

NLIS cattle: how to get started

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Systems, Intelligence and Traceability Unit, Orange

The [National Livestock Identification System](#) (NLIS) is Australia's identification and traceability system for cattle. It is a permanent, whole-of-life system that allows cattle to be identified and traced from birth to slaughter.

Cattle are identified with an NLIS approved electronic device known as an RFID (radio frequency identification device). These are either white breeder or orange post-breeder devices, or a rumen bolus and matching ear tag.

All cattle movements are recorded in the NLIS database which provides traceability from birth to slaughter. Cattle producers can obtain direct access to the NLIS database to report the movements of their cattle via a 'Producer' account.

The NLIS database is currently administered by Integrity Systems Company Ltd (formerly NLIS Ltd), a subsidiary of Meat and Livestock Australia.

As a cattle producer getting started with NLIS, there are a few things to consider.

Property Identification Code (PIC)

A property on which cattle are held must be identified with a property identification code (PIC). A PIC enables the owner or manager of cattle to purchase permanent identifiers to attach to their cattle, record the movement of cattle between PICs in the NLIS database and be accredited with industry quality assurance programs, such as Livestock Production Assurance (LPA).

PICs are a fundamental part of the NLIS. PICs are issued by your [Local Land Services](#) (LLS) office.

NLIS cattle identification devices

You will require a PIC to purchase NLIS permanent identifiers (devices). The PIC code is printed on the outside of the NLIS device which must only be applied to cattle on that property.

You may order NLIS devices through either a rural merchandiser or by directly contacting a tag manufacturer.

Manufacturers of NLIS accredited devices for cattle are listed on the NLIS website at <https://www.nlis.com.au/NLIS-Information/>

There are two different types of NLIS permanent identifiers (devices) for cattle:

1. Breeder or post breeder device – applied as a tag to the right (offside) ear of the animal; or
2. Rumen bolus – inserted into the rumen/reticulum of the animal. This device also comes with a corresponding management ear tag, applied to the right ear of the animal, which indicates it as a bolus identified animal.



Figure 1. White 'Breeder' ear tag and orange 'post-breeder' ear tag (left) and rumen boluses with corresponding ear tags

NLIS devices are manufactured in two colours, which signify where the animal was identified.

'Breeder devices' are white, and applied to animals born on the property to which the PIC on the breeder device relates. (Note: white breeder devices can be used to replace lost devices for cattle born on the property on which they were originally identified.)

'Post-breeder devices' are orange, and applied to cattle not born on the property on which you are identifying cattle. (Note: orange devices are

usually used to replace lost or damaged devices for bought-in cattle moved to your property).

If your property does not have a PIC or you require an emergency supply of NLIS devices, you must contact your LLS office to obtain a PIC or emergency devices.

NLIS numbering system

NLIS cattle devices are individually referenced, both with an NLIS identification (visual) number and an RFID number.

NLIS ID numbers can be read by looking at the outside of the device and written down to refer to later.

The RFID microchip inside the device can be read by a hand-held scanner or panel reader.

When you buy devices, the manufacturer registers the RFID and NLIS ID to your PIC on the NLIS database.

NLIS (visual) ID number

This number is printed on the outside of the NLIS device – either the ear device or bolus management tag. The number sequence is as follows:

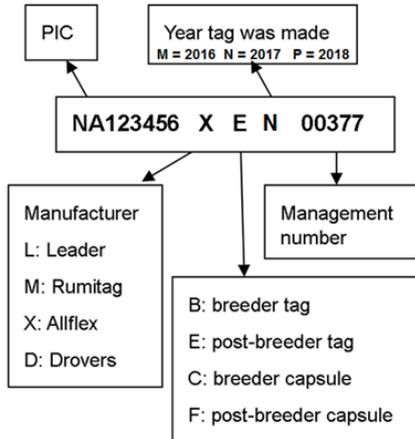


Figure 2. Visual ID number sequence on NLIS tags

Electronic or RFID number

This is the number encoded on the microchip inside the NLIS device. It is a globally unique and random number that can only be read by an NLIS scanner or wand.

