

Biosecurity – National Livestock Identification System Supplying Approved Identifiers

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) underpins access of Australian livestock products to international markets. NLIS allows for traceability of livestock through a combination of permanent identifiers, movement documents and database records.

This procedure describes the minimum requirements for the supply of approved permanent identifiers as part of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) and under the Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017 (NLIS Regulation).

Who should read this?

- District registrars and authorised officers employed by Local Land Services (LLS)
- Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), who may be advising livestock producers or tag suppliers about how to obtain or supply NLIS devices and tags, and
- Manufacturers and suppliers of identifiers

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Scope:

This procedure applies to district registrars and authorised officers employed by Local Land Services (LLS) as indicated in the text of the document. It is also relevant to the Department of Primary Industries (NSW DPI), an office within the NSW Department of Regional NSW who may be advising livestock producers or tag suppliers about how to obtain or supply NLIS devices and tags. The procedure also provides good practice guidelines to manufacturers and suppliers of identifiers.

Management of the biosecurity risk

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the minimum requirements for the supply of approved permanent identifiers as part of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) and under the Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017 (NLIS Regulation).

NLIS allows for traceability of livestock which underpins access of Australian livestock products to international markets through a combination of permanent identifiers, movement documents and database records. Manufacturers and suppliers of permanent identifiers are responsible for

checking each order and ensuring that the details are correct. Records of supplied approved identifiers are essential for traceability.

Biosecurity legislation summary

The NLIS database holds information on livestock movements from birth to slaughter, to protect and enhance Australia's reputation as a producer of animal products that are free of chemical residues and exotic diseases.

NLIS devices with a Property Identification Code (PIC) are required to be attached to all livestock and all properties with livestock should have a PIC. In NSW the NLIS is supported by the Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017, which forms the regulatory framework for the system. The NLIS is endorsed and supported by all sectors of the cattle, sheep, goats and pig industries including producer, stock and station agent, saleyard, feedlot and processor peak industry bodies.

Any person who deals with cattle, sheep, goats and 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. This is called the general biosecurity duty, and it is met 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* (the Act).

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 Local Land Service (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.

NLIS Procedures for the Supply of Permanent Identifiers

1. Permanent Identifiers

Under the NLIS Regulation, an identifier means a tag, label, brand, mark, implant or other means of identification of stock.

Permanent identifiers as defined under the NLIS Regulation are a breeder or post breeder device that is fully or conditionally accredited by the NLIS administrator as a permanent identifier for the particular species of stock. Permanent identifiers are attached to stock on the property to which the property identification code (PIC) on the identifier is assigned, and includes:

- for cattle, electronic NLIS devices that are fully or conditionally accredited by ISC Ltd as a breeder tag or post breeder tag (ear tags and rumen devices)
- for sheep and goats, currently a visual NLIS tag that is fully or conditionally accredited by NLIS Ltd as a breeder tag or post breeder tag
- for pigs, a visual NLIS tag that is fully or conditionally accredited by NLIS Ltd as a breeder tag or post breeder tag, or a permanent brand identifier containing six numbers from the PIC of the property on which the brand is applied.

Anything that is designed to be attached to stock and which contains a PIC must meet the specifications for an approved permanent identifier and be used only in accordance with the NLIS Regulation.

2. Manufacture of permanent identifiers

Manufacturers of permanent identifiers are not approved under the NLIS Regulation. Permanent identifiers must conform with the relevant NLIS Device and Tag Standard and include the NLIS logo; they are approved and licensed by Integrity Systems Company Ltd.

3. Ordering permanent identifiers

Permanent identifiers may only be ordered by:

- a district registrar
- an authorised officer
- the owner or occupier of the property to which the PIC is assigned or an authorised agent of that person
- the owner or person in charge of stock (e.g. agistment) on the property to which the PIC is assigned.

Although a person with agisted stock on a property is legally entitled to purchase permanent identifiers for that property if they have been included as a contact or PIC manager by LLS for the PIC of the agistment property, it is preferable for the property owner/occupier to order the identifiers and then supply them to the stock owner under an agreed arrangement.

