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NLIS Sheep and Goats: Guidelines for NSW Abattoirs

Animal Biosecurity, NSW DPI

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Sheep abattoir
Photo: Department of Primary Industries Image Gallery

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Preamble

This publication provides guidelines to abattoir operators about complying with the requirements for the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) whenever sheep and goats are slaughtered in NSW. These requirements are prescribed under the Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017.

In summary:

- all sheep and goats must have an NLIS visual tag before they are slaughtered
- all sheep and goats must be accompanied by a completed National Vendor Declaration (NVD) or Transported Stock Statement (TSS), which lists all of the Property Identification Codes (PICs) on tags in the consignment, before they are slaughtered
- kill data must be uploaded to the NLIS database by the next working day.

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1.Tags

All sheep and goats that are being consigned to an abattoir must be identified with an approved NLIS visual ear tag. The use of the correct year of birth colour is strongly recommended. Feral goats are exempt from tags if consigned directly from the property of capture or via a registered goat depot to an abattoir for slaughter. Dairy goats are not exempt from tagging if sent to an abattoir or a saleyard.

The **vendor** should check all sheep or goats before they are loaded and:

- replace any missing tags with either a breeder (year of birth colour) tag if born on that property, or a post-breeder (pink) tag for that property if the stock was born elsewhere or their origin or age is uncertain;

and

- write on the NVD, under 'PICs on ear tags/brands', all other PICs on tags that differ from the pre-printed PIC on the NVD (this includes purchased sheep and sheep bred by the vendor on a different property);

or

- attach a pink post-breeder tag (with the PIC of the property the stock are being consigned from) to all the sheep, and write that PIC (which is the same as the pre-printed PIC) under 'PICs on ear tags/brands' on the NVD to indicate that post-breeder tags have been used.

The **abattoir operator** should sight the stock as they are being unloaded or penned at the abattoir. Arrangements must be made to ensure that any sheep with missing tags remain linked to the consignment PIC and NVD throughout slaughter. Special (abattoir or emergency) tags may be obtained from Local Land Services (LLS) and attached to untagged sheep before slaughter. A vendor's property tags cannot be attached in abattoir lairages except with the prior approval of an authorised officer. Consignments where not all sheep are tagged should be reported to a Local Land Service authorised officer.

It is an offence for any person to sell or otherwise dispose of, buy or otherwise acquire, or slaughter untagged sheep. However, an abattoir may slaughter such stock for humane reasons on the direction of a Biosecurity and Food Safety (BFS) NSW Compliance Officer, or Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) on plant veterinarian, animal welfare inspector or veterinary practitioner.

2. Vendor declarations

All sheep and goat movements must be accompanied by an NVD, eNVD, or a Transported Stock Statement (TSS). The NVD is preferable as it provides all the information required for tracing, stock transportation and product integrity.

The vendor must provide the following information on the NVD or TSS.

- PIC of the property where the journey commenced. This is pre-printed on the NVD. If the stock have been on agistment, the vendor must obtain an NVD with that property's PIC from the property owner.
- Number and description (year born, breed, sex, type) of the sheep.
- All other PICs on tags attached to the sheep. This includes purchased sheep and sheep bred by the vendor but born on a different property. These PICs are written under 'PICs on ear tags/brands. If there are more than five other PICs, a list should be attached to the NVD and the most common four PICs, together with the words 'see attached list' or similar, should be written on the NVD.
- Whether the stock are vendor bred (question 3). **If the answer is 'No', then the other PICs must be written on the NVD** as above. For a mixed mob (vendor and non-vendor bred sheep) separate NVDs may be used so question 3 can be answered correctly.

- Date of movement

The rest of the NVD must also be completed to meet food safety, product integrity, livestock production assurance andstock transportation requirements.

The **abattoir operator** should confirm that a completed NVD (or post sale summary with all required information including other tag PICs) has been provided.

