8,223.88	32,895.52
Travel	812.50	812.50	812.50	812.50	3,250
Equipment	772.70*	772.70*	772.70*	772.70*	3090.80*
Supplies	750	750	750	750	3,000
Contractual	320.60	320.60	320.60	320.60	1,282.40
Other	2,691.25**	2,691.25**	2,691.25**	2,691.25**	10,765**
Indirect	1,573.82	1,573.82	1,573.82	1,573.82	6,295.28

Total Federal Request

\$60,579.00

20% State Match

12,115.80

Total NAIS Program

72,694.80

Reporting

The Cooperator agrees to submit to USDA/APHIS/VS (through their Area Veterinarian in Charge) quarterly accomplishment reports on program activities outlined in the Work Plan and Financial Plan. These reports should consist of a narrative and a data summary, and may be submitted electronically in the spreadsheet format supplied by APHIS. These reports will be used by APHIS to verify compliance with provisions of this Agreement. These reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter except the final report which is due no later than 90 days after the Agreement expires or terminates

Table 5: Animal Disease Traceability Performance Measures and Outcomes

Species at Premises	% Improvement in # Premises Registered with $\geq 70\%$ of animals	% Improvement in # Critical Location Point Premises Registered	% Improvement in # Animals Officially ID'ed	% Improvement in # Animals Officially ID'ed to the Birth Premises
Tier 1				
Beef Cattle*				
Dairy Cattle*	Currently 168 PINs 150% increase	Currently 0 projected 16 at end of 2008	Unknown	Unknown
Chickens**				
Turkeys**				
Swine***				
Sheep				
Goats				
Equine****				
Tier 2*****				

Cost Sharing: 20 percent cost sharing is required for all applicants. Cost sharing for all data collection infrastructure support must be accompanied by evidence that the purchase is directly cost shared by the applicant and the cost share for such purchases cannot be attributed to personnel salaries or other offerings of cost share equivalents. NAIS-approved tags/devices (as described on Page 14) purchased for official State-Federal Cooperative disease program work in this work plan do not require cost matching

evidence, but the amount of Federal funds used in the work plan to purchase the NAIS-approved tags/devices will be included in the total amount against which the overall 20% cost matching requirement will be calculated.

Livestock Markets and Dealers

- States will be responsible for selecting cooperating livestock markets and dealers in their State and coordinating support, including documentation of performance for required reports. Participating livestock markets and dealers must cost share and provide a minimum of 20 percent of out of pocket costs for data collection equipment, and the Federal contribution through the State would be a maximum of 80 percent of their allowable “animal movement data collection infrastructure funds” per facility. States will determine whether use of the Federal funds would be best distributed to as many markets and dealers as possible, or to optimally assist a targeted few, basing the decision on achieving the greatest impact for NAIS implementation within the State. Markets and dealers would also cover the cost of any retrofitting of their facilities that may be required to accommodate the automated data capture equipment and the integration of the data collection systems with their management programs. Participating livestock markets and dealers must be actively promoting NAIS premises registration efforts and their success in acquiring premises registration results must be documented by the State in the proposed work plan and quarterly and final reports.

Incentives

It is anticipated that some States/Tribes/Territories may request Federal funds, or allowance for matching funds, to utilize varying types of incentive efforts to encourage producers to adopt or implement portions of the NAIS. For purposes of these guidelines, “incentive(s)” in this context refers to giveaways (e.g., no actual direct relationship to completing a premises registration), including promotional items. The purpose of incentive(s) is to boost or accelerate premises registration participation within a State/Tribe/Territory.

USDA/APHIS can use appropriated funds for incentives to increase participation in the NAIS. Incentive costs associated with participation in the NAIS are allowable costs for the purposes of this cooperative agreement.

The following guidelines regarding incentive(s) should be followed:

- For FY2008 NAIS activities with increased premises registration as a primary objective, no more than 10 percent of total project funding intended for outreach and education activities can be used for incentive purposes. Producers/owners can receive only one incentive per premises registered and States/Tribes/Territories wishing to utilize incentives to increase premises registration must be able to document such.

