

Cattle Disease Traceability Project Moving Forward

Announced publicly in June, the Kansas-based CattleTrace pilot project is on track to begin testing a purpose-built infrastructure for cattle disease traceability by fall 2018. Cattle disease traceability is a top priority in the beef cattle industry, and the CattleTrace pilot project will help guide discussion and development of an enhanced traceability system in Kansas and on a national scale.

In late August, CattleTrace, Inc., was formally established as a private, not-for-profit corporation to securely maintain and manage the data collected as part of the disease traceability pilot project. In addition, a Board of Directors was named to lead CattleTrace, Inc. The Board of Directors includes Chairman Brandon Depenbusch, Innovative Livestock Services, Vice Chairman Tom Jones, Hy-Plains Feedyard, LLC, Mike Samples, Farmers and Ranchers Livestock, Ken Stielow, Bar S Ranch, and Mark Gardiner, Gardiner Angus Ranch. The Board appointed an industry advisory committee comprised of representatives from the Kansas Livestock Association, Kansas State University, Kansas Department of Agriculture and private industry to implement operations of the project.

“Producer privacy and data security are critical components of a disease traceability system,” Depenbusch said. “Establishing a private entity to own the CattleTrace database will provide necessary security to ensure the cattle movement data in the CattleTrace system is safe.”

Since the June 30 announcement, the CattleTrace advisory committee has been focused on recruitment of participants within each segment of the beef supply chain. Tyson Foods, Inc., Cargill and National Beef Packing Company, LLC, and U.S. Premium Beef, LLC will all participate in the pilot representing the beef processing sector. Feedyard participants include Green Plains Cattle Co., Hy-Plains Feedyard, LLC, Finney County Feedyard, LLC, Midwest Feeders, Inc., NA Timmerman, Inc., Cow Camp Beef, Innovative Livestock Services, Inc., Fairleigh Feed Yard, High Choice Feeders, Heritage Beef, LLC, Pratt Feeders, LLC, and Poky Feeders, Inc. Livestock market participants currently include Farmers and Ranchers Livestock in Salina, Winter Livestock in Dodge City, Winter Livestock in Pratt, Mankato Livestock, Inc., LaCrosse Livestock Market, Inc., and Manhattan Commission Company.

Depenbusch says the advisory committee is now turning its focus to installation of technology systems at the packer, feedyard and livestock market levels and also on recruitment of cow-calf producers.

“We have received tremendous support and commitment from industry

participants, and we thank the industry leaders who have already stepped up to participate in CattleTrace. Now, we are excited to start recruiting cow-calf producers to the project,” Depenbusch said. “If you are a rancher who does business with one of the livestock markets or feedyards that are partners in the CattleTrace pilot project, we encourage you to consider participating. One of CattleTrace’s primary objectives is to test the infrastructure from end-to-end. Cow-calf producers will help achieve that objective and will also play an important role in the development of a cattle disease traceability system that works in and for the industry.”

During the two-year pilot project, CattleTrace will collect the minimal data necessary for disease traceability, including the date and time, an individual animal identification number, and a GPS location, each time an animal’s tag is read with pilot project readers in the production chain. Approximately 55,000 Kansas-based calves will be tagged for the pilot, which will conclude in 2020. For more information about the CattleTrace pilot project, visit www.CattleTrace.org.