- If not, the sheep should be held in lairage until a completed document is provided by the vendor or stock agent.
- If the answer to question 3 is 'No', other PICs should have been written under 'PICs on ear tags / brands. If not, the abattoir should contact the vendor (for direct consignments) and make arrangements to have the other tag PICs recorded or check the sheep and record the other PICs observed on tags ('foreign PICs').

It is an offence for the vendor not to provide this information, and for an abattoir to slaughter stock if they don't have this information. However, an abattoir may slaughter such stock for humane reasons as outlined above.

3. Holding paddocks

The following guidelines are provided to help ensure that a seamless history of movements (without gaps) is maintained in both the NLIS database and other records for all stock slaughtered at Australian abattoirs for the purposes of traceability and product integrity.

Holding paddocks PICs and consignments

Stock may be held in nearby or remote holding yards or paddocks before being transferred to abattoir lairages for slaughter.

- **Nearby holding paddocks** are adjacent to the abattoir, nearby such that the stock are walked to the abattoir, or otherwise meet jurisdictional rules for assigning the same PIC.
    - Nearby holding paddocks should have the **same PIC** as the abattoir (otherwise they must be treated the same as remote paddocks).
    - **Saleyard consignments** to the abattoir or nearby holding paddocks are transferred by the saleyard to the **abattoir PIC**.
    - **Direct consignments** from a property to the abattoir or nearby holding paddocks are transferred when the abattoir operator uploads the consignment property PIC as the 'From PIC' with the kill data.
- **Remote holding paddocks** are more distant, such that the stock are trucked to the abattoir, or otherwise do not meet jurisdictional rules for assigning the same PIC.
    - Remote holding paddocks must have a **separate PIC**. This PIC should be linked to the processor's NLIS database account.
    - **Saleyard consignments** to a remote holding paddock are transferred by the saleyard to the **holding paddock PIC.**
    - **Direct consignments** from a property to a remote holding paddock are transferred by the abattoir operator to the **holding paddock PIC as a property to property (P2P) movement** before the stock are subsequently moved to the abattoir or otherwise within legislated requirements for P2P movements (2 days).
    - A **new movement document** is required when the stock are transported from the **remote holding paddock to the abattoir.**
- The movement document should be an NVD or eNVD if the remote holding is LPA-accredited, or a State waybill, such as a Transported Stock Statement (TSS).

- The movement from the remote holding paddock to the abattoir consists of a **non-vendor bred** lot. In accordance with the NLIS Regulation and relevant NLIS procedures, the movement document must therefore include all the **'Other from PICs'** for all animals in the lot, or all animals must be tagged with pink post breeder devices issued to the holding paddock PIC.
- Copies of this movement document, and the original vendor's NVD or saleyard Post-Sale Summary (PSS), must be held at both the remote holding and the abattoir in accordance with legislated requirements.

NVD check

The vendor's NVD or saleyard PSS must be reviewed to ensure that all required information has been provided and that the information confirms that the stock are fit for slaughter and meet market requirements.

NLIS database uploads

Saleyard consignments to the abattoir or nearby holding paddocks are uploaded by the abattoir as a saleyard consignment (source of animals) using the abattoir PIC as the processor PIC. The mob-based kill data includes the saleyard PIC as a 'From PIC' (NVD information is not required for kill upload of stock consigned from a saleyard).

Direct consignments from a property to the abattoir or nearby holding paddocks are uploaded by the abattoir as a direct consignment (source of animals) using the abattoir PIC as the processor PIC. The mob-based kill data includes the property PIC as the 'From PIC' and the vendor's NVD information.

Consignments from the remote holding paddock to the abattoir are uploaded by the abattoir as *direct consignments* (source of animals) from the remote holding PIC using the abattoir PIC as the processor PIC. The mob-based kill data includes the remote holding PIC as the 'From PIC' and the relevant information from the new movement document.