An owner may give written notice to LLS and NLIS advising that the person agisting stock has authority to trade using the property's PIC.

Orders for permanent identifiers may be placed either:

- directly with the manufacturer, or
- with a supplier or distributor such as a rural merchandiser.

3.1 Order forms for permanent identifiers

Order forms may be designed and supplied by manufacturers or suppliers to best meet their requirements but need to include the following information required under of NLIS Regulation:

- the date the identifier was ordered
- the number and type of identifiers to be supplied
- the identification code and provision for a start serial number of each identifier
- the full name and business or residential address of the person placing the order
- the full name and business or residential address of the owner of the stock for which each identifier was supplied and in respect of that stock:
 - the species of the stock
 - the PIC, and
 - the name and address of the property to which the PIC is assigned, and
- if the permanent identifier relates to a district code or to a PIC for a saleyard or abattoir – the reason why the identifier was ordered.

To **protect the supplier**, a privacy statement should also be included to the effect that "*The information collected on this form may be shared with Local Land Services, NSW Department of Primary Industries, Integrity Systems Company (ISC) Ltd and other persons for the purposes of the Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017*"

4. Supply of permanent identifiers

Identifiers **must** only be supplied for an active PIC and to a person who is entitled to order those identifiers. The manufacturer or supplier must check and confirm that each order meets the requirements and is legitimate. Manufacturers and suppliers are not expected to confirm the number and type of identifiers being ordered is appropriate.

Appendix 1 includes a checklist for the ordering and supply of permanent identifiers.

A 'legitimate' order includes:

- a valid PIC which passes the algorithm
- an active PIC (not one which is inactive, cancelled/disbanded or blocked)
- has been placed by a person who is entitled to order those identifiers .

Both the manufacturer and the supplier should keep written records for at least two years of these checks to provide evidence if required that they have taken appropriate steps to supply identifiers correctly.

5. LLS and permanent identifiers

An order for a permanent identifier may be referred by a manufacturer or supplier to an LLS for checking when the:

- information on the order does not match that recorded on the NLIS database PIC register, and
- PIC is not active according to that database.

On receipt of such a request, the district registrar or delegate must check the PIC, holding and customer details in FARMS in a timely manner. If the details on the order match those recorded in FARMS, the:

- supplier is advised that the PIC and applicant details are correct, and to proceed with the order, and
- PIC details on FARMS are refreshed to trigger an update to the NLIS database.

If any of the details on the order do not match those recorded in FARMS, the supplier is advised which details are incorrect, not to proceed with the order and are given advice on how the problem may be resolved.

If the number or type of identifiers being ordered appears to be excessive or incorrect, the district registrar may advise the applicant or supplier of this information, clarify how they intend to use the identifiers, and provide advice on the correct use of identifiers, but cannot delay or refuse to process an otherwise legitimate order.

Records of orders that have been processed by a LLS (either as a direct order or confirmed on behalf of a manufacturer or supplier) should be kept by that LLS for at least two years.

6. Permanent Identifiers (special or emergency tags)

Each LLS must ensure that they have arrangements in place for the supply of permanent identifiers, which are special or emergency identifiers, by authorising persons other than LLS staff at saleyards and abattoirs. A special/emergency permanent identifier indicates the stock identification district code of the saleyard or abattoir in which the animal was identified, but not the property of origin of the stock.

The use of special/emergency identifiers allows stock to be lawfully moved, sold or slaughtered but does not negate any breach of the NLIS Regulation that may have already been committed. Records are essential for traceability and may be kept in the form of an application for special identifiers or a movement document.

6.1 Types of special permanent identifiers

- special identifiers with the district code may be used in saleyards, abattoirs and on properties
- Special/emergency identifiers with a saleyard or abattoir PIC must only be used in that corresponding saleyard or abattoir.

