

Representatives,

Here is my take on this bill:

You may have heard of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS). Here is a link to explain the overview of the program:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Animal_Identification_System

This proposed program met with serious opposition from the agricultural community and in 2010 the USDA decided to drop the program:

<http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/mar10/x100315a.asp>

Our clever federal government decided not to let it die quietly and through Executive Order, our president redirected this battle. Through executive order the USDA expanded the powers of one of its departments called Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

APHIS is aligned in the following "chain of command"

WTO/EU

To

Codex Standards

To

OIE

To

United States

To

Executive Orders

To

Department of

Homeland Security

To

USDA

To

APHIS

To

The States (Alaska)

To

(Proposed Creation) of Department of Agriculture

Here is a link to USDA/APHIS where you can click and view their “Strategic Plan”.

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/about_aphis/strategic_plan.shtml

As you can see in their plan, they have been given the authority of “surveillance and enforcement” with the full power of Homeland security. What bothers me most are the statements concerning “international exports”, “respond to conflicts between humans and wildlife”, “APHIS also receives funding through user fees”.

APHIS has been directed to respond to a wider range of emergencies in partnership with FEMA. This includes identifying available resources during emergency response (Where the food is and how much do they have).

APHIS is expected to lead emergency response efforts related to animal and plant pest and disease outbreaks, as well as animal and plant health aspects of natural disasters and bioterrorism threats. APHIS is also expected to support a wide range of other (unspecified) emergency response efforts.

Proponents of HB191 say that it will consolidate all of Alaska’s agricultural statutes under one department and simplify addressing agriculture issues. This part is true but it works two ways. It also

es it easier for federal directives and policies to be implemented also. This is the main reason that I
against this bill. When NAIS was being fought by farmers the states that had active Departments of
culture were the first ones to start involuntary implementation of USDA directives.

In summary, I see passing HB191 will help facilitate the control over Alaska by the federal
government.

Thank You Representatives for your time,

Cameron Seddon

Sent via e-mail:

There is no "food security" for Alaska at this time. Well over 90 percent of what we consume is barged up weekly from the L48. Years ago, stores used to manage a large reserve inventory of groceries, mostly due to shipping uncertainties. With the advent of increased competition and the "JIT" inventory management (so successful for WalMart) most stores these days have under a weeks' worth on hand, and less for items which are delivered more frequently. Add in the challenges of slide into a depression (shrinking economy, inflation, etc) most of these stores operate on a razor thin margin and they are all fighting for the consumer dollars still available.

The state has done nothing to address this either. The disasters of the Delta and Pt MacKenzie projects should teach us that government has no business being in business. Yet, the state spends (or makes available loans) millions of dollars in what can only be called subsidies for....well, basically the dairies. It sounded great in theory-grow the barley and oats in Delta, ship down to Southcentral to feed the dairy cows and everyone would benefit. Of course, their terms were beyond stupid-expecting a return in a few short years was impossible. In the L48, family farms were built over decades and sometimes centuries, as each generation cleared land and made improvements. It was set up to fail and I am pretty sure that some folks got what they wanted: 1000s of acres available for Anchorage's future expansion, right across the Inlet. But that's another subject altogether, lol

As our productive lands are gobbled up by developers who then go on to populate the landscape with cookie cutter subdivisions, there is no effort to expand Ag whatever. Yes, there are occasional lease sales, property sales, but most are not suitable for agriculture. And it comes with strings. Lots and lots of strings. A person only has "fee simple" (an equivalent, actually) to about five acres, the rest-only ag rights. In practical terms, the farmer pays only ag taxes on that land, not the "going rate" for residential. Can you imagine a farmer with 600 acres being able to pay the taxes at, say, the \$38,000 per acre that is the norm here?

In fact, there is no unified program to provide food security in the state. There are no programs or support for small operations whatever. Someone who wishes to start a small herb farm has no resources, and neither do greenhouses, or truck farms, etc. Only those who have larger farms can get funding (loans).

If the new Ag Dept had a goal, a mission, to improve Alaska's food security and worked with people and farms (large AND small) to make it happen, then I would be behind it. But that is not the case. Most of the people involved in Ag right now at the state level, are folks who have failed at farming here already, and who now control the purse strings.
