

March 2007 Deadline Set for Michigan Cattle ID

The Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) has set the date of March 1, 2007, by which *all cattle must be identified* with Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) electronic ear tags prior to movement from a premises. After that date, animals *will not be allowed to move* with official metal ear tags or official registered breed tattoos as their identification. This recent change is in support of Michigan's Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication Program. The use of RFID tags decreases the time and money required to trace animal movement within Michigan.

Michigan will be using the new Animal Identification Number (AIN) system which allows each animal to be identified with a lifetime number. The format for the AIN is 15 numeric characters, the first three being a country code which, for the United States is 840. **EXAMPLE: 840123456789012.** As animals are bought and sold dur-

ing their lifetime, the tag is never changed unless lost, and then the animal will be retagged at its current premises.

Before any tag orders can be placed, producers need a National Premises Identification Number. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will assign one permanent number to each premises (location) involved in animal agriculture. The staff in MDA's Animal Industry Division (AID) has entered all TB tested herds into the USDA Premises Allocator. Premises Identification Numbers contain seven alphanumeric characters. **EXAMPLE: A123R69.**

As part of its ongoing efforts to safeguard U.S. animal health, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiated the implementation of a National Animal Identification System (NAIS) in 2004. The NAIS is a cooperative State-Federal-industry program administered by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). A National Animal ID system will dramatically improve our ability to respond to animal disease outbreaks. During the contagious disease outbreak, time is actually the enemy. The more time it takes to track an animal, the more animals are exposed, the more

premises become involved, and the more money it costs to contain the disease. An animal ID system will help animal health officials identify the birthplace of a diseased animal and shorten the time required to trace the animal's history to identify other potentially exposed animals.

When the Michigan Department of Agriculture in November 2001 received a grant for \$1.3 million for livestock identification related to bovine tuberculosis (TB), USDA officials might not have known what kind of results to expect. The program has evolved into a highly effective animal identification and tracking program. The program has demonstrated its ability to be the framework for the National Animal Identification System.

During the recent USDA station review and audit the Animal Industry Division was assigned 30 metal ear tag numbers and 30 RFID tag numbers with the intent to locate the in 24 hours. Staff in the Division located all 60 tags along with the farm location in 30 minutes. Excellent support by staff both in the office and field along with producer participation is the only way this type of results will occur.

Following are the answers to common questions the MDA has been asked regarding the new requirements. More information can be found at www.michigan.gov/mda.

Q. Why is Michigan moving to mandatory electronic ear tags for cattle?

A. Provides for faster intra and interstate animal tracking for disease control and eradication programs.



Electronic ear tags like these are required to identify all cattle in Michigan by March 2007. They will eventually be required to identify all cattle in the United States.

- May be required by USDA for moving the Bovine Tuberculosis Zones to higher TB status.

- Part of the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) soon to be implemented by USDA.

Q. What organizations/industry groups supported the mandatory program?

A. • MDA, Bovine Tuberculosis Advisory Committee

- MDA Livestock Identification Advisory Committee

- Michigan Cattlemen's Association

- Michigan Farm Bureau

- Michigan Milk Producers Association

- Michigan Pork Producers Association

Q. How does a producer obtain a National Premises Registration Number?

A. Producers can call Michigan Department of Agriculture at 1-866-870-5136 to receive their National Premises Registration Number.

Q. How many premises shall I register?

A. One or more, depending on whether or not you commingle animals. If you have two herds that are kept separately and never commingled, or located in non-contiguous counties that are miles apart, you may want two premise ID numbers.

Q. Why is Michigan using the USDA 840 RFID electronic tags?

A. The 840 RFID 15-numeric characters tag is a lifetime number assigned to an individual animal. The tag is never changed unless lost, and then the animal will be retagged at its current premises. The 840 tag is part of the NAIS program.

Q. What will happen to the producers that are currently using 982 or 985 ear tags?

A. These tags will be 'grand-

fathered' into the system. Once producers use up their supply, then order 840 tags.

Q. Do I need an RFID tag on my cattle that I slaughter for personal consumption?

A. No.

Q. Will producers in the Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) have to pay for their RFID tags?

A. No, because these producers are annually TB tested, MDA will provide the tags.

Q. When we start using these RFID tags, do we continue to use the metal TB tags that we are currently using?

A. No, the RFID tags will replace the metal tags beginning March 1, 2007.

Q. If I was selected for the random TB surveillance program, do I get a discount on my RFID tags?

A. Yes, there is a 50-50 cost share for those selected for the random TB surveillance program. MDA will cover \$1.00 per tag.

Q. Can producers order tags without a premises number?

A. No, because tags have to be assigned to a premises for traceability.

Q. What is the official date for using RFID electronic tags?

A. Starting March 1, 2007, all cattle must be identified with RFID electronic ear tags prior to movement from a premises.

Q. Will producers need to have a Radio Frequency Reader to read the tags?

A. No, both the front and back of the tag will have the 840 15-numeric characters printed on them.

Q. Are terminal feedlots exempt from using RFID tags?

A. No, terminal feedlots need RFID tags on cattle.

Q. Will feeder cattle purchased from another state need RFID tags?

A. • Yes, if they are sexually intact (heifers & bulls) they will need RFID tags.

- No, if they are not commingled with any Michigan cattle and are shipped direct to a slaughter plant.

Please note that they WILL need an interstate health certificate and be tagged individually before coming into Michigan. Once leaving the feedlot, they must still be identified with a metal ear tag.

Q. Will producers need to purchase a tag applicator?

A. Yes, because RFID tags require a different applicator than bangle tags. If the applicator has the wrong pin, it will destroy the tamperproof tag when applied.

Q. How will producers be billed for the tags?

A. Producers will receive a bill from the Holstein Association for Allflex tags if those tags were ordered through MDA.

Q. How much will the tags cost?

A. The cost of the tags is \$2.00 each, and the applicator is \$20.00.

Q. Where do I apply this new tag?

A. Apply the tag to the left ear following the directions supplied with the tags.

Q. Do youth exhibitors in 2007 need their animals identified with RFID tags?

A. Yes, any exhibitor after March 1, 2007 will need their animal(s) identified using an RFID tag.

Q. Will animals purchased out of state need RFID tags for exhibition in 2007?

A. Yes, any animal purchased out of state and exhibited after March 1, 2007 will be required to have an RFID tag.