- The most important aspect of the work plan or application for funds with regard to premises registration incentive(s) is the applicant's description and justification for the proposed approach. The justification and support should include terms of cost per item, intended use, and measurable outcomes. Maximum allowance for individual items is \$12.00 per item.
- Applicants are limited to making incentives available only to producers/owners who register their premises during the funding period. In anticipation of potential producers/owners voicing concerns regarding registering their premises without receiving an incentive, applicants must describe their intended response.
- In general, applicants must be able to provide evidence that only premises registered by owners/producers within the funding period were provided the incentive once and only once. Each quarterly accomplishment report must contain an accounting of incentive efforts to date if this option is described in the work plan.
- Competitive incentive plan programs designed to reward groups or organizations with "prize" money are not allowed. Allocation of monies for incentive purposes of registering premises are to be aligned solely with registration of a premises.
- Promotional items not intended for use as a specific reward for registering a premises are required to have information imprinted on the item that can direct recipients to further contact information associated with registering a premises in that State/Tribe/Territory.
- Items that are provided as a specific reward only to people who sign up for NAIS premises registration must be identified or associated with the State/Tribe/Territory animal identification effort or the NAIS. This can be an associated thank-you note provided along with the intended item documenting the connection of the reward with registration of a premises. The item itself may be imprinted with the NAIS or State/Tribe/Territory animal identification logo; or the logo can be imprinted on one portion of the item such as a holster associated with a selected tool item; or an attached item imprinted with an appropriate logo such as a "tag" attached to a rope halter. At a minimum, the language or logos must somehow show or detail the Federal-State cooperative effort.

Appendix I: State Web Site Best Practices

Web sites are one of the easiest mechanisms for providing accurate, up-to-date information about the NAIS program to both producers and the general public. Your Web site should be tailored to existing State-led NAIS outreach efforts while remaining consistent with the USDA NAIS Web site.

You can improve your State Web site by adapting best practices in the following categories: **Accessibility, Content, Design, and Maintenance.**

Accessibility

Make your Web site easy to find and the chances of reaching and influencing your target audience can increase dramatically. There are various ways in which a user can find your State/agency NAIS web site. Those ways include navigating from the homepage of the State Department of Agriculture or other agency's site, external Web sites such as the USDA NAIS Web site, or search engine referrals like Google.

Minimum Requirements:

Create a URL that is easy to remember.

Keep your NAIS site URL short, simple and memorable. This technique makes it easier for the user to cut and paste the URL into a browser and reduces typing errors. Reach out to your IT department to see if a simpler URL can be created.

Make sure the NAIS section is logically placed within your State/agency Web site.

Navigation to the NAIS section of the State/agency Web site should be intuitive. A link from the State/agency home page that contains a short description of the NAIS program is ideal. Consider linking to your NAIS section from several appropriate locations within the State/agency Web site.

Additional Recommendations:

Add metadata so search engines can easily locate the site.

Metadata is hidden information on Web pages that allow them to be located and displayed by search engines such as Google, Yahoo, etc. The standard metadata are:

- Title: A brief piece of text identifying the webpage that uses targeted keywords. The title text appears in the title bar of browsers and is an important factor in how search engines rank your web page.
- Description: A brief textual description of the page's content. Used by some search engines as the description for your page when displaying search results.

Promote, promote, promote.

Whenever information appears about your State's NAIS program, use your URL. The URL should appear in factsheets, brochures, press releases, and in presentation slides just for starters. The URL is the easiest way for audiences to follow-up and obtain further information.

Content

Having useful NAIS content on your site attracts users and encourages them to return in the future. The following tips can enhance the information available on your State site and foster NAIS participation.

Minimum Requirements:

Link to the USDA NAIS Web site.

A link to the USDA NAIS Web site can provide general program information to users. The USDA NAIS Web site provides a variety of features including the ability to order outreach materials, contact a working group, provide feedback on the NAIS program, and view premises registration totals.

Provide easy access to Premises Registration information.

Providing your Premises Registration form in a downloadable format such as a PDF is an easy way to help increase participation in your State. If your State provides online registration, make the link visible from the home page. Step by step instructions on how to register should also be provided.

Present contact information for various NAIS representatives in your State.

Many users may come to your Web site looking for a way to ask questions about the NAIS Program. A link to contact information should be visible from every page on your NAIS site and should be part of your main navigation. Contact information for NAIS representatives in your State should include the following:

- o Contact name
- o Affiliation/organization
- o Street address
- o Phone number
- o Email address

Additional Recommendations:

Provide Online Premises Registration.

The convenience of online premises registration will increase the likelihood that Producers will register their premises and is preferable to downloadable registration forms.

Keep content consistent.

Site content should be consistent throughout each page, and also with the information presented on the USDA NAIS Web site. Contradictory information reduces the site's credibility. Assigning a single content owner for your site's NAIS section will help maintain a consistent voice and ensure accurate information is always posted.

Offer a Resource Library.

Providing a resource library is an efficient way to group all available downloadable documents such as registration forms, NAIS brochures, transcripts, and press releases, in one central location.

Provide a feedback mechanism.

Using an email link or an online form to submit feedback helps measure how your site is meeting your audiences' needs. Using a form will help you control how feedback is formatted and sent. If you choose to develop a form, it should provide concise instructions for submitting the feedback.

Create a frequently updated Spotlights or News section.

A good way of enticing your visitors to come back to your site is to offer Spotlights and News Updates on your site. These should be updated on a regular basis and used to highlight important NAIS topics and events, particularly those relevant to your State.

