

Livestock Compliant ID Guide

This guide explains both official and unofficial ways to identify livestock animals. It is designed to help veterinarians, exhibitors, and animal owners understand and follow both federal and Maine rules. By using the correct identification, we can protect animal health, support disease control, and keep animal movement safe within Maine and across state lines.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has national rules for animal identification in **Title 9, Part 86 of the Code of Federal Regulations**. These rules explain how animals must be identified when they move between states or go to shows and events, as well as support animal disease traceability across the country.

In Maine, animal identification is also required under **Chapter 206 rules from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**. These rules help prevent and control disease in animals moving into, out of, and within the state.

There are two main types of animal identification: official and unofficial.

Official identification is approved by the USDA and is required for the movement of cattle, sheep, goats, swine, and other species across state lines. Official ID is required in Maine for all sheep, goats, swine, and cattle to move off the farm, even if traveling directly to slaughter. These methods include things like official ear tags, electronic ID tags, and tattoos. Official ID must be approved by the USDA, guaranteeing it is unique to each animal so it can be tracked if needed. **Remember, it is illegal to tamper with or remove an animal's official ID once it has been applied.**

Unofficial identification includes other ways to recognize an animal. This can include names, photos, color patterns, or farm ID tags. These methods can be helpful, but they do not replace official ID when it is required by law.

This guide explains both official and unofficial ways to identify animals. It is designed to help veterinarians, exhibitors, and animal owners understand the rules and use them correctly. By following these guidelines, we can help protect animal health, support safe animal movement across the country, and fight against the spread of animal diseases.

Title 9, Part 86 of the Code of Federal Regulations



USDA Official Eartags – Criteria and Options



Maine Chapter 206 Animal Importation Requirements



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Livestock Compliant ID Guide Resources

More Resources can be viewed and downloaded from the State of Maine Animal Health website.

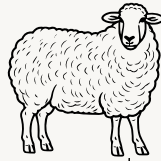
Maine Animal Disease Traceability: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/adt/index.shtml

Resources by Species: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/resource-library.shtml

Maine Animal Health at Maine Fairs: https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/fair.shtml

Heading out of state and not sure of the livestock official ID requirements for livestock to travel to your destination state? Visit www.interstatelivestock.com to use the interactive search engine to find out or contact the destination state's Animal Health office.

ID Requirements for International Livestock Travel? Visit the USDA Live Animal Exports website, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/live-animal-export>



Learn more about
USDA Sheep
Identification by
scanning the QR
code

Sheep Compliant ID Guide

Official ID Option: Official Scrapie Ear Tags



- Most common form of visual Official ID for sheep.
- Usually white, but can be ordered privately in different colors and customized with your farm name.
- No microchip in this type of tag. Not scannable.
- No other ID needed, just this tag
- Maine has FREE standard white scrapie tags available.

Official ID Option: Shearwell or Button Data 840 Visual Ear Tag



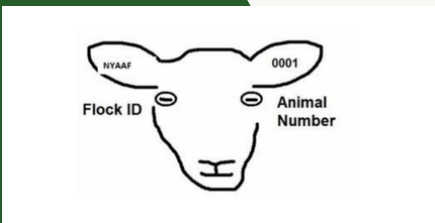
- A style of Official Scrapie Tag with the added benefit of being able to scan the chip inside the tag for easy ID and record keeping.
- Can be used instead of an official scrapie tag (above).
- No other ID needed, just this tag
- Get FREE Shearwell tags from Maine DACF's Animal Health Program office.

Official ID Option: 840 Microchip (Non-Visual Implant)



- Implant placement is between the skin and cartilage of the backside of the ear, near where the ear joins the head or between the skin and bones of the tail near the tail base. Animals must be tattooed with a legible "E" if the implant is at the base of the ear or "ET" if the implant is in the tail fold if a scrapie tattoo or breed registration tattoo is not in place.
- All chip numbers start with 840 and must be printed on the registration papers if there is no readable tattoo in place.
- Require a chip reader in order to scan and read the ID.
- Chips must be custom-ordered. Your USDA Scrapie Flock ID number is embedded in every chip you ordered for compliant ID.
- Not recommended for exhibition or slaughter destination sheep
- Not universally accepted by all states in food producing animals

Unofficial ID Option: Scrapie Tattoo

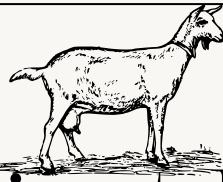


- Not required, but can be used for animals moving directly to slaughter
- In Maine, tattoos may be used to identify animals in addition to a USDA-compliant visual permanent official ID for exhibition movement purposes.
- Scrapie tattoos must be registered with USDA APHIS National Scrapie Program, easily readable, and unaltered for animals to move directly to slaughter only across state lines.

