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Appropriations Subcommittee pulls funding for animal ID system

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The House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee voted Thursday to eliminate funding for USDA's National Animal Identification System (NAIS). The decision, which effectively kills the voluntary animal ID program, came during the panel's markup of a fiscal year (FY) 2010 spending bill for USDA, FDA and related agencies.

After receiving \$142 million in funding since fiscal year 2004, "APHIS has yet to put into operation an effective system that would provide needed animal health and livestock market benefits," complained subcommittee chairwoman Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT).

Until USDA finishes its multi-city NAIS public listening tour and "provides details as to how it will implement an effective ID system, continued investments in the current NAIS are unwarranted," DeLauro said.

The bill authorizes \$20.4-billion in discretionary funding for USDA, a \$2 billion increase over FY 2009.

WIC funding — proposed at \$7.5 billion, an increase of more than \$681 million — represents about 40 percent of the FY 2010 USDA discretionary budget.

The subcommittee fully funded the Obama Administration's request for the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), providing over \$1 billion for FSIS for the first time in history.

Natural Resources Conservation Service operations and technical assistance received an \$11 million increase over FY '09, for a total of \$980 million.

The Market Access and Foreign Market Development export promotion programs were funded at the farm bill-mandated levels of \$200 million and \$34.5 million, respectively.

Funding for P.L. 480, the U.S. government's primary international food aid program, was set at \$1.7 billion, a \$464 million increase.

The House Appropriations Committee is expected to consider the bill on June 18.

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