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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Department of Agricultural Resources
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FACT SHEET

Premises Identification

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) under a cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is working to identify premises where animals are housed under the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) program.

Why Is Premises Identification Important?

Identification of premises where animals are kept is essential in order to protect animal and public health, economic interests and safeguard against intentional acts that pose a threat to food sources. A premises identification system will map out locations of susceptible species to allow for efficient use of resources during a disease outbreak. Knowing the locations of animals that could be affected by a disease is essential to stopping the spread and containing the infection, and the only way to ensure that a problem has been fully eradicated. Rapid containment of a spreading disease serves to protect all of those who are not yet affected. The ultimate goal is to have the ability to identify the source of infection within 48 hours of discovery. Swift recognition and containment of a disease outbreak will minimize the impact on animals and the humans around them.

MDAR benefited from premises information when attempting to place a horse with ambiguous test results for Equine Infectious Anemia (EIA). To protect the health of other horses it was necessary to relocate the suspect horse. MDAR was able to retrieve premises information that permitted the suspect horse to be relocated to an area that was a safe distance from other horses.

Which Premises Should Register?

All livestock and poultry owners are encouraged to register their premises regardless of the size of the operations or the number of animals present at the premises. Examples of premises that should register are: Farms, fairs, exhibitions, zoos, market/collection points, tagging sites, veterinary clinics, quarantine facilities, slaughter plants, rendering plants, laboratories and research facilities.

What Is The Benefit Of Premises Registration?

In the event of an outbreak of a potentially infectious disease, such as avian influenza, premises registration will enable officials to determine where at risk animals may be located. Timely identification will ensure the safety of animal and human health.

What Is The Policy Regarding Privacy Of Information?

The Department of Agricultural Resources will protect information obtained for the purposes of registering premises. Information will not be released unless done so by court order.

How Is A Premises Registered?

Premises can be registered by completing a Premises Registration Form available for downloading on the NAIS web page of the MDAR website www.mass.gov/agr/animalhealth/nais. DAR is also integrating premise information collected by local animal inspectors and uploading this information to the USDA database. These premises will automatically be registered with USDA. Owners who are not sure if their premises have already been registered may contact MDAR to inquire about their registration status.

How Can Premises Information Be Updated?

Once registered, premise owners may access their “account” through the use of a secure password provided to them. Those who registered through the MDAR Premise Registration Form, or whose premise information was uploaded by MDAR, will be mailed their password. Once you receive your password you may update or inactivate your account as necessary.

How Is A Password Obtained?

Once registration has been completed, USDA supplies MDAR with a password for the registered premises. MDAR will periodically mail passwords to the registered premises. Registered premises owners may contact MDAR to request their password if it is needed prior to receipt by mail.