



Cattle Traceability and Tagging

For Veterinarians

A requirement for adult cattle in Texas to have an approved form of permanent identification in place at change of ownership will go into effect January 1, 2013, per Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) rule. One form of approved identification is a USDA metal ear tag, and the TAHC is seeking to develop partnerships with interested veterinary practitioners to help distribute these free tags. While producers may apply the tags themselves, veterinarians will have the opportunity to provide tagging services to their clients.

The Commission amended its rules in June 2012, to regain some of the traceability of beef cattle inadvertently lost when the brucellosis test requirement was suspended in the summer of 2011. The amended rule permanently cancelled the brucellosis test requirement for adult cattle at change of ownership. In its place is the requirement that all sexually intact cattle, parturient or post parturient, or 18 months of age and older changing ownership be officially identified with Commission approved permanent identification. A complete list of acceptable identification devices/methods may be found at www.tahc.state.tx.us.

The new traceability rule will help preserve the ability of cattle industry partners and the TAHC to identify animals and trace animal movements quickly and effectively, no matter which disease is involved. This applies to private treaty sales as well as those at livestock markets or through video auctions.

The USDA metal ear tags, also known as National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags, are being made available at no cost while supplies last. Veterinarians may continue to order tags from USDA as in the past, or request a supply from the TAHC.

When tags are reallocated to a client, it is important to capture and submit the client's name and contact information.

Tag reallocations should be reported within 7 days. Choose one of the following reporting methods:

- 1) Report the information online.
 - a. For access, call 800-550-8242 x 733 to obtain a username and password.
 - b. Go to: <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/apps/tags/>
 - c. Complete all required fields and submit a record for each consecutive tag series assigned to a producer.
 - d. After records are submitted online, the Official Tag Allocation form may be retained for your records.or
- 2) Official Tag Allocation forms (contact a TAHC office for copies, or download from the agency web site, www.tahc.state.tx.us)

Mail forms to: TAHC Tag Allocation, PO Box 12966, Austin, TX 78711-2966

If you are interested in distributing tags, please contact the TAHC Animal Disease Traceability Team at animal_id@tahc.state.tx.us, 1-800-550-8242 ext. 733, or your local TAHC Regional office. Your business name and contact information can be added to a searchable list of tag providers posted on the TAHC homepage.