

National Livestock Identification System Compliance Monitoring

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Authorised by:	Director, Animal Biosecurity Director Compliance Executive Director, Regional Operations (LLS)	Authorised date:	November 2024
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Scope

This procedure applies to the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) for cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs. It highlights the responsibilities of the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Biosecurity and Food Safety (BFS), Local Land Services (LLS), District Registrars, NSW livestock owners and other members of the red meat supply chain. DPIRD BFS and each LLS region may undertake additional activities in response to changing priorities and if resources are available.

This procedure applies to all DPIRD BFS and LLS staff as authorised officers enforcing the *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) and District Registrars under the *Biosecurity (NLIS) Regulation 2017* (the NLIS Regulation).

This procedure describes the requirements for monitoring the NLIS in NSW, consistent with national requirements. It encourages industry to improve the lifetime traceability of cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs.

This procedure does not comprehensively describe the investigative and enforcement actions to consider when offences are detected. Compliance policies, procedures, and work instructions should be consulted, and responses applied consistently.

This procedure does not apply to the property identification code (PIC) requirements for horses and poultry or the use of transported stock statements.

Biosecurity legislation summary

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* (the Act) promotes biosecurity as a shared responsibility between government, industry, and communities. Under the Act, all members of the NSW community have a general biosecurity duty to prevent, eliminate, or minimise a biosecurity risk as reasonably practicable.

The *Biosecurity (NLIS) Amendment (Electronic Devices) Regulation 2024* supports the transition from the current ‘mob-based’ traceability system for sheep and goats, to one

where sheep and goats are identified using electronic identification devices (eID) and each individuals' movements are recorded. This Regulation commenced on 30 June 2024 and supports the phased implementation of eID for sheep and goats.

Work health and safety

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* obligates the agency (NSW DPIRD and LLS), 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 to identify, assess, and control risks.

NSW DPIRD and LLS will collaborate to create a safe and supportive work environment when undertaking activities related to this procedure.

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

NLIS overview

The NLIS underpins Australia's livestock products' access to international markets. It allows for livestock traceability through permanent identifier devices, movement documents, and database records. The NLIS aims to ensure cattle (including bison and buffalo) and sheep, goats, and pigs can be traced from their property of birth to slaughter for biosecurity, food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

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 free of chemical residues and exotic diseases.

Traceability is provided by the combination of four elements – Property Identification Codes (PIC), approved permanent identifiers, NLIS movement documents and records of livestock movements uploaded to the NLIS database:

- PICs identify specific areas of land where livestock reside
- NLIS approved permanent identifiers, link an animal to a PIC. For breeder devices the PIC on the identifier show the property where the cattle, sheep or goats were born. For pink post breeder devices, the PIC shows the property on which the cattle, sheep or goats reside at the time of identification
- NLIS movement documents contain information provided in an approved form when the livestock are moved. Part of this prescribed information (delivery information) is the PIC of the last property of residence that the cattle, sheep, goats or pigs have moved from
- mob-based and individual livestock (from 1 January 2025) movement recording on the NLIS database provides a readily accessible record of movements over time, supported by scanned images of National Vendor Declarations and Waybills (NVDs).

The Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program, run by Integrity Systems Company (ISC) Limited, is a voluntary program that includes property audits of conformance with LPA rules. Under this program, NLIS records and recording of movements onto a PIC are subject to auditing.

Regulatory Capture

Regulatory capture can be defined as a situation where an officer finds themselves so closely tied to a person, business, sector, or even a community that they cannot apply the rules consistently and make decisions based on what the person or company wants, so the officer can maintain the relationship. Officers may have yet to experience regulatory capture, but they must be aware of the potential for it to occur.

DPIRD BFS and LLS promote and facilitate more robust primary production across NSW, and staff regularly engage with livestock owners, saleyard operators and staff, transporters, agricultural shows and livestock sporting event committees. As a result of regular contact, many industry members and stakeholders have become well-known to DPIRD BFS and LLS staff. Authorised officers must apply the Act and the NLIS Regulation objectively during compliance interactions.

