

April 1, 2020

Dear Maine Agricultural Community Member:

If you are reading this letter, you are an important part of Maine's agricultural community, and we at the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Animal Health program (ME DACF) have some important information for you re: **animal identification for Maine livestock** going to sales, shows or fairs this spring/summer.

These guidelines apply to all 4-H, FFA and Youth Show animals.

As recently as last year, if you raised a 4-H/FFA/Youth Show animal in Maine, and your project animal (lamb, goat, pig or steer) arrived at your farm without official identification (ear tag), you may have been visited by ME DACF's Livestock Specialist (Cindy Kilgore) and/or 4-H staff member Donna Flint and had your animal tagged by them.

As of January 15, 2020, USDA has asked us to stop that practice because it does not encourage producers to learn the proper use of tags and show how official ID aids all farms in proper animal identification and traceability.

Instead, 4-H/FFA/Youth Show livestock need to be **tagged with USDA official identification* at the farm of origin**. USDA official ID is required for any livestock to travel into another state, and for participation in some fairs and shows, including but not limited to the Big E and Fryeburg Fair.

*please see images below to see examples of tags that meet these requirements



NUES tag (w number & US shield)



RFID tag (starting with 840)



Scrapie tag (w/ USDA-issued Flock #)

For more information about ear tags and official identification:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/SA_Traceability

Special Considerations

- **Cattle:** Both the Big E and Fryeburg Fair now require that any cattle exhibited or sold there have USDA 840 RFID tags as their official ID.
- **Sheep and Goats:** Sheep and goats must come from a flock with Scrapie ID tags and should not leave the source farm without one in the ear! *These animals will not be allowed at shows, sales or fairs without Scrapie ID.*

- **Swine:** Fryeburg Fair now requires that any 4-H swine exhibited or sold there have USDA 840 RFID tags as their official ID.

With the increased requirements for producers with show or sale animals to use official ID, we are encouraging all groups associated with Maine youth in agriculture (4-H, FFA and youth shows), as well as producers in general, to **learn how they can obtain official tags, what official tags are most appropriate for the animals that they are raising for show/sale, and how to tag those animals (if needed.)**

To avoid any livestock being turned away from a show/sale/fair and the heartbreak of the child or young adult caretaker of that animal, **make certain that the tags applied to the animal are appropriate to meet all requirements of the fairs, shows, and sales that the child intends to bring the animal to all season.**

It's also important for youth in agriculture to be aware that there may be specific identification requirements and possible health testing, vaccination and health paperwork requirements for their market/show animals to enter shows/sales and certainly to visit other states' shows/sales.

Learning what is required – from tags or identification to any required vaccinations, health tests and/or paperwork - is a key part of quality showmanship and learning the business of agriculture. Any questions regarding tagging requirements and animal identification should be directed to Donna Flint (donna.flint@maine.gov or 207-557-4623).

Together we can make this an excellent show and fair season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized first name followed by a long horizontal line.

Drs. Michele Walsh, Rachael Fiske and Carolyn Hurwitz, Maine State Veterinarians, ME DACF
Ms. Donna Flint, ME DACF Animal Disease Traceability Technician
Dr. Lisa Phelps, Maine State 4-H Program Leader