



# Sheep and Goat eID

## Livestock owner Frequently Asked Questions

NSW is currently transitioning to mandatory individual electronic identification for sheep and goats. Using eIDs for sheep and goats will ensure more accurate and timely traceability to help manage and recover from any emergency animal disease or residue incident.

### What is an eID?

An eID is an electronic identification device that has an internal microchip and is printed with a unique serial number, which is attached to individual sheep and farmed goats generally in the form of an ear tag, or leg band for some goats. The eID can be scanned and the individual electronic data is uploaded to the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database. The NLIS is Australia's system for the identification and traceability of cattle, pigs, sheep and goats.

### Why is eID being implemented?

NLIS (Sheep and Goats) as a mob-based system was fully implemented in mid-2010. The NLIS has matured, and our markets are more stringent in their traceability requirements. Hence the need to introduce a more accurate and efficient traceability system for sheep and goats.

The introduction of eID will:

- Provide more accurate and timely traceability of animals
- Reduce time delays to manage an emergency disease or residue incident
- Reduce the number of animals and producers impacted (including animals destroyed) in response to an emergency disease
- Reduce the time that Australia is restricted from export markets following an emergency disease or residue incident

### Why is ultra-high frequency eID not being implemented?

NSW approves for use eID devices which are NLIS accredited. Currently there are no UHF livestock devices either NLIS accredited or in the NLIS accreditation process that can be used on sheep and goats. Readers and other eID infrastructure would also need to be upgraded to make it possible to read the electronic information in a UHF device. The additional time and resources that would be required to trial, acquire and upgrade the entire supply chain to install UHF

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supplies currently means that the existing eID equipment is the only viable option for our national implementation timeline for the foreseeable future.

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

Yes, Commonwealth Government has announced \$26 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.

### How much is implementing sheep and goat eID's going to cost me?

Implementing eID will have a cost impact on all sheep and goat supply chain segments.

Many factors will determine the exact cost to you of implementing sheep and goat eID in your operation. These can include what segment of the supply chain you are in (e.g. processing, saleyard, producer, agent, event operator), the size of your operation, whether you buy in or breed sheep or goats, how you buy in sheep or goats, and whether you transfer sheep between PICs.

Depending on your industry sector, you may be eligible for the NSW Sheep and Goat eID Infrastructure Rebate Scheme to assist with some of the costs of implementing sheep and Goat eID. The detail on what each sector is eligible to apply for is outlined in the Guidelines on the RAA website <https://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/eid>.

### What Government assistance will be provided to offset the costs to implement eID?

\$38 million has been allocated by the NSW Government to support the sheep and goat industry transition to implement eID. This includes the \$7.2 million Australian Government contribution.

Eligible saleyards, processors, primary producers and stock and station agents in NSW can apply for a rebate on the purchase and installation of eID systems and equipment.

Applications for the NSW Sheep and Goat eID Infrastructure Rebate Scheme open on

- 1 August for saleyards and processors.
- 3 October for producers and stock and station agents.

Information about the rebate, including program guidelines and FAQs are available on the RAA website: [www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/eid](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au/grants/eid).

### Can I get a discount on tags?

There is currently no government supported discount on tags in NSW.

The NSW Sheep and Goat eID Infrastructure Rebate Scheme is designed to support infrastructure purchases and installation only, not ongoing expenses. eIDs are ineligible for the rebate.

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The NSW Government supports a national tag tender/ procurement approach to reducing the cost of eIDs for sheep and farmed goat producers as the most sustainable solution for the industry and is currently supporting investigations into this approach.

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

The recent 2020 SAFEMEAT Traceability Evaluation Exercise reported that within 24 hours, 70% of sheep slaughtered using visual tags were traceable back to the vendor or property of residence for the last 30 days, compared to almost 100% of sheep with eIDs accurately traced back to vendor or property of residence within the same time period.