Table 1: Types of Special Permanent Identifiers

	Cattle	Sheep and goats	Pigs
<i>Type of Identifier</i>	Orange post-breeder device	Pink post-breeder tag	‘Crown’ brand
<i>Identification code options</i>	District code, eg NA470000 Saleyard PIC, eg NB994701 Abattoir PIC, eg NC994711	District code Saleyard PIC Abattoir PIC	Four character code – see <i>NLIS Procedure – Permanent identifiers for pigs (special circumstances)</i> (INT17/80412)

6.2 When to use special permanent identifiers

Special/emergency identifiers may be used to identify stock if a permanent identifier:

- is not readily available

- cannot be safely attached to the stock
- if already attached to the stock – is unreadable or has ceased to work, or
- if previously attached to the stock – has been lost.

Situations where these conditions might arise include:

- an identifier has been lost in transit or while at a saleyard or abattoir
- an NLIS device has been damaged and cannot be read electronically
- the owner or person in charge of the stock is not readily able to obtain approved identifiers from the property owner or occupier (the stock have to be moved or sold quickly (eg. flood, fire) and before sufficient identifiers can be obtained and attached), or
- the stock owner has ordered but has not received sufficient identifiers in time.

6.3 Ordering special permanent identifiers

Special identifiers with a saleyard or abattoir PIC may only be ordered by:

- the district registrar
- an authorised officer for LLS for that district
- by the owner or occupier (person in charge) of the saleyard or abattoir if that person is authorised by the district registrar to supply special/emergency identifiers.

Special identifiers with a district code may only be ordered by:

- the district registrar
- an authorised officer for the LLS for that district.

Special/emergency Identifiers must not be ordered for an agent identification code.

6.4 Authorised persons to supply special permanent identifiers

The District Registrar may authorise saleyard operators, stock agents, abattoir operators or their employees or contractors to supply special/emergency identifiers.

District registrars are encouraged to authorise at least one person at each saleyard so LLS activities can be redirected from issuing tags to compliance.

A person must also be authorised on request at each abattoir as LLS are not expected to have authorised officers on site.

Application and authorisation must be in writing using the form available on the NSW DPI website and signed by the person being authorised to confirm that they understand the conditions and agree to comply with them.

The authorised person cannot delegate their function to another person. If a number of persons need to be authorised in order to provide continuous coverage, then each should apply for authorisation in their own right.

The district registrar may rescind an authorisation and should do so if an audit or other verifiable information indicates that the authorised person is not supplying the identifiers correctly or keeping the required records, or if special/emergency identifiers are being lost or misused.

6.5 Records of special permanent identifiers

The record must be made by close of business on the next working day following the supply of the identifier and be kept by whoever supplied the special identifier for a minimum of two years.

The record must contain the:

- full name and business or residential address of the person to whom the special identifiers were supplied
- full name and business or residential address of the owner of the stock
- address and property identification code (if known) of the property of origin of the stock
- species of the stock to be identified
- type and quantity of special identifiers supplied
- reason for supply of special identifiers
- identification code and serial number on each special identifier supplied, and
- date and place of supply of the special identifiers.

The record may be:

- a copy of the LLS 'Application for authorisation to supply certain permanent identifiers at saleyards and abattoirs' form
- a copy of the approved movement document (National Vendor Declaration (NVD), PigPass or Transported Stock Statement (TSS)), with the reason for supply written on the copy
- the data uploaded to the NLIS database, provided it includes a 'From PIC'
- or any other form or method specified by or acceptable to the district registrar.

The district registrar may require the record of special/emergency identifiers supplied by an authorised person to be provided to the district registrar within a designated timeframe, e.g., 7 days, to speed up traceability if required and assist with compliance monitoring.

6.6 Attaching special permanent identifiers

The person to whom the special/emergency identifier is supplied is responsible for ensuring that it is attached without delay to the correct stock and in accordance with any directions given. The person attaching the identifier may be:

- the owner or person in charge of the stock
- a stock agent
- an employee or contractor of the saleyard, agent or abattoir.

If the stock are cattle for imminent slaughter, the identifier need not be physically attached but the NLIS or RFID number must be linked to the carcass and uploaded to the NLIS database with all other prescribed information.

7. Reuse and recycling of approved identifiers

Approved identifiers cannot be recycled or reused. Identifiers that were previously attached to slaughtered stock must be disposed of in an approved manner that ensures the identifier is unable to be used or attached to identifiable stock.

