

Biosecurity – Permanent Identifiers for Pigs (Special Circumstances)

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Scope:

This procedure applies to the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Industry and Local Land Services (LLS) involved in the administration, implementation and management of the NLIS in NSW.

Management of the biosecurity risk

The purpose of this procedure is to describe how the NSW Government will manage the situations where a Permanent Identifier for Pigs (Special Circumstances), i.e. a special ('crown' or 'emergency') brand, or a special emergency NLIS post-breeder ear tag is applied to pigs. This procedure identifies which National Livestock Identification System scheme (NLIS) movement documents must be used, the records which must be kept by the supplier of the crown special brand or NLIS post-breeder tag and the specifications of this type of permanent identifier.

Biosecurity legislation summary

The NLIS is Australia's permanent whole-of-life identification system which aims to ensure individual cattle, sheep and goats, and pigs can be traced from property of birth to slaughter for biosecurity, food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

The NLIS is underpinned by State/Territory legislation, which forms the underpinning regulatory framework. In NSW this is the Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017 (the NLIS Regulation). The NLIS is endorsed and supported by all sectors of the cattle, sheep and goats and pig industries including producer, stock and station agent, saleyard, feedlot and processor peak industry bodies.

The NLIS Regulation prescribes mandatory identification and traceability requirements for pigs in NSW including:

- o Part 2 - Property identification codes
 - o Part 3 - Permanent identification of pigs
 - o Part 4 - Information requirements for stock transactions (Division 1) and Reporting and record keeping
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Any person who deals with pigs and who knows or ought to know of the biosecurity risks associated with pigs has a general biosecurity duty to take measures to prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. The general biosecurity duty can be discharged by following the NLIS Regulation, Industry Standards or by following other advisory or education material.

The collection, use and disclosure of information in accordance with this procedure, including any internal or external discussion or distribution of information, must be in compliance with the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* or be exempted by the operation of section 387 of the *Biosecurity Act 2015*.

Section 387 (2) of the Act provides authority for the disclosure of information about a person, without the consent of the person: to a public sector agency, or to any other person, but only if the disclosure is reasonably necessary for the purpose of exercising a biosecurity risk function.

Work health and safety

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 places an obligation on the agency (NSW DPI and LLS) as a person conducting a business or Undertaking and workers to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Safe Work Method Statements that support activities included in this procedure must be used in identifying, assessing and controlling risks.

NSW DPI and LLS will work together to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking any activities for this procedure.

Users are reminded of the need to follow safe work practice when applying any techniques described in this publication. This includes identifying, assessing and managing any work health and safety risks.

Roles and responsibilities:

- **NSW DPI Biosecurity and Food Safety authorised officer**

- NSW DPI will advise LLS about the specifications and use of special brands and NLIS ear tags for pigs, as well as providing policy advice to LLS and to pig producers about NLIS Pig requirements in NSW.
- The NSW DPI Leader Traceability or delegate attends SAFEMEAT Jurisdictional Traceability Group meetings and provides NSW input and feedback on any matters relating to NLIS Pigs.

- **Local Land Services**

- District registrars assign property identification codes (PICs) and pig brand numbers and maintain district registers of PICs and brands. They may also sell NLIS post-breeder tags printed with the District Code, and authorise other persons to apply special (crown or emergency) brands or special emergency NLIS post-breeder ear tags at a saleyard or abattoir.
- LLS veterinarians and biosecurity officers regularly attend Forbes, and other infrequent pig sales, to provide NLIS and other advice and conduct NLIS compliance monitoring.

- **1.3 Authorised officers**

- Authorised officers/Biosecurity Officers in saleyards monitor compliance with stock identification requirements by vendors, agents and buyers, and take appropriate regulatory action where non-compliance is detected. Specific procedures for authorised officers are provided in the NLIS Compliance Monitoring procedure.

Authorised officers:

- apply special (crown) brands as required
- advise on and promote NLIS requirements, including correct ear tagging procedures and good branding practices, and the need to provide a correctly completed PigPass NVD.

Actions and steps:

Permanent Identifiers for Pigs (Special Circumstances)

2.1 Approval and use of permanent identifiers for pigs (special circumstances)

LLS authorised officers (Veterinarians or Biosecurity Officers) may approve the movement of pigs not properly identified (i.e., without swine brands or NLIS ear tags) if it is not practical to brand or tag the pigs on their property of origin. The pigs must be branded or tagged with a permanent identifier for pigs (special circumstances) i.e. a special/crown brand or special NLIS post-breeder ear tag, before they are sold or slaughtered or moved again.

