Agency Priority Goal Action Plan

Animal Disease Reduction

Goal Leader(s):

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Fiscal Year 2020, Quarter 4

Overview

Goal Statement

- To effectively control the spread of animal diseases, USDA supports animal health professionals and other agency partners who use identification technology to quickly trace potentially diseased animals. By September 30, 2021, at least 55 percent of all USDA approved identification tags distributed for cattle will be electronic Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags.

Overview (continued)

Challenges

- The transition from metal/visual animal ID tags to RFID technology represents an adjustment for the industry and individual producers. There are approximately 100 million head of cattle in U.S. production at any given time. Transitioning a portion of these animals to a new form of animal ID will require significant engagement with stakeholders.
- RFID technology will require improvements to existing databases that track animal health certificate and animal identification data.
- The transition from metal/visual animal ID tags to RFID technology also requires the distribution of electronic tag readers to capture RFID tags in more locations.

Overview (continued)

Opportunity

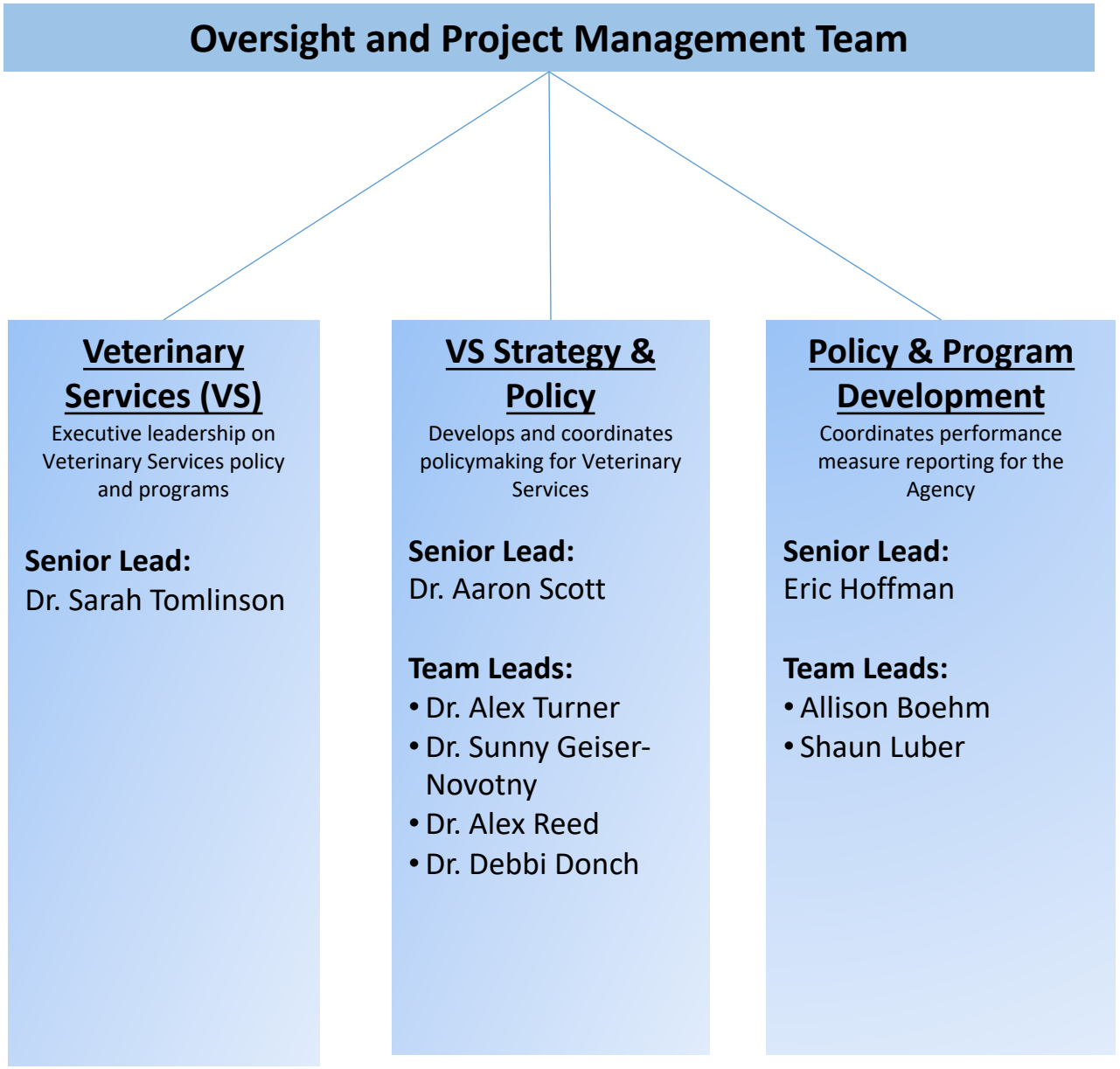
- The current system used to trace animals across State lines is cumbersome, as it requires time to collect data regarding origin and destination through paper documentation. The increased use of RFID technology will allow animal health officials to trace these exposed animals in hours as opposed to days.
- RFID technology allows animal health officials to quickly and accurately trace a diseased animal's location, and reduces unnecessary quarantining and testing of unaffected animals. This minimizes the burden for producers with disease-free animals and helps to protect the financial stability of the industry.
- RFID technology will also help permitted animal movements proceed more quickly following a disease outbreak, while ensuring other producers do not receive exposed animals.
- RFID technology will require a modernized IT infrastructure to support electronic data. This modernized infrastructure will allow animal health officials to electronically capture and send animal movement data to and from multiple sources.

