

## **Post Rock Answers**

**Week of: 7/16/18 – 7/20/18**

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**Post Rock District – Livestock**

### **Kansas Aims to Increase Livestock Disease Traceability**

The phrase “too many chiefs and not enough Indians” is sure to flood us all with memories of different projects, tasks, and events that we have been a part of that probably wasn't truly effective. Yet, at the other end of the spectrum, when great leaders come together with a common goal, special things can happen. I think that is exactly what the stage is set for across our great state as Cattle Trace kicks off, beginning efforts to form a state animal disease traceability program in Kansas.

Organizations like the Kansas Department of Agriculture, Kansas State University, the Kansas Livestock Association, alongside of Governor Jeff Colyer, have teamed up with local level producers to begin this pilot program, which will hopefully expand to a national level in the future. Kansas represents every sector of the beef industry and ranks among the nation's best in terms of total cattle. With a collection of great minds leading the way, we are set up for a perfect scenario not only to implement an effective traceability program, but also to break the ice for a national biosecurity and protection plan to come to fruition.

Kansas is fortunate to have received state and federal funding to begin this project. From producers and sale barns all the way through the feedyards and packers, operators will have the chance to take part. As opposed to rules and regulations being handed down from Washington, this is our opportunity to implement animal disease traceability (ADT) in a producer driven manner. The hope is to begin by tagging 55,000 head in the remainder of 2018. Producers will receive tags at a reduced rate for participating in the pilot program.

Neil Bouray of Mankato Livestock and Sylvan Sales shared several reasons why it was imperative that this be a program which is ultimately run by the producers. “For the cow/calf man that hasn't participated, officials may show up and tell you to gather the cows for testing that very day; it doesn't matter that they were AI'ed and turned out a week ago. Originally the program was designed to have sale barns tag every head that comes through the ring. By the time these markets invest twice the man power and three times as many hours (for no additional profit), many markets would be out of business in no time. It's a great opportunity for feed yard managers to place readers at the load out, working facility, really wherever it is handiest to them. At the end of the day, these modifications make it way easier not only for the producers to participate, but for ADT to become a reality” says Bouray.

This program really picked up steam after a December 2017 vote by KLA members to amend a policy supporting mandatory cattle disease traceability across all ages of cattle. Kansas Livestock Association's CEO, Matt Teagarden was quoted in the *Stock Exchange* reiterating the excitement among KLA staff and members to implement a program that is sure to provide long term protection of our livelihoods. This is an opportunity to provide security on an issue which has been a recognized concern for some time, according to Teagarden.

We are all aware of the importance of consumers to our industry. While being proactive and building a sustainable model for protection, it is the hope that this effort will also instill further trust in these consumers that our industry is continuing to take steps toward creating a safe and wholesome food source.

For more information about the Cattle Trace project, go to [cattletrace.org](http://cattletrace.org) or contact the program coordinator, Cassie Kniebel, at [info@cattletrace.org](mailto:info@cattletrace.org) or 785-564-7446.

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