8. Offences for incorrect supply and use of identifiers

- a person must not order an approved permanent identifier unless they are entitled to do so
- a person must not sell or supply an approved permanent identifier unless the order has been made by a person who is entitled to do so

- a person must not sell or supply an approved permanent identifier unless the identifier refers or relates to an active PIC
- a person who is supplied with a special permanent identifier relating to a District Code, Abattoir PIC or Saleyard PIC must not use the permanent identifier contrary to the directions of the supplier
- a person must not, knowing that it is or may be intended to be attached to any stock, make, sell, supply or use any thing that is not, but could reasonably be mistaken for, an approved permanent identifier. This offence includes supplying permanent identifiers with an incorrect or misprinted PIC, supplying a permanent identifier that does not conform with approved specifications, or writing a PIC on a blank or existing management tag
- A manufacturer of NLIS devices for cattle must upload the NLIS device and RFID numbers and date of supply to the NLIS database by the close of business on the next working day after selling or supplying the permanent identifiers.

Definitions and acronyms:

- **DPI:** Department of Primary Industries
- **District code:** An identification code assigned to a stock identification district
- **ISC:** Integrity Systems Company Ltd (formerly NLIS Ltd)
- **LLS:** Local Land Services
- **NLIS:** National Livestock Identification System
- **NLIS database:** The national database which is used to record livestock movements and is managed by ISC Ltd (formerly NLIS Ltd). Under the NLIS Regulation, the authorised administrator is ISC Ltd (formerly NLIS Ltd) and the permanent identification register is the NLIS register.
- **NVD:** National vendor declaration (including PigPass)
- **PIC:** Property identification code
- **Property:** An area of land (including an area comprising one or more parcels of land that are proximate) that is worked as a single property. A property has a PIC.
- **RFID:** Radio frequency identification device
- **TSS:** Transported stock statement

Documentation:

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017
- Policy – Biosecurity Collection, use and disclosure of information
- 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
- Procedure – Biosecurity Collection, use and disclosure of information

Revision history:

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	01 July 2017	Substantially updated to align with Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation	Systems, Intelligence and Traceability
1.1	April 2023	Review and update as part of the DPI website uplift project	Animal Biosecurity, Traceability team

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Appendix 1 – Check list for ordering/supply of permanent identifiers

1. 'Search the PIC register' function on the NLIS database via an 'Agent', 'Tag manufacturer' or 'Third-party' NLIS database account.
2. Check the property name and address and PIC owner is the same as the order form.
3. If the PIC is registered in multiple names (e.g., A & B Smith), then one party (e.g., A Smith) may order tags. However, if C Smith places the order, then further confirmation is required.
4. If the PIC is inactive or can't be found on the NLIS database, or is assigned to a different property or person to that specified in the order, the supplier must confirm the correct information before processing the order by;
 - a. obtaining a written statement from the owner or occupier of the property in whose name the PIC is registered that the person placing the order is authorised by them to do so; or
 - b. confirming that the person placing the order has a lawful interest in the property from agency account records, copy of lease agreement, or other verifiable sources; or
 - c. suggesting the person to whom the PIC is registered orders the tags and then supplies the tags to the stock owner (agistee); or
 - d. obtaining a statutory declaration that the person placing the order has stock on that property or is otherwise a lawful occupier of that property; or
 - e. contacting the relevant LLS - this must always be done if the PIC is Inactive.
5. Once the order is approved, advise your clients:
 - a. Which types of tags they should use on their stock (eg breeder, post-breeder)
 - b. How to attach the tags correctly and securely
 - c. To only attach tags to stock on the property printed with that PIC
 - d. stock born on agistment must be identified with tags printed with the agistment property PIC
 - e. To preferably use the correct year of birth colour for visual sheep breeder tags
 - f. To contact their Local Land Services for further advice
6. When the tags are delivered, advise your clients to:
 - a. Check that the PIC and tag colour are correct
 - b. Contact the supplier immediately if there are any problems before attaching the tags