Officers should always:

- be objective, fair and impartial
 - act within their authority and
 - conduct their enquiries respectfully.
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Roles and responsibilities

Local Land Services

LLS works with DPIRD BFS to monitor NLIS performance and encourage continual improvement in all red meat supply chain sectors.

LLS is primarily responsible for monitoring NLIS requirements in sale yards, on properties, travelling stock reserves (TSR), stock watering places (SWP), and at livestock events. They also play an important role in providing advisory and extension services on NLIS and PIC requirements.

Saleyards: LLS authorised officers monitor and record NLIS compliance at public livestock sales, focusing on higher-risk sale yards based on a regional risk assessment and NLIS reports provided by DPIRD BFS.

On-property sales: LLS authorised officers advise vendors and livestock agents on operating on-property sales, ensuring that NLIS requirements are met.

Property to Property (P2P) Project: LLS assists DPIRD BFS compliance with an ongoing P2P project by advising producers on their NLIS responsibilities when buying livestock privately or via an online auction or sale site.

TSRs: LLS monitor and manage the movement of livestock onto and off TSRs within their regions, ensuring that NLIS requirements are met, and biosecurity risks are minimised.

Agricultural shows and livestock Events: LLS assists agricultural shows, rodeo, and camp draft committees in meeting their NLIS requirements.

Reporting: LLS are responsible for ensuring all compliance and animal health activities are recorded in the Livestock Health Management System (LHMS).

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DPIRD BFS leads and communicates NLIS policy in NSW and monitors compliance with the NLIS in the processing sectors in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

DPIRD BFS Animal Biosecurity

- Leads, manages, communicates, and advises on NLIS legislation, policy and procedure. Develops NLIS related collateral including eLearning modules for use by LLS and DPIRD staff.
- Keeps senior managers, the Deputy Secretary and the Minister informed of NLIS policy and other issues.
- Monitors NLIS performance across the supply chain and provides NLIS reports regularly to LLS and DPIRD BFS compliance team to assist with risk-based operations.
- Provides individual customised NLIS performance reports each quarter to saleyards, abattoirs, knackery operators, and livestock agents for their information and action.
- Liaises with and reports on NLIS performance to national NLIS industry/government committees, such as the SAFMEAT Jurisdictional Traceability Group and Advisory Group, which represent the views of DPIRD and LLS, as agreed through the NLIS Working Group.
- Conducts various NLIS committees, including the NLIS Working Group (DPIRD BFS and LLS members) and the NLIS Advisory Committee (DPIRD BFS, LLS, NSW Police, Industry peak councils, and ISC Ltd are members). NLIS performance and compliance is a standing agenda item. The NLIS Working Group reports to the Strategic Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Alliance (SABWA) each quarter.
- Represents NSW on the Database Development and Review Committee (DDRC), run by ISC Ltd, whose members comprise other states and territories.
- Manages the NSW NLIS Livestock Traceability email inbox and works with LLS to resolve NLIS and PIC warnings and error messages.
- Provides policy and database user advisory services to supply chain users, DPIRD BFS Compliance team and LLS.

DPIRD BFS Compliance

- Develops and implements specific compliance policies, procedures and work instructions.
- Provides support to LLS on operational processes of monitoring and compliance activities.
- Monitors NLIS compliance at abattoirs, livestock events, goat depots and includes stock and station agents where appropriate.
- Conducts targeted audits, inspections and operations with LLS to address specific compliance risks associated with NLIS offending.
- Conducts risk-based audits of goat depots.