Overview (continued)

Opportunity

- Now the USDA is looking to further improve the time and accuracy to locate diseased animals by incorporating the use of RFID technology. At the beginning of FY 2020, 40% of official cattle ear tags distributed were equipped with RFID. The next step is to increase the number of USDA approved RFID equipped tags distributed for cattle to 55%. This progress will improve a State's ability to locate official animal identification numbers, minimizing the impact of a potential animal disease outbreak.

Leadership & Implementation Team



Goal Structure & Strategies

Structure & Strategies

	Outreach Activities (Stakeholder awareness, education, communication, information sharing, etc.)	Technology Improvements (Tags, Equipment, and Databases)
Strategy	Work with producers and industry to identify ways to protect their livelihood.	Modernize IT infrastructure, such as the Mobile Information Messaging System (MIMS) and Animal Health Events Repository (AHER), to facilitate use of RFID tags and sharing of data electronically.
Current state	Engagement with cattle industry representatives, veterinarians, livestock markets, and State Animal Health Officials.	IT infrastructure is under development.
Targeted state	Creation of outreach and educational materials and activities to further acceptable implementation strategies and use of RFID technology.	• Modernized MIMS, a USDA application used to collect and manage data associated with livestock disease management. • Use of AHER to efficiently share data. AHER allows state animal health officials and the USDA to quickly trace sick and exposed animals to stop the spread of disease.
Objectives	• Better understand producer needs and useful actions. • Seek input through States, industry working groups, and producer listening sessions.	• Continue MIMS Modernization. • Continue to share data with States, Tribes, and 3rd party databases.
Milestone/Metrics	• Attend cattle industry association meetings. • Attend meetings with State officials. • Develop outreach materials for stakeholders. • Develop training module(s). • Work with State and Industry stakeholders to	• Completion of MIMS modernization. • Continue to solicit States and 3rd party databases to share data with AHER. • Continue to work with industry stakeholders (i.e. slaughter houses and livestock markets)

