

NPPC Recommends Changes In USDA Proposed Swine ID Program

The National Pork Producers Council has submitted its recommendations to the Department of Agriculture concerning the department's proposed mandatory swine identification system. The comment period on the proposal ends April 4.

NPPC supports the concept of swine identification and the organization's Swine ID Task Force has been working with USDA, packers and marketing agencies for more than a year to develop a system that will serve the needs of producers, packers and consumers without placing an unfair burden on any particular segment.

The Swine ID Task Force, after a thorough evaluation of the

USDA proposal, said it is unnecessarily cumbersome. In the recommendations, endorsed by NPPC's Executive Committee, it was pointed out that the identification system must be simple and easy to enforce if it is to be truly effective.

In NPPC's opinion, the scope of the proposed rule should be narrowed to slaughter hogs, with sows and boars included. The organization noted that sows and boars are presently covered by identification regulations while feeder pigs in interstate movement are also already covered by most states.

Other NPPC recommendations:

- There should be no exceptions for particular production systems, such as farrow-to-finish opera-

tions. All market hogs (excluding sows and boars) should be identified and records kept by the buyer or agent, allowing for traceback to the farm of origin.

- Identification should take place prior to or at the first point of concentration or sale.

- Truckers should not be required to identify swine as called for in the proposed rule.

- Tattoos should be limited to four digits in order to accommodate existing equipment and for ease of application.

- The proposed requirement to record multiple tag and tattoo numbers appearing on hogs should be deleted. The proposal is just too cumbersome. The recording of one

tattoo should be sufficient for the identification system, thus avoiding multiple numbers which would serve no good or practical purpose.

- Reasonable notice should be given to markets, packers or other parties before inspection of their identification records by authorized government officials.

- The definition of what constitutes "interstate commerce" in the proposed rule needs to be clarified. The implication that a "broad interpretation" will be followed, needs to be spelled out.

- During the implementation phase of the proposed system, considerable leeway should be exercised so that penalties for inadvertent errors in instituting the system would be minimal.

NPPC said it believes an effective national swine identification system would be beneficial to producers, markets and packers by helping them track their product and make improvement in their herds as needed. At least as important, said the Council, is the reassurance to consumers that they are getting a safe, high quality pork product.

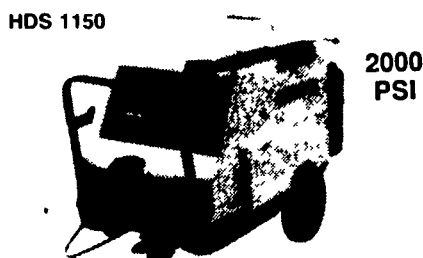
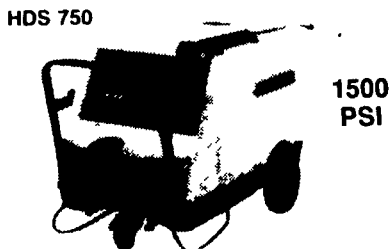
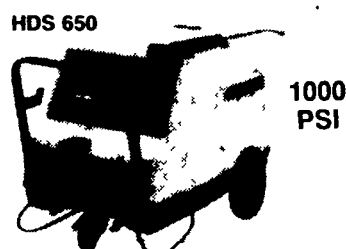
The organization said it believed that its recommendations, if made a part of the final rule, would be a positive influence on producer acceptance of a swine identification system.

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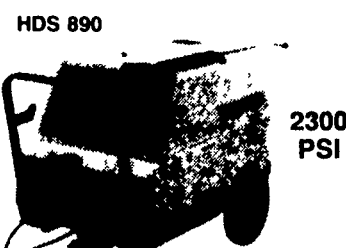
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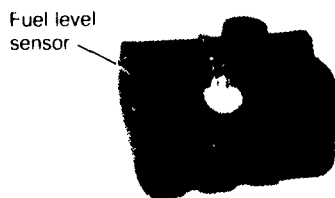
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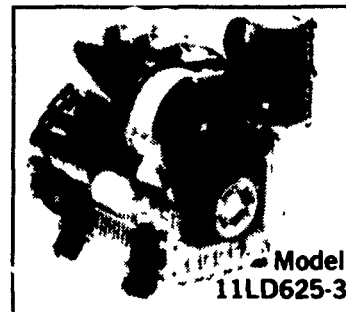
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