

# Buying and selling pigs: NLIS Pigs

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## Introduction

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's permanent whole-of-life identification system which aims to ensure individual livestock animals can be traced from property of birth to slaughter for biosecurity, food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

The regulatory framework for NLIS in NSW is the [Biosecurity \(NLIS\) Regulation 2017](#) (the NLIS Regulation). The NLIS Regulation prescribes mandatory identification and traceability requirements for pigs in NSW including:

- Part 2 – Property Identification Codes
- Part 3 – Permanent identification of pigs
- Part 4 – Information requirements for stock transactions (Division 1)
  - Movement document (PigPass NVD)
  - Reporting pig movements (PigPass database)

The NLIS allows Governments to protect human health through livestock industries' provision of foods that are safe and free from contamination. Rapid identification and traceback in the event of an emergency disease or detection of chemical residues maintains consumer confidence and ensures timely return to normal operations along the supply chain.

## What does this mean for me?

**To sell pigs** either direct to an abattoir, through a saleyard, or direct to another producer you must:

- Have a property identification code or PIC
- Have a registered swine brand and/or NLIS accredited ear tags linked to your PIC
- Ensure all pigs are correctly identified with your registered swine brand or accredited NLIS ear tag
- Be registered for [PigPass](#)
- Correctly complete a movement document - PigPass National Vendor Declaration (NVD) to accompany the pigs
- Keep a record of the PigPass NVD for 3 years

**To purchase pigs**, you must:

- Have a property identification code or PIC
- Provide your PIC to the selling agent at a saleyard or selling pig owner
- Be registered with PigPass so you can record movements onto your property within 2 days
- Keep a record of the PigPass NVD for 3 years

### What is a PIC?

The property identification code is a 2-letter 6-number sequence that is linked to a property, for example NA471234. This code is unique to that property.

You must have a PIC if you keep one or more pigs on your property, even if they are pets.

Apply to your Local Land Services (LLS) to attain a PIC for your property.

### How do I correctly identify my pigs?

Pigs must be identified before they move from a property, to a saleyard, another property or to an abattoir.

Pigs that weigh 25kg or heavier must be identified with either a registered swine brand or an NLIS accredited ear tag that includes the PIC of the property they are leaving.

Pigs weighing less than 25kg must not be branded, instead they must only be identified with an accredited NLIS ear tag.

### Swine brands

A swine brand is a tattoo slap brand that consists of the 6 digits of the PIC and is applied to the shoulder of pigs weighing more than 25 kg on that property (Fig 1). For example, if the PIC is NA471234 the swine brand is 471234.

Application for a registered swine brand can be made through your LLS office.

As swine brands are linked to a PIC and therefore the property for which they are registered, they cannot be used on pigs originating from a different property.

Pigs weighing more than 25 kg should be branded on one shoulder using carbon-based ink or paste. If moved to a subsequent property to grow out, they may be branded on the other shoulder.

Pigs greater than 25 kg live weight may also be identified with an NLIS accredited ear tag if a brand is not available.

Pigs weighing less than 25 kg live weight must only be identified with an accredited NLIS ear tag. Pigs less than 25kg must not be branded in NSW.

The LLS can advise where to purchase swine brand or tattoo equipment.



**Fig 1.** Pig branded on the shoulder with the 6 digits of the PIC

### Branding and brand maintenance

To ensure clear, legible branding of pigs:

- Never use another owner's brand
- Ensure the brand is maintained in good operating condition; that is, the brand is clean, and needles are sharp and straight and not clogged with old ink or hair

- Use carbon-based branding ink or paste so the brand will still be readable after the pig is slaughtered and dehaired. Do not use boot polish, stock sprays or bale stencilling ink.
- Press the tattoo into an ink-impregnated pad to ensure needles are covered with ink.
- Strike the tattoo flat onto the pig's shoulder with enough force for skin penetration of all needles. Never strike the pig over the backbone.
- Re-ink the tattoo before branding each pig.
- If pigs are excessively dirty, wash the shoulder area before tattooing.
- Replace brands that are worn, broken or have damaged needles.
- Brand pigs on one or both shoulders within 7 days before leaving the property.

### Use of Crown Brands

If you don't have a brand, there are provisions for special or crown brands to be applied by LLS authorised officers. This brand is applied to pigs over 25 kg for a small fee if a brand for the property is not available. The crown brand is applied over the pig's rump.

Application may be made to your LLS to use a crown brand in special circumstances.

### NLIS accredited ear tags

NLIS accredited ear tags are either yellow or orange in colour and are printed with a property's unique PIC, the NLIS logo and a (P). These ear tags are used to permanently identify pigs less than 25 kg live-weight and may be used as an option for pigs greater than 25kg instead of branding.