- Monitors NLIS PIC movements and NVD records of goat depots.
 - Monitors non-approved goat depot trading where relevant.
 - Investigates misuse of the Harvested Rangeland Goat device-free movement pathway.
 - Initiates and leads NLIS related investigations where appropriate.
 - Assists LLS authorised officers with investigations and prosecution action.
 - Develops and delivers training to improve staff capacity to detect, investigate and take appropriate action for NLIS offences.
 - Records compliance activities and reports on compliance and enforcement outcomes from NLIS activities.
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Monitoring Activities

Monitoring activities undertaken by DPIRD BFS and LLS aim to increase voluntary compliance with NLIS rules and achieve a high level of livestock traceability across NSW through active engagement and appropriate compliance action. Monitoring also provides an opportunity to give immediate advice to an offender, encouraging future compliance and creating deterrence against reoffending.

Monitoring includes routine checks and audits, extension and advisory activities, directing individuals to take corrective action to address minor offenses, and detecting and investigating serious offenses. Monitoring should also occur during routine disease and residue monitoring and control activities.

Advisory and extension activities include general or targeted promotion and publicity such as media releases, posters, brochures and newsletters, and detailed NLIS information published on the DPIRD website. Information in person is also provided at offices, over the phone or written correspondence at sale yards, agricultural shows, livestock events and field days.

Priority for monitoring is given to those sectors and activities presenting the highest biosecurity and market risks.

Monitoring NLIS requirements in northern NSW should be conducted simultaneously with cattle tick surveillance. For more information, see the cattle tick procedure.

The following guidance is provided for monitoring NLIS requirements.

Supply Chain

Unidentified livestock cannot be sold, including for slaughter, anywhere in NSW. An emergency identifier device (post-breeder device issued at a saleyard or abattoir) must be attached in the approved manner before the livestock leaves the premises where the unidentified livestock are located.

Saleyards and abattoirs should only use emergency identifiers issued by LLS. Emergency identifiers are only issued as needed to cover the number of livestock requiring immediate identification. LLS may approve a saleyard operator or abattoir operator as an approved supplier of emergency identifiers.

When an officer finds unidentified livestock, the officer should resolve the immediate identification issue by directing the person in charge of the livestock to apply the relevant identifiers (or apply themselves if appropriate) and encourage future voluntary compliance.

Saleyards

Authorised officers should regularly monitor sales where NLIS reporting suggests vendors, agents, buyers, and saleyard operators have failed to follow, implement, or direct NLIS requirements.

The lowest ranked saleyards highlighted in the quarterly NLIS dashboard reports should be regularly monitored to ensure that NLIS requirements are met.

The NLIS database should be checked to assess if known or irregular sales at smaller saleyards resulted in uploads to the NLIS database.

Where minor discrepancies are found, officers should address these directly with the responsible vendor, agent or sale yard manager to achieve prompt corrective action.

Detailed [guidelines](#) for sheep and goat saleyard operators and stock agents are available.

Pigs should only be sold if they display a swine brand (the actual number comprising the code can be difficult to read on a live pig) or an approved NLIS ear tag. Pigs under 25kg are not branded, and a breeder or post-breeder identifier must be applied before the pig is sent for sale.

Property to property movements (P2P)

P2P individual livestock movements that have not been recorded can be monitored to some extent. The number of automated system transfers are in the NLIS monthly reports Internal P2P Monitoring Report and NLIS System Transfers Statistics Report on the NLIS Compliance dashboard. The sheep and goat mob-based system does not trigger system transfers on the NLIS database. Information provided by producers may be a source of intelligence.

Where a movement must be recorded on the NLIS database;

- Cattle must be electronically identified and must have an individual animal movement uploaded to the database
- from 1 January 2025, any electronically identified sheep or goat must have an individual animal movement uploaded to the database. Any sheep or goat identified with visual tags must have a mob-based movement upload, and
- from 1 January 2027, all sheep and goats must be electronically identified and must have an individual animal movement uploaded to the database.
- Pigs will continue to require a mob-based movement upload

Priority should be given to higher-risk aggregations and movements involving feedlots, saleyards and larger properties, often identified in the NLIS monthly reports.