Approval for the movement may be given verbally and a record kept in the authorised officer's files, or a written permit may be sent to the person who wishes to move the stock and a copy retained by the authorised officer.

If the movement is across district boundaries, the approval or permit may be given by either the authorised officer for the district of origin or destination, depending on where the sender or recipient of the stock applies, but each authorised officer should check with their counterpart in the other district to ensure they are aware of and concur with the movement and have not already rejected the application.

The permit may cover multiple movements to a specified location such as a saleyard or abattoir.

A special/crown brand or ear tag must/ may also be applied if unbranded pigs arrive at a saleyard or abattoir, although LLS may not allow pigs to be tagged at saleyards. Although use of a special/crown branding or NLIS post-breeder tagging allows the pigs to be sold or slaughtered it does not cancel out any breach of the NLIS Regulation (clause 18) and a breach investigation must be conducted.

2.2 Supply of special brands

A special brand or special NLIS post-breeder ear tag may be supplied by a district registrar, authorised officer or a person approved by the district registrar. The latter provision allows a special branding device to be supplied or lent to an authorised person such as a stock agent, saleyard operator, or abattoir operator.

The district registrar must keep track of the brand and put in place measures to ensure that it is only used on specified pigs, that the brand is returned or accounted for after each use, and that appropriate records of use are kept.

Special NLIS post-breeder pig ear tags must be printed with a serial number unique to each tag and either the:

- district code, or
- saleyard PIC (if being used in a saleyard) or
- abattoir PIC (if being used in an abattoir)

2.3 Records of permanent identifiers for pigs (special circumstances)

Records are essential for traceability. The record must be made and kept by whoever supplies the special/crown brand or special NLIS post-breeder tag, be it the district registrar, authorised officer or an approved supplier.

The record must contain the:

- full name and business or residential address of the person to whom the special brands were supplied
- full name and business or residential address of the owner of the pigs
- address and PIC of the property of origin of the pigs
- class and brief description of the pigs to be identified
- type and quantity of special/crown brands supplied
- reason for supply of special/crown brands (if used in saleyard or abattoir)
- identification code and serial number on each special brand or special NLIS post-breeder tag supplied,
- number of special identifiers (NLIS ear tags) supplied and
- date and place of supply of the special/crown brands or NLIS post-breeder tags.

The record must be made by close of business on the next working day following the supply of the special brands and kept for seven/three years, unless the special brand is for use at a saleyard or abattoir where the record must be retained for two years.

2.4 Application of special crown brands and special NLIS post-breeder tags

A special/crown brand may be applied by an authorised officer, district registrar, or a person approved by the district registrar. The latter provision allows a special/crown branding device to be supplied or lent to an approved person such as a stock agent, saleyard operator or abattoir operator. A special/crown brand must not be lent to a producer for their ongoing or frequent use.

The district registrar must keep track of the brand and put in place measures to ensure that it is only used on specified pigs, that the brand is returned or accounted for after each use, and that appropriate records of use are kept.

LLS may charge for special brands and approvals in accordance with the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

A special brand must be applied to the rump (as permitted by the Group Biosecurity Permit – Permanent Identifier for Pigs (Special Circumstances), rather than the shoulder, so that it does not obscure (or become obscured by) a brand applied on a property.

A carbon-based ink must be used. The size and specification and the characters that make up the special brand are prescribed in Appendix 1, Special or Crown brands for pigs, and the Group Biosecurity permit, Special identifier for Pigs at:

https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/723258/Group-Permit-Special-Identifier-for-Pigs.pdf

Special NLIS post-breeder ear tags may be applied by an authorised officer, district registrar, or a person approved by the district registrar e.g. at an abattoir, or the owner of the pigs prior to the pigs being moved..

The Permanent Identifier for Pigs (Special Circumstances) information is available at Appendix 1, and the Group Biosecurity Permit are published on the Biosecurity page of the NSW DPI website.

2.5 Obtaining a special brand or ear tag

Vaucluse Livestock Equipment (<http://www.vaucluse-aps.com.au/tattoo.htm>) can supply rotating numbers and replaceable letters.

Other suppliers include: bainbridgevet.com.au and stockbrands.com.au

Drovers A1 A-One Brands (<http://www.drovers.com.au/index.html>) can supply replaceable numbers and letters. A set of numbers would have to be carried by the authorised officer and changed manually.

