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ANIMAL HEALTH ADVISORY

Updates to Federal Official Identification Requirements in Cattle and Bison (4 November 2024)

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has updated specific federal traceability requirements for electronic identification (EID) in cattle and bison, **effective November 5, 2024**.

Under the updated federal requirements, **all official ear tags applied to cattle and bison must be readable visually and electronically when used for interstate movement.**

Q: To what species does this change apply?

A: This change only applies to cattle and bison.

- All sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age or older.
- All dairy cattle as defined by 9 CFR 86.1 of any age.
- Cattle and bison of any age used for rodeo, exhibition, or recreational events.

Q: How are dairy cattle defined in 9 CFR 86.1?

A: Dairy cattle are defined as all cattle, regardless of age or sex or current use, that are of a breed(s) or offspring of a breed used to produce milk or other dairy products for human consumption, including, but not limited to Ayrshire, Brown Swiss, Holstein, Jersey, Guernsey, Milking Shorthorn, and Red and Whites.

Q: What cattle and bison are exempted from the official EID requirement?

A: Official ID is **not required** for cattle and bison during the following movements: directly to slaughter; as part of a commuter herd agreement; or directly to an approved tagging site, such as a livestock market.

Q: Can I continue to use the visual-only official ID tags I have on-hand for my cattle or bison herd (840s, metal NUES, etc.)?

A: No. Visual-only, non-electronic tags may NOT be used as official ID in cattle or bison after November 5, 2024. Producers are advised to either destroy existing tag inventories or use them in other approved species.

NOTE: Visual-only, non-electronic official ear tags will continue to be considered official ID in all other species of livestock except cattle and bison.

Q: My cattle or bison have visual-only (non-electronic) official ID tags. Do they need to be retagged?

A: No. Visual-only official ID applied before November 5, 2024 will be recognized as official ID for the life of the animal; however, all new official ID tags, including retags, applied to cattle and bison after November 5, 2024 need to be both visually and electronically readable.

Q: If I add a new visual EID tag to an animal that already has a visual-only official ear tag, which ID needs to be recorded on test charts and movement documents such as a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI)?

A: All official animal ID numbers must be recorded, including dairy-breed offspring, steers, and spayed heifers.

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Q: If I need to retag my animal after it lost an old, non-electronic tag, do I need to follow the updated rule?

A: Yes. The new tag must be an official EID tag.

Q: Can I apply a new EID tag if my animal already has an older, non-electronic ID?

A: Yes. USDA continues to support upgrades in tag technology. Do not remove the old tag. Instead, make a note in your records of both ID numbers along with the date when the new tag was applied and maintain a copy of those records for 5 years.

Q: Can I remove old official ID if I have retagged to meet the new requirements?

A: No. Official ID is intended to provide permanent identification of livestock and may only be removed in limited circumstances, such as a malfunction of the old electronic component, deterioration of the tag, or an infection at the attachment site. The owner must maintain records to correlate the old/removed tag with the new ID number.

Q: Is USDA providing free EID tags during this change?

A: Yes. USDA is supplying a limited quantity of tags to states for distribution. Indiana's allocation is 61,000 tags. USDA will be shipping EID tags directly to 15 Indiana livestock market facilities based on officially reported past sale volumes of cattle. At this time, logistics prevent shipping smaller quantities to individual producers. Tags **are not available** through BOAH. Tags continue to be available for purchase [from suppliers](#).

Q: Are backtags still an option for use in slaughter channels?

A: Yes. USDA-approved backtags may be used at markets only for direct-to-slaughter cattle and bison that are slaughtered within 3 days of their movement to the slaughter plant.

Q: Does USDA still offer an exemption for direct-to-slaughter cattle moving interstate?

A: Yes. Cattle moving directly to a recognized slaughter establishment or to *no more than one* approved livestock facility, where the cattle are shipped for slaughter within 3 days of arrival, are exempt.

ABOUT ANIMAL DISEASE TRACEABILITY IN INDIANA

Indiana was—and is—among the first states to adopt premises registration and promote electronic animal identification. Since 2014, Indiana has placed more than 2.3 million official tags by leveraging state and federal dollars. The Turn IN-Trade UP program, in partnership with veterinarians, saw more than 30,000 steel NUES tags exchanged for 13,800 840-RFID tags.

MORE INFORMATION

Requirements for interstate movement may be found online at: <http://www.interstatelivestock.com> or www.aphis.usda.gov .

Producers, veterinarians and others who need to purchase official EID tags should refer to the online buyer's guide or visit: www.in.gov/boah/traceability-and-premise-id/.

For questions regarding interstate movement of livestock, including shipments to or from an approved livestock facility in Indiana, contact BOAH at (317) 544-2400.

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