

Friday, February 17, 2012

Animal Traceability Bill Demands Electronic IDs

NEW ZEALAND - A bill to deliver electronic national identification and tracing of livestock has passed its third and final reading in Parliament.

The NAIT Bill paves the way for the scheme to “go live” on July 1 this year as planned, with the requirement for all beef and dairy cattle to be tagged before they can be moved or sent to slaughter.

Primary Industries Minister David Carter says the National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) Bill is a significant step in protecting farmers in the international marketplace and strengthening New Zealand’s biosecurity system.

“NAIT is a partnership between industry and the Crown which started in 2004 in recognition of the growing need for better animal identification and tracing systems.”

The NAIT Bill sets out the legal framework for the collection of information on livestock, their location and movement history throughout their lifetime. It also outlines the governance arrangement and powers for the NAIT organisation.

“NAIT needs to be mandatory to be effective. It will begin with cattle on 1 July this year, and deer by 1 March 2013,” says Mr Carter.

“With most other agricultural producing nations already having computerised tracing of individual animals, New Zealand simply cannot afford to lag behind.

“NAIT is effectively an insurance policy to support our high livestock health status and biosecurity infrastructure, but can be used to further improve productivity and on-farm management.”

Mr Carter acknowledged the work of the previous government in developing NAIT and the ongoing commitment of the livestock and animal products industries to the scheme.

DairyNZ has welcomed Parliament’s adoption of the National Animal Identification and Tracing Bill (NAIT) as a milestone in bringing animal traceability for the dairy industry to reality.

The scheme has a long history of partnership between industry groups, government, and more recently the NAIT implementing organisation.

DairyNZ CEO, Tim Mackle, says the passing of the NAIT legislation is welcomed. At the same time, the industry will be watching carefully to ensure the final scheme works effectively and efficiently and is not overly costly.

“There is no question that as a country and an industry we need NAIT. Being able to trace

animals is at the heart of providing advanced biosecurity protection for our industry. Having this system in place builds on our reputation as highly credible food producers,” says Mr Mackle.

Farmers have been preparing for the introduction of the scheme. Many in the farming system have already voluntarily tagged their animals for some time, recognising the opportunities that a comprehensive identification and traceability system can deliver in terms of meeting consumer expectations and growing confidence.

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Article can be found at: <http://www.thedairysite.com/news/37487/animal-traceability-bill-demands-electronic-ids>