



Media release

1 NOVEMBER MANDATORY CATTLE TAGGING DEFERRED

NAIT Limited and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) today announced mandatory implementation of the national animal identification and tracing (NAIT) scheme will be deferred to next year.

The original 'go live' date of 1 November 2011 for mandatory tagging will no longer apply.

NAIT Limited's board, MAF and Government, remain totally committed to the scheme but to provide certainty to farmers and the industry, mandatory tagging will be delayed.

MAF Deputy Director-General Peter Thomson says mandatory tagging of cattle using NAIT-RFID ear tags was due to come into force later this year provided the National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) Bill was passed in Parliament and the IT system supporting the scheme was in place.

Parliament, however, has a significant list of bills to consider over the next few months and it is becoming increasingly unlikely the legislation will be passed before the general election.

Meanwhile, NAIT Limited and MAF are still continuing to develop an animal identification and tracing IT system that meets New Zealand's needs.

NAIT Limited CEO Russell Burnard said this revised timing will allow opportunity to further refine and test the IT system before implementation.

"New Zealand requires animal identification and traceability to better manage livestock diseases and meet growing demands for assurances of the history of our livestock and animal products.

"NAIT will safeguard farmers' incomes by protecting New Zealand's excellent animal health reputation in overseas markets, meeting growing consumer expectations for traceable food products and by enhancing biosecurity.

"In order to provide farmers and industry with the certainty they need to plan ahead, we are withdrawing from the 1 November mandatory tagging date. A new target 'go live' date has been set as mid-late 2012, pending the passing of legislation.

"NAIT will be mandatory in 2012 so NAIT Ltd encourages farmers to continue tagging new born cattle with NAIT-RFID ear tags to avoid having to retag older animals.

"We are working with NAIT shareholders and partners on a revised implementation schedule and, once timeframes become clearer, NAIT will provide an update to farmers and the industry.

MAF is continuing its work on the development of NAIT regulations for obligations and exemptions and urges all interested parties to make a submission on the proposed regulations before the closing date tomorrow (Friday May 27). All submissions will be considered by MAF.

ENDS

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BACKGROUND

NAIT (New Zealand)

NAIT (National Animal Identification and Tracing) is an animal identification and tracing system that will link people, property and animals. NAIT Ltd is the industry-owned company that will implement the NAIT system.

NAIT will provide New Zealand livestock owners, processors and government with timely and quality information on the current location, movement history and other related attributes associated with livestock.

NAIT-approved RFID (Radio Frequency Identification Device) tags are available now, and will be mandatory when both the legislation is in place and the system is operating effectively.

With its ability to trace infected animals and properties quickly and accurately, NAIT will improve New Zealand's ability to respond and contain the damage from biosecurity risks and food scares. This will help give assurance to our trading partners and help our ability to resume trade after such an event.

For more information visit: www.nait.co.nz