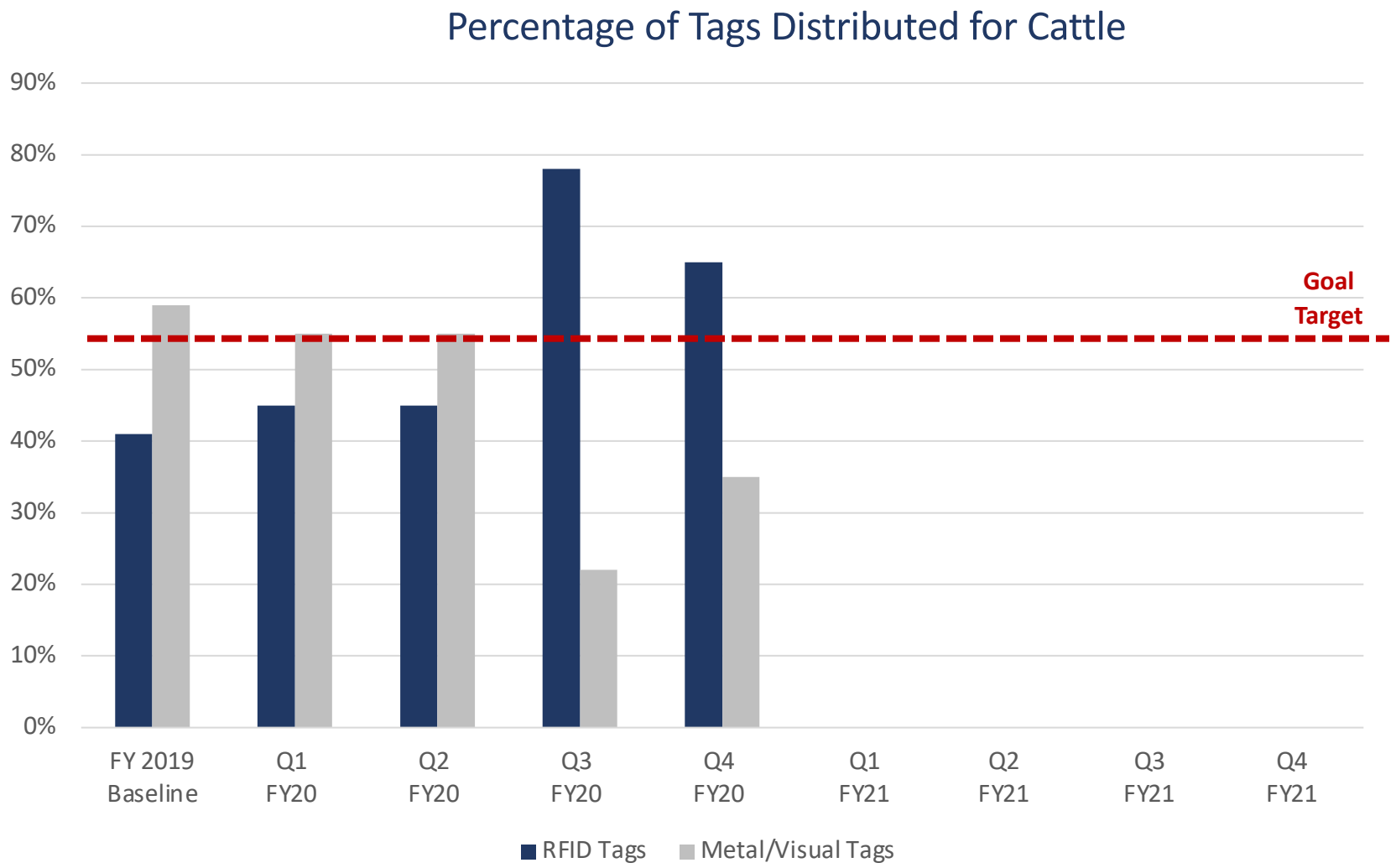
Key Milestones

Milestone Summary			
Key Milestones	**Milestone Due Date**	**Milestone Status**	**Comments / Change from last quarter**
Outreach activities ***(Supporting measure)***			
Attend national cattle industry association and State level meetings	FY 20 Q2 FY 21 Q2	Ongoing	• FY20 Q4: Due the COVID-19 pandemic, all non-essential travel remained suspended throughout July, August, and September 2020, deterring many national and state level cattle industry meetings.
Attend local meetings with stakeholders	FY 20 Q4 FY 21 Q4	Ongoing	• FY20 Q4: In addition to engaging in virtual communications with over 675 stakeholders, the Agency facilitated State Fair livestock exhibition activities to ensure compliance with official animal ID requirement and discuss RFID tag usage.
Continue developing outreach materials for stakeholders	Quarterly FY 20, FY 21	Ongoing	• Review and editing of multiple informational flyers focusing on topics such as Animal Disease Traceability, Premise ID, and use of RFID continues.
Continue developing training materials for USDA officials and accredited veterinarians	Quarterly FY 20, FY 21	Ongoing	• Review and editing of informational flyers focused on preparation of international health certificates continues.
Work with State and Industry stakeholders to explore implementation strategies	FY 21 Q1	Ongoing	• In Q4, the Agency published a Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment on a proposal to use RFID as official ID on cattle and bison covered under the ADT rule. The Agency is evaluating comments received during the 90-day comment period (closed 10/5/2020).

Key Milestones

Milestone Summary			
Key Milestones	***Milestone Due Date***	***Milestone Status***	***Comments / Change from last quarter***
Technology Improvements ***(Supporting measure)***			
Complete Mobile Information Messaging System (MIMS) modernization	FY 21 Q3	Ongoing	• MIMS modernization, renamed Animal Health Services (AHS), is on schedule. Early user testing of AHS began in Q4, piloting bovine TB and brucellosis testing within the application. This application will allow producers and accredited veterinarians to use a free web-based interface and mobile applications to complete and print electronic health certificates on location without the need for a live internet connection.
Continue to solicit States and 3rd party databases sharing data with the Animal Health Events Repository (AHER)	Quarterly FY 20, FY 21	Ongoing	• Facilitating data sharing among federal and state animal health officials, veterinarians, and industry continues with the integration of information from Federal, State and third-party databases into the AHER. The Agency is reaching out to breed registries and process verified program service providers.
Continue to work with industry stakeholders (i.e. slaughter facilities and livestock markets) to utilize electronic ID technology	Quarterly FY 20, FY 21	Ongoing	• The Agency is supporting three pilot projects to advance traceability using ultra high frequency tags. These projects were granted a one-year extension due to COVID 19 pandemic impacts on cattle markets and slaughter plants.

