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Date: July 23, 2007

From: Colorado Coalition Opposing Mandatory 4-H and FFA Premises I.D.

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Coalition Says Mandatory 4-H Premises Registrations Should Be Halted Until Cost-Benefit Analysis Is Completed; CSU To Be A Co-Contributor To Study

Ordway, Colo. (July 23, 2007) - The Colorado Coalition Opposing Mandatory 4-H Premises Registration applauds the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) recent decision to initiate a cost-benefit analysis of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The Coalition urges Colorado State University's (CSU) Cooperative Extension Service, the Colorado Department of Agriculture and the Colorado State Fair Board to suspend the scheduled implementation of mandatory premises registration for Colorado 4-H youth until the analysis has been completed.

"4-H families deserve the opportunity to understand the specific risks, benefits and costs associated with the animal identification system before it is mandated for 4-H youth," said Leellen Koroulis, Routt County, a coalition member. "The Colorado State Fair is mandating premises registration for 4-H youth enrolled in live animal projects intended for exhibition at the 2007 fair. Yet, these families have not been provided with information that allows them to make an informed decision about enrolling their premises in the national system. The lack of information about costs, risks and benefits is one of the reasons why producers across the nation overwhelmingly oppose a mandatory program, causing USDA to redesign the system as voluntary on a national level. We urge CSU, the Colorado State Fair Board and the Colorado Department of Agriculture to reverse the mandatory provision until this analysis is completed."

USDA has selected Kansas State University to lead the multi-institutional benefit-cost analysis of NAIS. The study will be conducted with the assistance of co-contributors Colorado State University and Michigan State University. Montana State University will provide an assessment of the economic benefits and costs of NAIS, including its three components: premises registration, animal identification and animal tracing.

"This study is specifically designed to examine all components of the NAIS system, including premises registration," said Koroulis. "It is entirely possible this study could find a negative impact on producers involved in premises registration. Until we know the facts it is premature for any state agency to impose a mandatory component on participants because of the potential for irreparable harm."

Richard Kipp, Pleasant View, Colorado concurred saying, "CSU, the State Fair Board and the Colorado Department of Agriculture need to slow this process down and let the analysis run its course before this policy is inflicted on 4-H families. We don't need more big government intrusion into our businesses. I've never seen so many bureaucrats trying to tell livestock producers how to run their operations, and their denial of the mounting resistance to this mandate across the state is problematic in itself. I suggest that these folks get out of their air-conditioned offices and into the country to visit with real producers where they'll get a clear understanding of just how unpopular their policy mandate is."