Summary of NLIS database upload	
Movement	**NLIS database transfers for sheep and goats**
Saleyard to abattoir or Saleyard to nearby holding then to abattoir	Saleyard to abattoir PIC by saleyard then saleyard consignment kill upload (mob-based), by abattoir
Saleyard to remote holding then to abattoir	Saleyard to remote holding PIC by saleyard, then direct consignment kill upload off remote holding PIC as the consigning PIC, by abattoir
Property to abattoir or Property to nearby holding then to abattoir	Direct consignment kill upload off a PIC or a remote holding PIC as the consigning PIC, by an abattoir
Property to remote holding then to abattoir	Mob-based movement P2P transfer to remote holding PIC by an abattoir, then direct consignment kill upload off remote holding PIC by an abattoir

Details about saleyard and direct consignment uploads are provided in the next section

4. NLIS database uploads

The key feature of the NLIS is the ability to rapidly trace sheep and goats through the NLIS database. To achieve this outcome, prescribed data must be uploaded soon after slaughter.

Who

Uploading kill data is the responsibility of the abattoir operator.

The abattoir must have a 'Processor' NLIS database account linked to the abattoir and holding paddock PICs (assigned by the LLS). An account can be opened through the Integrity Systems NLIS database website or by contacting Integrity Systems Company Ltd on 1800 683 111.

When

Key information must be uploaded to the NLIS database on the day of kill or the next working day. 'Working day' refers to normal business days, i.e., Monday to Friday except public holidays; for example, a Friday kill may be uploaded the following Monday.

How

The data may be recorded and uploaded in one of three ways:

- Entering the data into a spreadsheet which is uploaded to the NLIS database. This is the best option for larger abattoirs. This option is suitable for saleyard consignments only, as scanned images of an NVD/Waybill form cannot be attached to a file. Details on this option are available in the 'Tech Tip Sheep and Goats mob-based kill upload' available from the 'Help' button or 'Help tools' tab on an abattoir NLIS database account.
- Typing in the details on-line. This may be the easiest option for smaller abattoirs. It allows recording details for one mob of sheep or goats at a time. A scanned image of an NVD/Waybill form can be attached and submitted with the mob data. Details are available in the same Tech Tip.

Using commercial software, if available. Please discuss this option with your software and IT providers. The NLIS Database interface specifications are available at https://www.integritysystems.com.au/

What

The following data must be uploaded for **saleyard consignments:**

- Species (sheep or goats)
- Processor PIC (linked to the processor account)
- Date of kill
- Number of head in the mob killed
- Saleyard PIC
- Source (saleyard)
- Foreign PICs (PICs found on tags, but not listed on the NVD)

The following data must be uploaded for **direct consignments:**

- Species (sheep or goats)
- Processor PIC (linked to the processor account)
- Date of kill

- Number of head in the mob killed
- Source (direct)
- From PIC (Vendor's PIC)
- NVD serial number
- NVD image
- Whether the stock are vendor bred (and how long owned if 'No').
    - Although this field is not currently mandatory on the NLIS database, it is required by legislation and must be entered.
- Other PICs listed on the NVD.
    - Although this field is not currently mandatory on the NLIS database, it is required by legislation and any other PICs written on the NVD must be entered.

The following information is **optional** for all consignments:

- Foreign PICs.
    - These are PICs found on tags attached to sheep which have not been written on the NVD. This information is useful for tracing and product integrity purposes and also for compliance monitoring as it identifies NVDs on which not all tag PICs have been recorded.

5. Records

The **vendor or selling agent** must provide a copy of the NVD to the abattoir before or when the sheep or goats are delivered to the abattoir. The copies must include any attached list of other PICs. A post-sale summary (PSS) may be provided instead of the NVD *provided* other PICs are listed on the PSS.

The **abattoir operator** must keep a copy of the NVD for at least 2 years. This requirement is met if an image of the NVD is uploaded to the NLIS database.

6. Compliance and performance monitoring

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) regularly monitors the performance of sheep abattoirs from the NLIS database and provides a report to each abattoir, the Biosecurity and Food Safety NSW Compliance Unit, Department of Agriculture and Water Resources on-plant veterinarian and relevant DPI staff and management. Pooled data is also provided to state and national NLIS committees to monitor the overall performance of the NLIS.

