

ID still doesn't make sense

I have been following the position of the Illinois Department of Ag concerning premises ID. It seems that in the early 1980s, the state of Illinois achieved brucellosis free status without a complex and expensive premises ID system. More recently, recall that bovine spongiform encephalopathy found in this country was quickly traced to a farm in Canada, again without using premises ID.

Mr. Hess of the IDOA has several hypothetical scenarios to compel us to voluntarily comply with their premises ID agenda. One that Josh Flint outlined involved a contaminated hanky in a plastic bag, an airplane ticket and sale barns, all at the cost of \$2,500. First of all, since 9/11, a hanky in a plastic bag would probably run into some resistance at some point before full implementation. Like it or not, the military base at Gitmo is an excellent deterrent for terrorists caught in this country.

I have a more plausible hypothetical scenario. It involves a terrorist in another country with a laptop computer, a WiFi signal, idle time on his hands and a lot less than \$2,500 in his pocket. Imagine if premises ID were fully implemented and such a terrorist taps into IDOA computers. Not only would this be a way to introduce a virus into IDOA's mainframe, but also everyone who complied with premises ID now has his or her information available to the world. Certain farms could be identified as likely targets. Google Earth can reveal things like terrain, proximity to law enforcement and possible witnesses close to livestock facilities with premises ID.

Producers need to remember once you are in the system, you will be stuck there for life. You will always be at the risk of harm by a corrupt entity. Premises ID is redundant because we have always had premises ID. It's down by the road and clearly marked on the mailbox.

In this era of horrible money trouble, why spend billions on redundancy? Perhaps our governor would like to greatly reduce the state budget by having the premises ID staff clean out their desks. If you're still on the fence about premises ID, look at Page 50 in the January *Prairie Farmer* at the bottom of the sidebar in the upper-right corner. IDOA feels that reimbursement for beef at the rate of a 250-pound calf is fair enough. Of course, when the gestapo comes to kill off your herd on a whim, getting any reimbursement will be tricky. They will likely say your cattle would have died anyway and call it even. Then they'll simply outspend us in court and win that way.

*Chet Peugh
Chadwick*

Prop 2 and pasture poultry

In the January 2009 issue of *Prairie Farmer*, Tom Bechman wrote an article titled "Could 'smart barns' beat dumb voters?" I do not support the Humane Society of the United States' anti-animal agriculture politics. However, I do believe Prop 2 is a negative reaction to all the neighborhood confined animal feeding operations that keep popping up around the country. My own house is down wind of a mega hog operation.

Prop 2 will in due time encourage more Californians, especially young people, or young people with energy partnered with older people with assets, to get into the pasture poultry business and share the benefits of grassland agriculture with their friends and neighbors.

Letters

As a small pasture layer operator, I can tell you fresh air, sunshine and green grass have huge advantages over HS3 Technologies Inc. Nature gives us these gifts every growing season free. HS3 offers an expensive tweak on the same old bad idea that got us into Prop 2 to begin with.

Pasture poultry work in symbiosis with other grazing animals such as cattle (beef and dairy) and sheep. The rumi-

nants eat the grass down to a height the chickens like, and the chickens debug grass and spread fertility (they poop out of doors on the ground and the soil metabolizes the manure).

Eggs from pasture hens are far superior to conventional eggs in taste, texture and nutritional value. Recently, I read a comment from another man in the pasture poultry business that the eggs are not even in the same food group as conventional eggs.

Chickens on pasture get fresh air vs. fecal dust in confinement house

air. Sunshine for natural vitamin D and germ-killing ultraviolet light vs. artificial everything for confinement birds. And exercise vs. not enough room to stretch their wings in a cage.

Beginning pasture poultry operators don't have to own any land. They can piggyback on an existing cattle or sheep operation and give their host the above-mentioned benefits.

In conclusion, pasture poultry is aromatically and aesthetically pleasing.

*Robert A. Sayre
Dundas*



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