

USDA Updates National Animal Identification System Program Standards and Technical Reference Document to Include Performance and Printing Standards for Identification Eartags for Swine

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today released an updated version of the January 2007 National Animal Identification System Program Standards and Technical Reference document. The updates include:

- Performance and printing standards for identification (ID) eartags adjusted to include swine and
- Printing standards added for slaughter swine premises ID eartags.

Performance Standards for the ID Eartags

APHIS updated the performance standards for the ID eartags section to include information specific to swine. The premises identification number (PIN) must be easily and reliably readable. Separate performance requirements for tag loss rates for swine also are included.

On average, no more than 5 percent of tags—when applied to swine in a manner approved by the manufacturer—can be lost in the year following application or in any year thereafter under normal field conditions during the expected life of the tag. When attached just prior to entering slaughter channels, no more than 1 percent of the tags can be lost while swine are in slaughter channels.

Printing Standards for Slaughter Swine Premises ID Eartags

A new section, "Printing Standards for Slaughter Swine Premises ID Eartags," has been added and states:

- The portion of the eartag most visible to animal handlers and used as the primary identifier of the animal must:
 - o Be a minimum of 2 sq. inches in size;
 - o Bear the entire 7-digit PIN of the premises;

- o Bear the U.S. Shield;
- o Bear the PIN and corresponding bar code on the reverse side; and
- o Bear the text, "Unlawful to Remove."
- The portion of the eartag most visible to animal handlers and used as the primary identifier of the animal can:
 - o Include a management number. If a management number is applied by the manufacturer or at the premises, the PIN and management number must be printed on separate lines; and
 - o Include a management number in the bar code, provided the first 7 alphanumeric characters of the bar code correspond to the PIN.

There are no printing requirements for the portion of the tag that is not visible to animal handlers since it is not used as the primary identifier of the animal.

- The font for all characters imprinted on the tag by the manufacturer must be Arial or, if different, approved by APHIS.
- Print size for eartags must be a minimum height of 0.25 inches (6mm) for numbers and letters.
- The U.S. Shield must be a minimum of 33 percent larger than the PIN print size. The minimum height and width is 0.33 inches (8mm).
- An indentation of the manufacturer's unique, copyrighted logo or trademark must be easily observed on the tag. Having such information permanently imprinted on the tag also is acceptable, provided the print is on the back of the visual portion of the tag.
- Printing of other information may be authorized if it does not compromise readability of required information.

The Program Standards Technical Reference document supplements the National Animal Identification System (NAIS) User Guide and provides the data element standards and other standards relative to the NAIS. Use of these standards by states, tribes and industry organizations involved in the administration of the system, manufacturers of identification devices and other entities that are part of, or that support the NAIS, will ensure that the system is effective. The majority of the standards were published in the Draft Program Standards, April 2005. Several revisions and/or updates were made in January 2007 and again in October 2007. Notice of this action was published in the Dec. 5 *Federal Register*. The revised document also is available on the NAIS Web site at www.usda.gov/NAIS.

NAIS is a voluntary program and consists of three components: premises registration, animal identification and tracing. The premises registration component of NAIS ensures the availability of a nationwide communications network to assist livestock owners and animal health officials in the event of an animal disease event.

Note to Stakeholders: Stakeholder announcements and other APHIS information are available on the Internet. Go to the APHIS home page at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov> and click on the “Newsroom” button. For additional information on this topic, contact Wayne Maloney at (301) 734-7255 or by e-mail at wayne.maloney@aphis.usda.gov.

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