The monitoring data assesses how well vendors, saleyards and abattoirs are complying with the requirements of the NLIS and whether the system at each abattoir is continuously improving. On a State-wide basis, it provides an overall measure of traceability and whether the NLIS as a whole is working.

The following sections describe the key performance parameters, how to interpret the data, and corrective action that should be taken to continuously improve performance.

Overall score and rank

These figures provide an overall estimate of how well all stakeholders in the supply chain of each abattoir, namely vendors, agents, buyers and abattoir operators, are complying with the NLIS and the Regulation and providing data that allows for effective tracing.

The percentage figure is an average of the four performance measures detailed below, namely Traceable PIC status, Required NVD data, Timeliness of uploads and Saleyard consignment disparity. 99% is achievable. Over 96% is acceptable but needs improvement. Under 96% means

that the system is failing, the Regulation is not being complied with, and prompt corrective action is essential.

The rank lists each abattoir out of the 17 or so active sheep abattoirs in NSW. The lower the figure (1 = 1st) the better.

Kill days

This is the total number of days for which kill data was uploaded during the monitoring period.

This figure should be compared with actual operating days. For example, if the abattoir operates 5 days a week, with 1 day off for maintenance each month and no public holidays, then there should be 62 kills days each quarter. A lower 'kill days' figure suggests that some kills days were not uploaded. This is for guidance only and is not included in the overall measure of performance.

Sheep and mobs uploaded

This is the total number of sheep and mobs uploaded as direct and saleyard consignments during the monitoring period.

This figure should be compared with actual kill data. A lower number suggests that some sheep were not uploaded to the NLIS database.

Traceable PIC status

This measures whether the status of all property PICs provides good traceability for direct consignments. It is a combination of the following parameters: [Active + Inactive From PICs] + [Agent codes ÷ 2].

The PIC status performance measure should be 99.5% or higher. A lower figure may be due to using disbanded (cancelled) PICs, invalid (e.g., mistyped) PICs, district codes, blocked PICs or 8As (AAAAAAAA), all of which are unlawful and negate traceability.

Required NVD data

This is a measure of whether all of the required data from NVDs has been uploaded for direct consignments. This data includes a valid NVD serial number, whether the sheep are vendor bred and, if not, other PICs as written on the NVD or foreign PICs as sighted by the abattoir. An NVD image must be uploaded together with mob data for direct consignments.

A low figure (<96%) suggests that most or all of the data are not being provided or uploaded. Incomplete NVDs is one of areas of the mob-based system that needs further improvement.

The NLIS business rules do not require NVD data to be uploaded for saleyard consignments as this should already have been recorded by the saleyard operator on the NLIS database.

Timeliness of uploads

This is a measure of devices uploaded within 2 or 7 days of the kill date. The Regulation requires kill data to be uploaded by the close of business on the next working day after the sale. The 2-day monitoring figure takes weekends into account but not public holidays or other non-operating days. The 7-day figure measures late uploads which are completed within a calendar week.

These figures should always be 100%. A lower figure suggests that one or more uploads have been late, or upload errors have not been corrected promptly.

Saleyard consignment discrepancy

This is the difference between sheep transferred by saleyards to the abattoir or holding PIC, and saleyard-consigned sheep uploaded by the abattoir as killed.

- A positive number means more sheep have been uploaded by the abattoir than were transferred by saleyards, resulting in a performance score of 100%. This may be because sheep are being transferred to a holding paddock PIC but then uploaded as saleyard kill consignments, or a saleyard has transferred sheep to the wrong abattoir PIC (perhaps because the buyer has provided an incorrect PIC).
- A negative number means more sheep have been transferred by saleyards than have been uploaded by the abattoir as killed, resulting in a performance score below 100%. This may be because the abattoir has not uploaded all sheep killed, or has uploaded saleyard consignments as direct consignments, or a saleyard has transferred sheep to the wrong abattoir PIC (perhaps because the buyer has provided an incorrect PIC).