Specific issues regularly identified include:

- the correct completion of NVDs (or other movement documents) with other PICs recorded,
- post-breeder identifiers being attached to sheep with visual tags when sold,

- vendors providing and purchasers retaining NVD records for all livestock movements,
- all movements to and from goat depots and the correct use of the device-free movement pathway for Harvested Rangeland Goats.

For a description of the minimum requirements for the identification and movement of sheep and goats under the Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification System) Regulation 2017, see the NLIS Sheep and Goat procedure.

Goat Depots

A list of approved goat depots, established using the [NLIS Industry Standards for Operating a Goat Depot and User Manual](#), is available from the DPIRD BFS Licensing Team on 1800 680 244.

Online Sales

Online cattle, pig, sheep, and goat sales are conducted through auction facilitators such as Auctions-Plus, Elite Livestock, and other sites, including Gumtree and Facebook. Some sites advise that it is the purchasers' responsibility to comply with NLIS requirements. Many purchases do not complete the NLIS transfer for the livestock they move onto their properties. The NLIS Compliance Dashboard Reports flag PICs that may have been party to an online sale for follow-up.

Agricultural shows and livestock events

Agricultural shows and livestock event organisers must record livestock attendance at shows and livestock events in the NLIS database within two days of the show/event occurring.

Livestock movements must be recorded on the NLIS database using one of two methods, depending on the circumstances:

- **Property-to-Property (P2P) Transfers:** This method is preferred for recording livestock and is required if the livestock are **moving to an abattoir or another property after the event**. Two P2P transfers must be recorded:
 1. from the property of origin to the showground/event PIC and
 2. from the showground/event PIC to the original or new PIC.

The show or event organiser is responsible for ensuring both P2P transfers are uploaded to the NLIS database.

- **'Sighted Livestock':** this method can only be used when livestock are individually electronically identified and have been on the show/event location for **less than three days**.
 - Previously only used for cattle
 - It will be available for sheep and goats from 1 January 2025 under the transition to electronic identification.
 - It is not available for pigs.

Follow up of NLIS reporting requirements for shows and livestock events should be based on the risk presented to the local region. Higher-risk movements include livestock (especially mixed species) at risk of intermingling with other livestock originating from outside the region.

Abattoirs and knackeries

Unidentified livestock cannot be purchased or slaughtered by any abattoir or knackery.

Further information for the requirements for abattoirs and knackeries is available on the [NLIS Cattle](#), [NLIS Pigs](#), [NLIS Sheep and Goats](#) and [Individual Electronic Identification for processors](#) pages.

NLIS database error and warning messages

The NLIS database generates error and warning email notifications to inform stakeholders of discrepancies or issues related to livestock movements, property and device statuses and other data records. These notifications are crucial for maintaining accurate traceability and ensuring compliance with biosecurity regulations. DPIRD BFS manages database errors and warnings and liaises with LLS and the supply chain to correct database entries. For more information, see the NLIS Procedure [Stock Identification – Managing statuses, errors and data transfers on the NLIS database](#).

Reporting

Reporting is an essential component of NLIS monitoring. Data obtained through monitoring is used by:

Local Land Services

- to identify trends in their region
- to respond to problems at specific sale yards, which might require intervention
- to ensure staff apply this procedure and any resulting compliance action consistently
- determine the appropriate allocation of resources.

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- to detect problems at specific sale yards or abattoirs which might require intervention
 - to monitor state-wide NLIS trends to determine if any changes to legislation, policies or procedures are needed
 - to fulfil reporting obligations to state and national NLIS committees.
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Compliance action

All compliance actions must follow the relevant agency prosecution Guidelines, Compliance and Enforcement Policies, and specific directions or work instructions. Officers must ensure

timely compliance actions are applied consistently across the state. If an LLS officer cannot resolve an offence or the offending continues, they can discuss a resolution with DPIRD BFS compliance team using the regulatory support arrangements.

Offences are generally investigated by the authorised officer who detects the offence. An officer may request the assistance of another experienced officer from LLS or DPIRD BFS compliance team to provide guidance and mentoring or where the direct involvement of the experienced officer is needed.