Blue Slaughter Only / MEAT Tags



Remember, sheep need to have official ID applied before the animal may be sold or leave the farm. Blue slaughter-only tags and back tags are for animals moving directly to slaughter.



Scan the QR Code
to view the USDA
Goat ID Guide

Goat Compliant ID Guide

Official ID Option: Official Scrapie Ear Tags



- The most common form of visual Official ID for goats.
- Usually white, but can be ordered privately in different colors & customized with your farm name.
- No microchip in this type of tag. Not scannable.
- No other ID needed, just this tag
- Maine has FREE standard white scrapie tags available.

Official ID Option: Shearwell Data 840 Visual Ear Tag



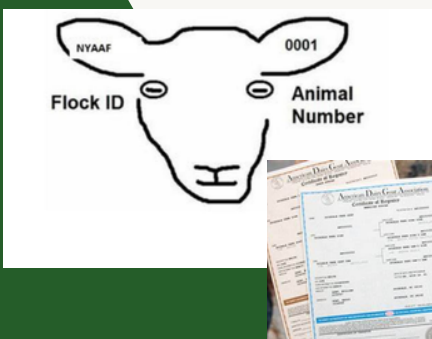
- A style of Official Scrapie Tag with the added benefit of being able to scan the chip inside the tag for easy ID and record keeping.
- Can be used instead of an official scrapie tag (above). No other ID needed, just this tag
- Get Shearwell tags FREE from Maine DACF's Animal Health Program office.

Official ID Option: 840 Microchip Non-Visual Implant

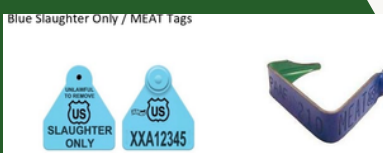


- Implant placement is between the skin and cartilage of the backside of the ear, near where the ear joins the head or between the skin and bones of the tail near the tail base. Animals must be tattooed with a legible "E" if the implant is at the base of the ear or "ET" if the implant is in the tail fold if a scrapie tattoo or breed registration tattoo is not in place.
- All chip numbers start with 840 and must be printed on the registration papers if there is no readable tattoo in place.
- Require a chip reader in order to scan and read the ID.
- These must be custom-ordered. Your USDA Scrapie Flock ID number is embedded in every chip you ordered for compliant ID.
- Not universally accepted by all states in food producing animals

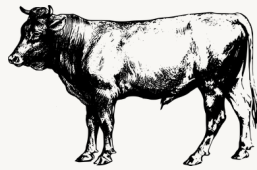
Official ID Option: Legible Tattoos & Matching Registration Papers



- Tattoos must be registered with the National Scrapie Program in addition to the issuing registry to be considered official in Maine.
- Tattoos must be easily readable, free of evidence of alteration, and the tattoo digits must only be used for that animal (unique)
- The registration papers must match the animal and list the tattoo sequence and location of the tattoo on the animal.
- Photocopies of registration papers are not accepted as proof of official identification. Original registration papers must accompany the animal during travel.



Remember, goats need to have an official ID applied before the animal may be sold or leave the farm. Blue tags and back tags are for animals moving directly to slaughter only!



Scan the QR code
to view the USDA
cattle ID guide.

Cattle Compliant ID Guide



Official ID Option: Official RFID Button Tags

- Most common form of visual Official ID.
- Usually yellow or white but can be ordered in a variety of custom colors from manufacturers.
- Orange button tags are reserved for Brucellosis vaccinated animals. Animals with orange tags have been vaccinated against Brucellosis.
- Official Canadian ID, starts with 124, maple leaf marking



Official ID Option: Official RFID Button Back Hanging Tag

- A style of Official visual RFID tag with large visible hanging front tag face to capture more information that is readable chute side
- These are popular choices among breed registry tagging systems.
- Highly customizable
- Has official US Shield on the tag to indicate this is an official form of Identification.



