

CCIA NEWS

SPRING 2005

Move to RFID Progresses Smoothly

A timely transition to RFID will ensure that the Canadian cattle industry can continue to meet and exceed domestic and international requirements for animal health and food safety through an efficient trace back and age verification process.

As of September 1, 2006 all cattle leaving their herd of origin must be tagged with an approved RFID tag.

In order to facilitate bar coded tags on cattle that have left their herd of origin prior to September 1, 2006, the CCIA will also continue to recognize the bar coded tags until December 31, 2007.

Mabel Hamilton, Board Chair of the CCIA adds, "Since the fall of 2004, 1.8 million RFID tags have been registered in the system. We are pleased with how well these tags are being accepted by all sectors of the cattle industry, and we are confident that this transition will continue to run smoothly."

With bar coded tags no longer being eligible for sale as of July 1, 2005, the CCIA is recommending that all 2005 calves be tagged with CCIA approved RFID tags.

Reminder:
 Removing a CCIA tag is a serious offense.

CCIA Approved RFID Tags

Through a variety of tag trials both in lab and in the field, CCIA approved RFID tags must meet specific industry established criteria that adheres to our diverse Canadian climate and other established requirements. As outlined in the CCIA's Standards, Procedures, and Testing Document all CCIA approved RFID tags must have the following attributes:

- A CCIA Identification number unique to the individual animal
- CCIA Trademark (3/4 Maple Leaf and "CA" letters)
- Demonstrate exceptional retention and readability
- Are yellow in color with a yellow backing stud (unless otherwise approved)
- Meet all requirements in the Canadian National Standards for RFID technology

The CCIA encourages RFID tag manufacturers to submit a variety of RFID tag styles to the CCIA for trials. In the first 2 1/2 years of trials, 18 tag types

(70,000 tags) were tested including 3 dangle type RFID tags. From these trials, 6 tags met the requirements and were approved for use within the Canadian Cattle Identification Program. "The CCIA and tag manufacturers recognize that many producers would benefit from a tag that allows them to accommodate visual herd management information", said Chris Giffen, CCIA Operations Manager. He adds, "Although we welcome all styles of RFID tags to be entered into trials, they must meet all requirements in order to be approved". There are several more tags in trials, including 4 dangle type RFID tags, with results expected near the end of summer. As an industry led non-profit organization, the CCIA does not sell RFID tags however is confident that the further introduction of various tags will create a more competitive market place.

In an effort to increase efficiency the CCIA has also standardized the color of approved tags. In order to more effectively identify the presence of approved RFID tags, the CCIA requires that all approved RFID tags are yellow in color. Chris Giffen adds that, "Having the CCIA RFID tags a standardized color allows producers to tag in their chosen color for herd management. They then have the option of removing unnecessary herd management tags from previous owners without the concern of CCIA tags being cut out. Through our superior standards and commitment to effective and efficient disease trace back, the CCIA continues to examine how we can maintain our role as a world leader in animal identification".



Why RFID Technology?

With so many forms of identification technology available on the market, why is RFID technology optimal for the Canadian Cattle Identification Program? RFID technology is essential in providing accurate and efficient trace back information. It allows electronic reading of numbers which in turn provides an accurate read every time, as the line of site required by the previous bar code tags is not necessary. However, the benefits of RFID technology stem beyond simple identification. With international markets indicating that Age Verification

may be a prerequisite for export, RFID technology will ensure that Canada has an accurate and comprehensive Age Verification system. Other proactive initiatives that RFID directly impacts include providing the necessary basis for full animal movement tracking. "It is the way that the beef industry is going.

Consumers want to know there is a safety system in place and RFID technology will provide an



excellent basis for this type of tracking", said Julie Stitt, CCIA Executive Director.

Other popular forms of identification include implants and metal curl lock ear tags. Chris Giffen, Operations Manager for the CCIA states that, "If an implant were to be used, an external tag to identify that an implant has been inserted would still be required. In addition, these types of identification are not tamper evident and often require a veterinarian to assist in application. The CCIA is certain that RFID technology will allow producers to continue the application process as they did with the previous bar-coded tags without additional resources."

Age Verification To Aid In Export Markets

With the U.S border closed to live Canadian beef, the need for Age Verification is as significant as ever. By logging onto the Age Verification website <https://www.cia.livestockid.ca/CTS/> producers can register and submit cattle birth date information as a confirmed alternative to dentition. This voluntary program enables producers to store information and have it readily available should it be required by domestic or export markets. Producers who do not have internet access can assign a third-party user to submit information on their behalf. Nadine Meade, Project Manager of CCIA Database Enhancements adds, "In order to meet the needs of producers, all technological aspects of the Age Verification System have been considered. We have created a database that can be utilized by those with or without computers and we encourage producers to make the most of this opportunity".

Community Pastures Update

Since May of 2003, the Canadian Cattle Identification Program has been subjected to a higher level of scrutiny and evaluation domestically and by our international trade partners. In order to meet the ever increasing demands of the global animal health and food safety expectations, all tagging exemptions will be removed from the Health of Animals Regulations.

This regulatory amendment will require all cattle to be tagged prior to leaving the herd of origin, even if going to community pasture, exhibition site, test stations or veterinary clinics (unless going to an approved tagging site). Although an official date for the amendments to come into effect has not been determined, the CCIA recommends that the industry continues with its responsible leadership by tagging all cattle prior to leaving the herd of origin, regardless of the regulatory amendments.

Ensuring Optimal Tag Retention:

As outlined in the CCIA's Standards, Procedures and Testing Document, all approved RFID tags must demonstrate exceptional retention in order to pass trials. To ensure the best tag retention possible, the CCIA recommends these tips:

- Ensure Backing studs correspond to matching fronts (CCIA tags are approved as a complete set)
- Use appropriate tag applicators for specific tag brands
- Tag as per manufacturers directions (see diagram)



Canadian
**Cattle
Identification
Agency**

#210, 6715- 8th Street NE, Calgary, AB T2E 7H7
www.canadaid.ca ~ 1-877-909-BEEF

Canadian Publications Mail
Agreement #1736345