Abattoirs may monitor this discrepancy by running the NLIS database report 'Mob-based movements onto PIC', selecting the abattoir or holding PIC and entering an appropriate date range (e.g., last week). The report displays all mobs transferred to the abattoir or holding PIC by saleyards during that period. This should be compared with the abattoir's records of sheep received from saleyards and any discrepancies investigated and follow-up with the relevant saleyards, buyers or suppliers.

Limitations

Monitoring reports from the NLIS database do not take into account:

- Number of sheep actually killed.
- Number of sheep tagged.
- Whether all PICs on tags have been written on the NVD;
- Whether direct consignment PICs are for the correct properties.

More information

Using the NLIS database:

- Help tools on your NLIS database account
- NLIS Ltd, phone 1800 683 111, email: support@integritysystems.com.au
- Your software and IT providers

NLIS rules, NLIS questions, PICs, special tags:

- Local Land Services, ph 1300 795 299 or https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/
- Department of Primary Industries, phone 02 6391 3511, email enquiries.nlis@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- DPI NLIS (Sheep and Goats) webpage at: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis/sheep-goats

Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017: https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2017-0231

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

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (March 2023). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Primary Industries or the user's independent adviser.

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NLIS Sheep – Vendor's Checklist

PIC: **Date:** **NVD number:**

Before consignment:

- Obtain an NVD with the pre-printed PIC for the property the sheep are being consigned from.
- Check all sheep shortly before or at loading.
- Replace any missing tags with either a breeder tag (preferably with the correct year of birth colour) or a pink post-breeder tag with the PIC for that property.
- If any sheep were purchased or born on a different property, write all PICs on tags attached to those sheep on the NVD under 'PICs on ear tags / brands'

  or

  attach a pink post-breeder tag to all sheep and write that PIC on the NVD under 'PICs on ear tags / brands' to show that post-breeder tags have been used.
- Complete the rest of the NVD.
- Send the completed NVD with the sheep to the saleyard or abattoir.

NLIS Sheep – Buyer's Checklist

PIC: **Date:** **NVD number:**

Before sale:

- Check that the sheep that you intend bidding on appear to all have tags and are accompanied by a completed NVD (including other tag PICs).
- Confirm that your account details are up to date and include the correct abattoir or holding paddock PICs.

After purchase:

- Provide the correct PIC for the abattoir or holding paddock to which the sheep are being delivered to the selling agent at the time of purchase.
- Obtain a copy of the NVD or post-sale summary after the sale and keep it somewhere where it can be readily found for at least 7 years.

NLIS Sheep – Abattoir Operator's Checklist

Abattoir: **Date:**

Preparation:

- Open a 'Processor' NLIS database account.
- Obtain a copy of the Tech Tip Sheep and goats mob-based kill upload.
- Talk with your software and IT providers about data upload options.

Before slaughter:

- Remind each vendor of direct consignments of their obligations (see vendor's checklist)
- Remind buyers on your behalf to only buy sheep that are tagged and that are accompanied by a completed NVD (including other tag PICs), and to provide the correct abattoir or holding paddock PIC (see buyer's checklist)

On delivery, sight all sheep for missing tags:

- Replace lost tags with special tags, or implement other systems approved by the Biosecurity and Food Safety NSW Compliance or DoAWR on-plant vet that maintain the link between all sheep and carcases with their PIC and NVD.
- If many sheep in a consignment are untagged, advise the vendor that the sheep cannot be killed and report the incident to an LLS authorised officer.

Obtain a completed NVD from each vendor or selling agent:

- If the answer to question 3 is 'No', confirm that other tag PICs have been written under 'PICs on ear tags / brands' on the NVD. If not, advise the vendor or agent and make alternative arrangements to record foreign PICs.

After slaughter:

Enter and upload to the NLIS database the following information on the day of kill or the next business day:

- Species (sheep or goats)
- Abattoir PIC
- Date of kill
- Number of head killed
- Saleyard or vendor's PIC (From PIC)
- NVD serial number (direct consignments)
- Whether the stock are vendor bred (and how long owned if 'No') (direct consignments)
- Other PICs listed on the NVD or found on the sheep (direct consignments)
- Foreign PICs (optional)
- NVD image (optional)