Key Indicators



Summary of Progress – FY20 Q4

- In Q4, a total of 3,925,242 USDA approved identification tags for cattle were distributed. Currently, 65% of USDA approved tags being distributed are electronic RFID tags and 35% of USDA approved tags being distributed are visual/metal tags.

- Despite the COVID-19 pandemic impacts, USDA APHIS Veterinary Services Staff facilitated State Fair livestock exhibition activities, an essential activity for livestock stakeholders nationwide. For example, Agency personnel supported exhibition activities for over 2,530 exhibitors at the Iowa State Fair in August 2020. Official ID is required in livestock exhibitions to meet ADT requirements in most States. These exhibition activities serve as an opportunity for the Agency to engage with stakeholders and discuss the benefits of RFID tags.

- USDA continues to offer RFID tags to States and accredited veterinarians as a no cost alternative to metal tags for use on cattle and bison. Provisions are in place to continue to offer these RFID tags in FY 2021.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

Description/definition of the data: Official animal identification devices provide essential information to achieve timely traceability in response to an animal disease event. The Animal Identification Number (AIN) is an official number that is imprinted on visual official eartags or encoded in electronic identification devices also known as radio frequency identification (RFID). Animal identification number devices may only be manufactured by authorized device manufacturers.
Authorized AIN device manufacturers distribute devices through authorized device managers, documenting this distribution in the Animal Identification Management System (AIMS). AIMS is the Web-based information system used to administer official AINs devices and other animal disease events associated with AINs. The AIN manager maintains records for tracking the distribution of the AINs devices, making this information available when needed for animal disease traces. Databases used for these records include AIMS, State-specific databases, or third-party databases.

Source of data: Data on the distribution of AINs devices from manufacturers to stakeholders are pulled from the AIMS database. These data include AIN devices distributed to retailers, State animal health officials, accredited veterinarians, and producers.

Reliability and accuracy: The AIMS database is dependent on the data entry performed by AIN device managers. The definition and administration of official identification devices are defined in 9 CFR part 86 - Animal Disease Traceability and the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) General Standards document.

Limitations: It is important to note that data reported from the AIMS database represents devices distributed which does not necessarily equate to devices applied to animals.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- State and Federal Animal Health Officials
- Tribal Nations
- Industry Stakeholders
- Private Accredited Veterinarians
- Universities and Extension

Program Activities:

- Encourage the use of RFID devices through stakeholder outreach and education as well as the distribution of free tags to States.
- USDA approved official identification tags are distributed through the USDA Veterinary Services warehouse and private sales direct from the manufacturer.
- Provide cooperative agreement funds to States to help them establish and maintain support for State ADT activities. USDA developed national baseline data for tracing exercises administered to States. These tracing exercises document a State's ability to properly administer, record, and retrieve documents pertaining to official livestock identification and interstate movement.

President's Management Agenda:

- Cross-Agency Priority Goal 1: Modernize IT to Increase Productivity and Security– Develop effective governance organizations and a suite of tools and applications available across agencies that serve the needs of diverse users and facilitate data integration, exchange, and use.
  - The use of electronic identification tags for cattle allows for a more efficient transmission of data between State and Federal systems.
  - Enhancements to the existing databases to increase the ease of collecting data in a standardized format and subsequently providing access to accurate data in real-time, greatly enhances the effectiveness of U.S. traceability and disease control programs.

Additional Information (continued)

Contributing Programs

Regulations:

- 9 CFR, part 86: "Traceability for Livestock Moving Interstate" - establishes requirements for the official identification of livestock and documentation for certain interstate movements of livestock. Official identification and movement documentation is essential to tracing livestock when disease is found.

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations:

- It was essential for industry stakeholders from all sectors of the cattle industry to offer their opinions on relevant issues including those related to electronic identification tags for animals. APHIS conducted nine public meetings focused on animal disease traceability as part of outreach efforts in 2017.
- The purpose of these meetings was to solicit industry input regarding their experiences with animal disease traceability, and what concerns they had with transitioning to RFID tags.
- Many animal health officials, as well as industry stakeholders, acknowledge that the level of traceability necessary in the United States is unachievable with visual only tags.
- USDA will continue to work with our state partners and industry to establish appropriate benchmarks to meet to show progress. USDA will also ensure all new traceability cooperative agreements will be contingent on measurable advancements toward its overarching traceability goals.