Design

Good site design improves a user's ability to quickly and efficiently find the information they are seeking. The following tips will enhance your site design and ultimately increase user satisfaction.

Minimum Requirements:**Make all content accessible within three clicks.**

Users who are more than three clicks from the information they need are likely to leave the site and seek the information elsewhere. Also, most search engines only look for pages that are three clicks deep into a Web site.

Keep a consistent look and feel.

All pages should use the same Web template to enforce a uniform page structure throughout your site. Users should be able to predict the location of key page elements, such as navigation, page links, and content after visiting just one page. Keeping colors and fonts consistent also helps users become familiar with your site.

Additional Recommendations:**Include a site search capability.**

A site search feature will help visitors quickly locate the information they want. Make the search box prominent and be sure that it searches your entire site but does not search any external sites.

Provide appropriate details for links.

Users should not have to guess where a link is taking them. The text in the link or on the navigation button should reveal the link's destination.

Additional detail can be added to describe links such as whether it is a download (i.e., like a PDF) and its file size. This information helps users determine if their browser connection can support the file download.

Downloadable documents and external links should open in a new browser window to ensure that users don't leave your site accidentally.

Maintenance

Web site maintenance helps ensure it remains relevant to your users and functions as intended. Regularly updating your Web site also increases its credibility and relevance. Below are some valuable tips for maintaining your site.

Minimum Requirements:

Keep content accurate and up-to-date.

Users expect the content on your site to be accurate and current. Provide a date stamp on your major pages to let the user know the information is updated.

Review links to make sure they are active and still relevant to your site's purpose.

Broken links will discourage your users, and force them to seek out other sites. Regularly reviewing your internal and external links is an important way to ensure your audience will continue to use your site.

NOTICE OF **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AWARD**
BETWEEN THE
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (COOPERATOR)
AND THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)
VETERINARY SERVICES

ARTICLE 1 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this **Agreement** is to provide Federal financial assistance to: 1) Provide assistance with education and outreach; 2) Maintain and submit data required to ensure compliance with premises registration ; 3) Promote and facilitate premises registration with local organizations; and 4) Conduct surveillance activities that will provide specific information to the Cooperator, APHIS, and other interested parties for the National Animal Identification System program.

ARTICLE 2 - AUTHORITIES

Under the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, PL 107-171, Subtitle E, Animal Health Protection, Section 10401-10418, the Secretary of Agriculture, in order to protect the agriculture, environment, economy, and health and welfare of the people of the United States by preventing, detecting, controlling, and eradicating diseases and pests of animals, is authorized to cooperate with foreign countries, States, and other jurisdictions, or other persons, to prevent and eliminate burdens on interstate commerce and foreign commerce, and to regulate effectively interstate commerce and foreign commerce.

Notwithstanding Chapter 63 of Title 31, under 7 USC 2279g, on or after February 20, 2003, APHIS is authorized to use cooperative agreements to reflect a relationship with a state or other cooperator to carry out programs to protect the nation's animal and plant resources or to carry out educational programs or special studies to improve the safety of the nation's food supply.

ARTICLE 3 – MUTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The cooperating parties agree to/that:

- a. A mutually satisfactory annual **Work Plan** and **Financial Plan** developed by the **Cooperator** and APHIS are incorporated into this **Agreement** by reference. (See Attachment)
- b. The provisions of this **Agreement** will not replace functions that are being conducted by the **Cooperator** but will supplement those activities and increase program benefits to all parties.
- c. The employee(s) responsible for this work will be under the general program direction of the **Cooperator** and APHIS. Supervision of personnel will be provided by their employing organization, and they will be subject to their employing organizations rules and regulations.

ARTICLE 17 – FUNDING/EFFECTIVE PERIOD, REVISIONS, AND TERMINATION

The Federal award for this **Agreement** is in the amount of \$60,579 and the **Cooperator's** share is \$12,115.80 for a total project cost of \$72,694.80. These contributions establish a cost share ratio which shall be attained for the funding period except to the extent that there are cost overruns. Cost overruns will be the sole responsibility of the **Cooperator**, unless additional funding is secured from APHIS prior to the expiration of the funding period. In the event that project costs are less than projected, each party will realize a percentage of the savings to be distributed based on the established ratio. This **Agreement** shall become effective upon date of final signature and shall continue through **December 31, 2008**, subject to continuation in writing by mutual agreement of the parties. Further, this **Agreement** may be amended at any time during the effective period by mutual agreement of the parties in writing. It may be terminated following provisions of 7 CFR 3016.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

DateUNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
VETERINARY SERVICES

Regional Director

Date

Budget Object Class: 2551
Accounting Code: 8629650851
Amount: \$60,579

Attachment: Work Plan and Financial Plan