This number is formatted in the following sequence:

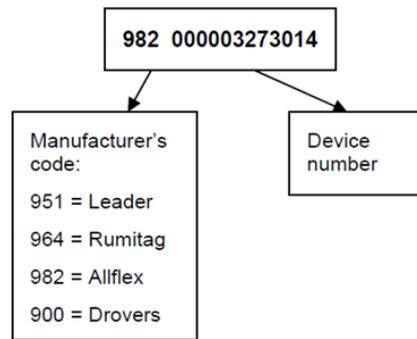


Figure 3. Electronic number sequence encoded in the NLIS tag

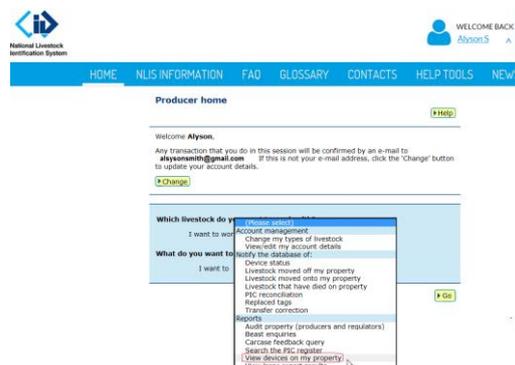
Although there are two distinct numbers for NLIS devices (visual or RFID), the system links these numbers on the NLIS database, and either may be used to record cattle movements.

Do I need to know my NLIS device numbers?

Producers must ensure that all cattle are properly identified with NLIS devices before leaving their property of birth or any subsequent property, and that any movements between properties are recorded in the NLIS database.

These devices are registered to the PIC of the cattle producer when bought from the tag manufacturer.

Producers can access a list of registered devices on their PIC by obtaining an NLIS ‘Producer’ database account and running the ‘Devices purchased’ or ‘Active devices on PIC report’ or ‘View devices on my property’ report:



Recording cattle movements - examples

A Producer moving cattle between properties with different PICs must record the movement of cattle onto the destination property, from the previous property, on the NLIS database using a ‘Producer’ account.

If the properties are under the same management plan and are worked as a single property it may be possible to amalgamate the properties under a single PIC. This would mean that cattle movements between the properties would not need to be recorded on the NLIS database.

Contact your LLS to discuss this option.

A Cattle trader is a person who turns cattle over quickly and mostly buys and sells cattle through saleyards. A trader must ensure that all cattle are properly identified prior to trucking and a national vendor declaration (NVD) is completed and accompanies all cattle movements.

Who is responsible for notifying the NLIS database of cattle movements?

Saleyard operators are required to transfer cattle to and from a saleyard on the NLIS database.

Feedlot operators are required to notify the NLIS database of cattle moving onto the feedlot property, unless the cattle were bought at a saleyard.

Abattoir operators are responsible for recording the movement of cattle in the NLIS database onto the abattoir PIC of cattle consigned directly to the abattoir. If the cattle arrived from a saleyard, the movement of cattle to the abattoir would have been recorded by the saleyard operator.

The cattle owner is responsible for recording cattle movements between properties, or onto their property, in the NLIS database. This includes the purchase of cattle privately or through an online facility such as Auctions Plus.

Producers are also responsible for the recording of cattle movements in the NLIS database where:

- cattle are bought privately (not via auction)
- cattle are moved to and from agistment
- cattle are run on a leased property arrangement
- cattle are moved to or from a travelling stock reserve (TSR).

What is the time requirement for reporting cattle movements to the NLIS database?

In NSW, notification of 'property to property' (P2P) movements of cattle to the NLIS database is required within 2 days.

Be aware that different states may have different timeframes for reporting P2P movements in their regulations. Check with the relevant primary industries agency in that state if you are moving cattle to an interstate property that you own or are leasing or agisting cattle on.

Quality assurance programs and vendor declarations

Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) is an independently audited, on-farm assurance program covering food safety, animal welfare and biosecurity. Accredited producers have access to LPA NVDs.

NVD serial numbers must be included in the record of a transaction recorded in the NLIS database.

LPA NVDs are a record of traceability and food safety information and double as an approved NLIS movement document and Transported Stock Statement (TSS) in NSW.

Cattle producers must complete an NVD whenever cattle are sold and moved, e.g. when selling cattle privately, through a saleyard or to an abattoir and the NVD must go with the cattle on their journey to sale, slaughter or another property. NVDs are required by all meat processors.

Further information

For information on NLIS rules and regulations: NSW DPI Biosecurity and Food safety at enquiries.nlis@dpi.nsw.gov.au

NSW DPI website at <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis/cattle>

PICs, emergency tags, reporting untagged stock: Local Land Services phone 1300 795 299 or <http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/>

NLIS database service at www.nlis.com.au or 1800 654 743

Livestock Production Assurance (LPA): 1800 683 111 or email lpa@mla.com.au

For updates go to www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/factsheets

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