Whilst eID does not prevent an exotic disease or residue incident, eID enables more accurate and timely traceability of animals, and their cohorts. This is critical for managing disease outbreaks swiftly, and reducing the time Australia faces export market bans.

For example, the UK foot-and-mouth outbreak in 2001 took seven weeks to trace animals due to the absence of eID. The disease spread, which resulted in a seven-year export market ban. The implementation of eID in Victoria demonstrated that traceback can now take minutes instead of days.

### Why should we implement eID if feral animals can spread emergency animal diseases including FMD?

Both livestock traceability and feral animal management can contribute to the management of animal disease transmission.

Feral pigs, deer and other vertebrate pests are routinely and strategically managed to reduce their economic, environmental and social impacts. This helps manage the transmission of existing endemic diseases to domestic stock.

A targeted reduction in feral animal numbers in a specified area has been shown to break disease transmission cycles. In NSW we are testing our ability to help eradicate an emergency animal disease by rapidly reducing high numbers of targeted feral animals in specific areas, which might surround an exotic disease incursion point.

While feral animals may play a role in the transmission of some livestock diseases, transmission between livestock is likely to be the major immediate threat in the case of emergency animal diseases.

The most likely access point for FMD is via the illegal importation of FMD contaminated feedstuffs which could then be fed to domesticated pigs.

Given the larger numbers and closer geographic proximity of domesticated livestock, the potential for disease spread among these animals is considerably higher. Australia's priority is to establish an exceptionally effective and robust traceability system, consistently striving to enhance it, reduce vulnerabilities, and address weak points.

Control of feral animals during an exotic disease emergency is outlined in the AUSVETPLAN for wild animal response (<https://animalhealthaustralia.com.au/ausvetplan>).

### What eID equipment do I need for my property?

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For many producers, the only change will be switching from a visual tag to an eID. Sheep and goat producers may not need to purchase tag reading equipment. However, access to a scanner will be necessary if you move stock between properties with different PICs, or onto your PIC.

Producers may want to purchase eID equipment to use individual animal data on health, fertility, genetics, weight gain and wool traits to make more informed management, monitoring and selection decisions. This individual commercial decision by producers may facilitate the ability to improve productivity and profitability.

### What are the on-farm benefits from eID?

eID provides the ability for sheep producers to obtain individual animal data for such matters as health, fertility, genetics, weight gain and wool traits. Such data allows producers to make more informed management, monitoring and selection decisions thereby facilitating the ability to improve productivity and profitability.

The ability to trace animals more quickly via eID allows Government to reduce disease spread and to respond and manage exotic disease incidents more quickly. This reduces the risk to producers that their animals and revenue will be negatively impacted in the case of disease spread.

### My animals never leave the farm, I slaughter on site. Do I need to tag them?

In this case no, they would not be required to be tagged. But they, or the sheep/goats they were bred from, should have been recorded as being present on your property in the NLIS database. The NSW Regulation requires that sheep must have a permanent identifier (in the form of an NLIS accredited device) before they leave or move from their property of birth or subsequent properties.

### Once a sheep or goat is tagged, will I need to upload these tags into the National Livestock Identification System database and if so at what point?

Once you purchase NLIS accredited eIDs, they are individually registered to your PIC on the NLIS database.

When moving animals through saleyards or to slaughter at abattoirs, saleyard and abattoir operators are responsible for scanning and recording each animal's eID into the NLIS database. This includes data such as the eID's serial number, microchip number, the FROM PIC and PIC to where the animal has been transferred to.

However, recording of property to property (P2P) movements will require producers to scan each individual animal and upload their movement information into the NLIS. For more information visit: [www.nlis.com.au](http://www.nlis.com.au).

### Will there be changes to the current tag colour system?

No. NSW will continue to strongly recommend use of the year of birth colour system for eIDs, noting that post-breeder eIDs will always be pink.

Use of breeder tags which correspond to the nationally agreed colour for the year of birth is recommended and continues to be used by many producers. The colours are rotated through an eight-year cycle.