**Breeder tags** are **yellow** (Fig 2) and must only be attached to pigs bred on the same property as the PIC on the ear tag. A pig must only have one breeder tag.



**Fig 2.** Yellow breeder NLIS ear tag

**Post-breeder tags** are **orange** (Fig 3) and are used on pigs that were either born on a different property or whose property of birth is unknown. The PIC on the tag must belong to the property on which the pigs are being tagged. More than one post breeder device may be attached to a pig, as a different tag is attached each time the pig moves from a different property (PIC).



**Fig 3.** Orange post-breeder NLIS ear tag

### Pig movement documents

The **PigPass National Vendor Declaration** (NVD) meets all NLIS requirements for movement documents and records for pigs. It also meets industry and processing standards for product integrity under the Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance Program (APIQ).

You can register with PigPass and obtain an NVD at [www.pigpass.com.au/register](http://www.pigpass.com.au/register).

The PigPass NVD must accompany pigs for all movements and be provided to the buyer or person receiving the pigs (where applicable) including:

- Movement to another property for normal management or after sale
- Movement to saleyards or abattoirs
- Movement to agricultural shows or to any other property for any other stock event purpose, even if ownership of the pigs doesn't change.

Information on the PigPass NVD must be accurate and complete and includes:

- The number and type of pigs being moved
- The date movement commenced
- The PIC of the property where the pigs were last held
- The brand or ear tags applied to the pigs
- The NVD unique serial number

It is an offence if any of this information is false or misleading, for example an incorrect PIC or brand.

Responsibility for the accuracy and completion of the PigPass NVD rests with the owner of the pigs.

A **Travelling Stock Statement** (TSS) may also be used as an NLIS movement document for movements between properties.

TSS' can be obtained from your regional LLS office.

## Recording pig movements

It is the responsibility of the person receiving the pigs onto their property to record the movement in the PigPass database within 2 days of the movement.

This includes pig owners, selling agents, saleyard operators, stock event operators (shows and other events) and abattoir operators.

Agents, saleyard and abattoir operators must keep records of movement documents for 3 years. Pig producers (vendors and purchasers) and stock event operators must keep records for 3 years.

## NLIS exemptions

### Australian Pork Industry Quality Assurance (APIQ) program

Pigs moved between PICs where there is no change of ownership (e.g. between breeder and grow-out units) do not need to be identified or accompanied by a PigPass NVD if:

- The properties are accredited in the APIQ program, and
- The movement is reported to the PigPass database within 2 days.

### Unweaned piglets

Unweaned piglets that are sold with their dam do not need to be tagged as long as:

- The piglets remain with their mother
- The numbers of sows and piglets are included on the PigPass NVD and
- A permit has been obtained from LLS to move the piglets without identification.

If the piglets are separated from the sow, they must be tagged with an NLIS accredited ear tag.

### Whole suckling pigs

Suckling pigs that move directly to an abattoir for market should be identified with an NLIS ear tag and be accompanied by a PigPass NVD.

### Penalties

Under the *Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017*, penalties can be applied if a person fails to properly identify pigs, provide a correctly completed movement document, or record the movement in the PigPass database within 2 days.

Meat inspectors at abattoirs may prevent slaughter or processing of any pigs which are not branded or are branded illegibly, or which are not accompanied by a completed PigPass or movement document.

It is an offence for an agent to sell pigs that are not identified, or for any person to buy pigs without a brand or NLIS ear tag. The owner of any pigs at a saleyard which are not correctly identified is guilty of an offence.

Not providing a PigPass or TSS is also an offence. The form must accompany all pigs when they are moved to any other property. An agent must only sell pigs if they are accompanied by a PigPass or TSS.

Producers, including vendors and purchasers, must keep a record of the movement document (PigPass or TSS) for three years. Agents as well as saleyard and abattoir operators must also keep a record of the movement document for three years.

### Where can I go for more information?

PigPass: 1800 001 458 (helpdesk), website: <http://www.pigpass.com.au>, or email: [helpdesk@pigpass.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@pigpass.com.au)

NLIS accredited pig devices: <https://pigpass.australianpork.com.au/faq>

PICs and swine brands  
Local Land Services: 1300 795 299  
<https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

Buying and selling pigs: NLIS Pigs replaces the following:

- Primefact #977 NLIS Pigs: selling pigs and
- Primefact #1098 NLIS Pigs: swine branding, ear tags and PigPass NVD.

Your Reference number (generally CM9)

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