Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

Sheep and Goat eID
Saleyard Frequently Asked Questions

NSW is currently transitioning to individual electronic identification (eID) for sheep and goats to strengthen Australia's livestock traceability systems.

Contents

Why is eID being implemented?

The NLIS (Sheep and Goats) mob-based system was fully implemented in mid-2010. The international markets we sell to now have higher traceability requirements, and the growing volume of international trade and travel has increased biosecurity risks to Australian livestock industries. Therefore, a more accurate and efficient traceability system for is required for sheep and goats.

The introduction of eID will provide more accurate and timely traceability of animals which will:

- Reduce time delays to manage an emergency disease or residue incident

- Enable more targeted response activities, reducing the number of livestock and producers impacted (including livestock destroyed)

- Reduce the time that Australia is restricted from export markets following an emergency disease or residue incident.

What is the benefit of having sheep and goat eID if there is a disease outbreak?

Implementing eID for sheep and goats offers significant advantages during a disease outbreak, particularly in terms of traceability and response efficiency due to:

1. **Enhanced Traceability:**

The 2020 SAFEMEAT Traceability Evaluation Exercise showed that within 24 hours, 70% of sheep with visual tags could be traced back to their vendor or property of residence for the past 30 days. In contrast, nearly 100% of sheep with eIDs could be traced in the same timeframe. This demonstrates the superior accuracy and completeness of traceability with eID.

2. **Timely and Accurate Management:**

While eID does not prevent exotic diseases or residue incidents, it significantly improves the ability to trace and manage affected livestock and their cohorts quickly. This allows for more effective and timely responses to outbreaks, which is critical for minimizing the spread of the disease and reducing its impact.

3. **Historical Lessons:**

Events such as the UK Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in 2001, highlighted the importance of eID. The lack of individual sheep traceability at that time led to a seven-week tracing process, contributing to a widespread outbreak and a seven-year export market ban. By contrast, the implementation of eID in Victoria has demonstrated that tracing can now be completed in minutes instead of days, showcasing the substantial improvement in response efficiency.

eID enhances the ability to trace and manage livestock during a disease outbreak, leading to quicker and more effective responses, reduced impact, and protection of export markets.

Will the NLIS database be upgraded as part of eID implementation?

The Commonwealth Government announced $22.5 million for an upgrade of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database.

Integrity Systems Company will use this investment to develop a new database that has improved functionality, user-friendliness, analytics, reporting and cybersecurity. The new database will be developed independently to avoid impacting the functionality of the current database.

What will saleyards need to do?

From 1 January 2025, saleyards will be required to scan, record and report all sheep and goat eID devices moving into, and out of their facilities.

Many of the eID device scanners used in NSW saleyards are designed to scan eID devices as fast as the stock can move through them. This means that the time taken for pre-sale drafting and penning of sheep and goats will be minimally impacted.

For saleyards using software integrated with the eID readers, the process of completing NLIS uploads should become more accurate and efficient as the software provides a level of automation of this process.

What NLIS uploads will saleyards be required to do?

From 1 January 2025, until 1 January 2027, sheep and goats with eIDs and those with visual tags will require distinct handling at saleyards. During this period, there will be two types of uploads to the NLIS database:

- **Mob-Based uploads** - between 1 January 2025 and 1 January 2027, movements to and from saleyards for mobs of older sheep and farmed goats identified with visual tags will be uploaded on a mob-basis, by the saleyard office.
- **Individual uploads** – additionally from 1 January 2025 any sheep and farmed goats with eIDs will be individually scanned, and their individual eIDs uploaded to the NLIS database, by the saleyard office.

This transitional arrangement ensures that both types of uploads are effectively managed during this period. This does not result in a duplicate recording of movements in the NLIS database.

From 1 January 2027, only individual eID data will be uploaded.

Sheep or goats with eID devices that die or are humanely euthanised at a saleyard must have their eID scanned and reported individually to the NLIS database as deceased.

How will missing eID devices be managed in saleyards?

In NSW, all sheep and farmed goats born from 1 January 2025 must be fitted with an eID before leaving their property of birth. All sheep and farmed goats of any age must be fitted with an eID before leaving any property from 1 January 2027.

If sheep or farmed goats are not compliant with this timeline and are missing eID devices at a saleyard, you should do the following:

- If there is a small number of stock in a consignment without eIDs, an emergency eID (with the saleyard PIC) can be fitted to each sheep or goat and the vendor charged for the cost of the eID plus attaching it.
- If an entire consignment of stock is not identified with eID devices:
  - the stock cannot be sold and should be returned to the vendor, under permit
  - the stock can be held until sufficient emergency eID devices can be obtained and attached, and then sold.

What will agents need to do differently at saleyards?

It is the responsibility of the saleyard operator to discuss with vendors and agents the role and responsibility changes associated with eID implementation.

Agents will be required to utilise eID readers supplied by saleyard operators to scan and record all sheep and goat eID devices and supply information to the saleyard operator before the sheep and goats leave the saleyard. This includes:

- date of sale
- sale lot number
- species
- number of head in each sale lot
- vendor's PIC
- RFIDs of the sheep/goats in each lot
- serial number of the NLIS movement document.

The destination PIC provided by the buyer or the Agent's PIC or Buyer code, must be given to the saleyard operator by the end of the sale, or sooner if required by the saleyard operator.

What will agents need to do differently for sheep and goat clients?

As agents are a trusted source of information, selling and purchasing livestock for their clients, agents are strongly encouraged to become familiar with eID requirements for producers and themselves. More detailed information, training and details of specialist support is available at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/eid.

When operating for a client outside of a saleyard, it is not the responsibility of livestock agents to purchase, apply, or scan eID devices for their clients, or to complete any NLIS transfers on their clients' behalf. However, agents may do this if arranged with the client, especially for recording of sheep and goats' movements onto their clients' PICs after buying stock privately or online, eg. via Auctions Plus.