

Big Brother in the Barnyard

By John Peck and John Kinsman

A few years ago farmers were informed of the USDA's National ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (NAIS). We were led to believe that it was a grand plan to protect us from the Bio Terrorists, Mad Cow, Avian Flu and a whole host of other dangers. Enticed by millions in federal dollars, some states are moving full speed ahead with their own mandatory NAIS programs even though it remains "voluntary" at the federal level. For instance, in Wisconsin premises registration, stage one of NAIS, has been subcontracted (along with millions in taxpayer money) to the private Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium (WLIC). Dairy farmers were warned that they would lose their milk license if they were not registered by May 1st, 2007, but widespread noncompliance and grassroots resistance forced the state to back off on this deadline.

Meanwhile, Wisconsin farmers who were registered against their will by cheese plants fearing loss of milk supply remain unsuccessful in their repeated attempts to be removed from the "voluntary" NAIS database. Many farmers, particularly the Amish, have been opposed to NAIS from the beginning as a violation of their religious freedom. In response, Free Wisconsin Pastures has been formed by Family Farm Defenders with the support of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom to pursue a legal challenge to Wisconsin's mandatory premises registration legislation.

In June 2007 James Landis, a Mennonite farmer in Pennsylvania, filed a lawsuit against the state's Department of Agriculture, claiming that premises registration violated his religious freedom. Mr. Landis had been blocked from selling his Muscovy ducks in New York City because he was not part of the "voluntary" NAIS program. Later in 2007 beginning dairy farmers in Wisconsin had been notified by the Department of Agriculture that they will not be issued a license to sell milk if they do not register their premises.

Michigan has been particularly aggressive at registering farmers against their will and the electronic microchip (RFID) tagging of all cattle – stage two of NAIS – was mandated by March 2007. On September 18th, Sheriff George Lassiter warned grass-based UP farmer, Greg Niewendorp, that the Michigan Department of Agriculture had actually issued a warrant for agents to enter his property, conduct TB tests, and microchip his 19 cows without his permission.

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Meanwhile, a September 9th, 2007 AP story by Todd Lewan confirmed what many have suspected for awhile, namely that implanted RFID microchips cause cancer. When the FDA approved RFID chip as "safe" for humans in January 2005, the agency basically ignored veterinary and toxicology studies dating back to the 1990's, linking chip implants to malignant tumors in lab mice and rats. Shortly after FDA approval of RFID chips, Tommy Thompson left his post as Bush's Secretary of Health and Human Services, to become a board member of VeriChip Corp. and Applied Digital Solutions. It would be ironic – to say the least – if NAIS ends up causing more cancer than it pretends to prevent.

For more information, go to the website:

www.NoNAIS.org

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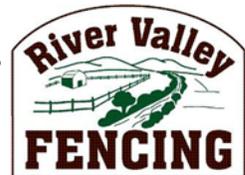
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