Special NLIS post-breeder ear tags are supplied by an authorised officer, district register, or a person approved by the district registrar, and are available from tag manufacturers who sell NLIS accredited visual tags https://australianpork.com.au/sites/default/files/2021-07/Accredited-pig-devices-Feb-18-_0.pdf

2.6 Movement documents

An NLIS movement document in the form of a PigPass NVD must accompany pigs when they move the movement of all pigs to sale, slaughter or to another property. PigPass NVDs are available from the PigPass website. See <http://www.pigpass.com.au/>.

To complete a PigPass NVD, pig producers must first register with PigPass and then create a PigPass NVD online at no cost. Alternatively a PigPass NVD book may be purchased.

For assistance with PigPass NVDs contact the PigPass helpdesk on 1800 001 458 or helpdesk@pigpass.com.au

Definitions and acronyms:

List definitions and acronyms where appropriate

- **DPI:** Department of Primary Industries
- **LLS:** Local Land Services
- **NLIS:** The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Pigs is Australia's system for identifying and tracing pigs. It is a mob-based system that links pigs with the properties on which they have run.
- **NLIS database:** is a national database used by the livestock industry and governments to record, monitor and report on movements between PICs of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.
- **PigPass NVD:** The PigPass national vendor declaration that is approved by APL, being a form on which is recorded the prescribed information that must be provided when pigs arrive at a property, saleyard or abattoir, or any other place
- **PigPass:** A national database containing pig movements, from which all movement data is immediately transferred to the NLIS database.
- **PIC:** Property Identification Code

Documentation:

List associated policies, procedures and documentation where appropriate, must list the following

- Procedure - NLIS pigs
- Policy - Records Management (IND-I-177)
- Policy - Information Security (IND-I-197)
- Policy - Classified Information (IND-I-196)
- Policy -Government Information (Public Access) (IND-I-178)
- Policy – Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information
- Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information

Records:

- Not applicable

Revision history:

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	27 January 2017	e New procedure to replace the NLIS Circular 'Special (Crown) brands for pigs' in response to the Biosecurity NLIS Regulation 2017.	Systems, Intelligence and Traceability
1.1	June 2023	Minimal update to links and contact details, and minor content edits as part of Animal Biosecurity website uplift project	Animal Traceability and Biosecurity Programs team

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Biosecurity Intelligence Support

Phone 02 6391 3511

Email cass.blacklow@dpi.nsw.gov.au

DPI NLIS Helpline

Phone 1300 720 405

Email enquiries.nlis@dpi.nsw.gov.au

NSW DPI website: www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/nlis

NLIS and Integrity Systems Company (ISC) assistance and information

Phone 1800 683 111

Email info@integritysystems.com.au

ISC website: [Home | Integrity Systems](#)

NLIS website: www.nlis.com.au

Appendix 1 – Special or crown brands for pigs

Pursuant to clause 3 and 17(8)(a) and 17(10)(b) of the Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017, a permanent brand identifier for pigs that complies with the following specifications and identification particulars is a permanent identifier for pigs which can be applied to one or more sides of the rump of the pig by an authorised officer.

Specifications:

1. the brand contains 4 characters:
 - a. the 1st or 4th character being a Local Land Services region letter as specified in the table below,
 - b. the 2nd and 3rd characters being two numbers each between 1 and 5 inclusive , and
 - c. the 1st or 4th character being a number between 1 and 9 or a crown symbol ; and
2. each character on the brand is at least 20mm high; and
3. the spacing between each character is between 2 and 3mm; and
4. the brand is attached to the pig by applying a carbon based ink or paste brand to one or more sides of the rump of the pig so that the characters on the brand are impressed through the skin of the pig and can be easily read; and
5. the brand is applied to the pig when the pig:
 - a. is located at a saleyard to which the property identification code (or truncated version of that code) and the Local Land Services letter on the permanent identifier has been assigned; or
 - b. is located at an abattoir to which the property identification code (or truncated version of that code) and the Local Land Services region letter on the permanent identifier has been assigned; or
 - c. is being or was moved between properties and is currently on a property to which the property identification code (or truncated version of that code) and the Local Land Services region letter on the permanent identifier has been assigned

Local Land Services region	Letter
North West	N
Central West	W
Greater Sydney	C
Murray	H
Hunter	M
Northern Tablelands	E
North Coast	K
Riverina	R
South East	S
Central Tablelands	T
Western	V