HISTORICAL Official ID Option: Farm Tag

- **Only accepted in cattle born prior to November 5, 2024**
- No longer manufactured for cattle.
- If the tag is orange, this indicates Brucellosis vaccination
- This ID type will have a USDA shield imprinted in the tag, this is an easy way to tell the tag is official ID.
- **NOT** accepted as official ID in cattle born after November 5, 2024.



Unofficial ID Option: Farm Tag or Tattoo

- Must be used with an Official RFID Tag in place.
- NOT OFFICIAL ID
- Custom colors and information can be put on the tag
- This ID type will not have a USDA shield printed on the tag, this is an easy way to tell the tag is not considered official ID.
- NOT REQUIRED



Remember, back tags are only for animals moving directly to slaughter. All cattle sold or moving for any other reason must have a form of official ID in place.

Step 1: Premise ID

Visit https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ahw/animal_health/adet/index.shtml or scan the QR code to the right to apply for a premise ID. Once you have your premise ID, you can order tags or request free tag options from the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Animal Health Program Animal Disease Traceability technician.



Step 2: Order Tags for... Sheep & Goats

- Register your flock/herd with the National Scrapie Program to obtain a flock ID.
 - Call (866) 873-2824 or email scrapie@usda.gov
 - Order your tags from USDA or an official ID manufacturer custom-printed with your flock ID.
- For further information regarding Scrapie tags and the USDA National Scrapie Eradication Program (NSEP), please see the following:
 - New England Veterinary Services Area Office: [508-363-2290](tel:508-363-2290)
 - <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/nvap/reference-guide/control-eradication/scrapie>



Cattle, Bison, & Pigs

- Once you have obtained your premise ID, you can contact any official ID manufacturer to order the official ID tags you would like.
- Some breed registries have official ID tags that you can order as well. Check with your registry before you order official ID tags.
- Note that when cattle are vaccinated against Brucellosis, they will have an orange official ID applied by the vaccinating USDA-accredited veterinarian. There is no need for additional official ID if an official orange ID tag is in place.

Official ID Manufacturers

<p>Allflex USA Inc. (800) 989-8247 www.AllflexUSA.com (Plastic tags)</p>	<p>Datamars (254) 598-3440 www.Datamars.com (RFID/Implants)</p>	<p>Premier 1 Supplies (800) 282-6631 www.Premier1Supplies.com (Plastic Tags)</p>	<p>National Band and Tag Company (859) 261-2035 www.nationalband.com (Metal Tags)</p>
<p>Alliance ID, USA (985) 898-0811 www.MicrochipIDSystems.com (RFID/Implants)</p>	<p>EZid Livestock (877) 330-3943 www.EZidAvid.com (RFID/Implants)</p>	<p>Shearwell Data Limited (800) 778-6014 www.shearwell.com (Plastic tags & RFID/Implants)</p>	

What is official animal ID?

Official animal ID is a tag, tattoo, brand, microchip, or other federal and state-approved ID that is used to identify one animal from another. Each animal must have its own unique ID number.

Why do animals need official ID?

Official ID helps animal health officials track animals if there is a disease outbreak. It can show where an animal came from and where it has been.

Who makes the rules for official ID?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) makes the national rules. In Maine, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry also has rules about animal ID and animal movement.

When is an animal official ID required?

Official ID is often required when animals:

- Move across state lines
- Go to fairs, shows, exhibitions, or sales
- Are sold to another owner
- Need a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (health certificate)
- Are part of a disease testing or disease control program

Do all animals need the same kind of ID?

No. The type of ID depends on the animal species and where and why the animal is moving.

For example:

- Cattle often use ear tags or electronic 840 tags.
- Sheep and goats need official scrapie tags and/or tattoos.
- Horses may use a valid Coggins test with a matching description, tattoo, brand, or microchip.
- Swine may use official ear tags or other approved identification.

What is a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection?

A Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, also called a CVI or health certificate, is a paper completed by a veterinarian. It says that the animal was checked and did not show signs of disease.

The CVI must include the official ID number for all animals traveling that are required to have official ID (cows, sheep, goats, swine, etc.)

How do I know what ID is required for the state my animal is traveling to?

Contact the destination state's Animal Health office. Interstatelivestock.com has an interactive tool that helps you find out what the requirements are for your animal to travel to another state. Your veterinarian can help you as well.

Can an official ID be removed?

No. Official ID should stay with the animal for its whole life. It should not be removed unless a veterinarian or animal health official tells you to do so.

Can I use my own farm tag?

You may use your own farm tag to help identify your animals on your farm. However, a farm tag is not enough when an official ID is required for events and interstate travel. Many farmers use both an official ID and a Farm ID tag or tattoo to identify their animals.

What happens if my animal does not have the right ID?

An animal without the correct ID may:

- Be turned away from a fair, show, sale, or auction
- Not be allowed to cross state lines
- Need a new CVI
- Cause delays or extra costs

Do animals going to a Maine fair or show need official ID?

Many animals shown at Maine fairs or shows need official ID. The exact rules depend on the animal species and where the animal came from. All animals traveling from outside of the state of Maine are required to have an official Certificate of Veterinary Inspection written by an accredited veterinarian. Always check the fair rules and Maine animal health rules before the event.

What is an “840” tag or microchip?

An “840” tag or microchip is an official ID number that starts with 840. The number is unique to one animal. 840 tags and microchips are approved by the USDA. They may be electronic and can be read with a scanner.

What is a scrapie tag?

A scrapie tag is an official ear tag used for sheep and goats. It has your flock ID number and an individual animal number. Maine sheep and goats need a National Scrapie Program ID, such as a scrapie tag, before they leave the farm.

Where can I get help?

For help with official animal ID in Maine, contact:

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Animal Health Program 207-287-3701

You can also talk to your veterinarian or visit the USDA Animal Disease Traceability website:

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/traceability>

Why is official ID important?

The official ID should always trace back to the farm of origin, where the animal was born. Every official ID is unique and special to the animal that carries it. This is important because the ability to positively identify the animal with 100% certainty is needed to protect agriculture. The ability to quickly and accurately identify livestock directly relates to how quickly and effectively major disease outbreaks can be contained, and losses are limited. Traceable official ID ensures that buyers are purchasing exactly the animal they want without question about the identity of the animal. Official ID's are used as proof of identity for show wins, production records, awards, part of pedigrees, and registry records. They are very important and useful!

What do I do if I find a tag that has fallen out, but I am not sure which animal it belongs to?

Retain the tag and refer to your records first to try to match the identity. Official Certificates of Veterinary Inspection (OCVI) are helpful to refer to if you have purchased livestock from out of state, and must list the official ID of all animals that travel on that OCVI. If you cannot find a match, contact the Maine Animal Disease traceability technician for help tracking the tag and finding the match.

What to do if an official ID tag falls out or is unreadable?

When an official ID tag falls out or is unreadable, there are 2 options. The first, and best option, is to order a replacement tag from an official ID manufacturer. The second option is to place another official ID tag and report the official ID change to the Maine Animal Disease Traceability technician by emailing animalhealth.agr@maine.gov. Record the replacement tag type and number in your records, along with the original ID number that the new number is replacing and why the ID was replaced. Remember, records must be held for 5 years for livestock.

I want to buy livestock, but they don't have official ID in place. What should I do?

The official ID should always trace back to the farm of origin, where the animal was born. Every official ID is unique and special to the animal that carries it. It is the seller's responsibility to ensure official ID is in place for livestock that leave the farm. It is the buyer's responsibility to make sure they purchase animals that are officially identified with official ID before purchasing and/or moving the animal. This is important because the ability to positively identify the animal with 100% certainty and ensure that the travel history is accurate directly relates to how quickly and effectively major disease outbreaks can be contained, and losses are limited. Traceable official ID ensures that buyers are purchasing exactly the animal they want without question about the identity of the animal. These ID's are used as proof of identity for show wins, production records, awards, part of pedigrees, and registry records. They are very important and useful!