To maintain a superior level of industry and community confidence, investigations into serious NLIS offences will be managed by DPIRD BFS compliance team (nominally, the Compliance Investigations Unit (CIU)). Investigations may be jointly undertaken where LLS officers request assistance to ensure procedural fairness and natural justice for the alleged offenders.

Staff can use various guidance materials and templates to undertake compliance actions for NLIS offences.

Definitions

- **Advisory and extension activities:** Activities designed to heighten awareness, acceptance and understanding or to impart knowledge and skills
- **Approved Permanent identifier:** For sheep and goats - an approved permanent identifier is either a visual NLIS tag or an electronic identification device (ear tag or goat leg band). All sheep and goats born after the 1st January 2025 must be identified with an NLIS approved electronic identification device. For cattle - an approved permanent identifier is an electronic identification device.
- **Audit:** Formal, pre-arranged and systematic measure of conformance with a standard (such as legislation)
- **BFS:** Biosecurity and Food Safety Division
- **BFS Compliance:** Compliance Investigations Unit (CIU)
- **Compliance action:** A range of responses to alleged offending, including but not limited to advisory letters, warning letters, penalty notices, biosecurity directions and prosecution
- **Compliance monitoring:** A range of activities designed to enhance compliance with legislation. Includes advisory and extension activities, monitoring, checks, audits and inspections.
- **DPIRD:** Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
- **Emergency identifier:** means a post breeder device detailing the saleyard or abattoir PIC, applied to unidentified livestock at a saleyard or abattoir.
- **ISC:** Integrity Systems Company Limited. The administrator of the NLIS
- **LHMS:** Livestock Health Management System
- **LLS:** Local Land Services
- **NLIS:** National Livestock Identification System
- **Officer:** a DPIRD BFS or LLS staff member authorised to enforce the Biosecurity Act 2015.

- **P2P:** Property to property
 - **PIC:** Property Identification Code
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Legislation

- Biosecurity Act 2015
 - Biosecurity (National Livestock Identification Scheme) Regulation 2017
 - Biosecurity Regulation 2017
 - Biosecurity Order (Permitted Activities) 2019
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Documentation

- Policy - Biosecurity and Food Safety Compliance and Enforcement Policy
 - Policy - Biosecurity and Food Safety Compliance Prosecution Guidelines
 - Policy - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information
 - Procedure - Biosecurity collection, use and disclosure of information
 - Procedure - Cattle tick
 - Procedure - Stock identification – Managing statuses, errors and data transfers on the NLIS database
 - Procedure – NLIS livestock movements for NSW Agricultural Shows and Events
 - Guidance - NLIS Industry Standards for Operating a Goat Depot and User Manual
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Delegations

- The following delegations are in effect and directly impact the operation of the NLIS:
 - Biosecurity Instrument of Authorisation (Minister) 2021
 - Biosecurity Instrument of Delegation (Secretary) 2021
- Staff must be familiar with the delegations and ensure their application to relevant operational activities.

Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1.0	20 August 2018	New procedure to support the Biosecurity Act 2015	Director, BFS Compliance
2.0	30 May 2022	Updated to reflect risk based, outcome focused approach to monitoring NLIS requirements	Group Director, Animal Biosecurity Director, Compliance & Integrity Systems Executive Director, Regional Operations (LLS)
3.0	April 2023	Put onto new template	Manager Traceability
3.0	December 2024	Update to reflect mandatory requirements for Sheep and Goat eID transition period	Director Animal Biosecurity

Contact

For NLIS policy, procedure, legislation and database enquiries:

DPIRD Livestock Traceability, phone 1300 720 405 or email:

livestock.traceability@dpird.nsw.gov.au

For general biosecurity matters:

animal.biosecurity@dpird.nsw.gov.au

General biosecurity, invasive plants and animal enquiries: 1800 680 244

Emergency Animal Disease hotline: 1800 675 888

For Local Land Services enquiries 1300 795 299

www.lls.nsw.gov.au