

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 19 APPROVED

SOURCE: COMMITTEE ON CATTLE AND BISON

**SUBJECT MATTER: Use of Official 900-Series Electronic Identification Tags in
Non-United States Born Cattle and Bison**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On May 9, 2024, the United States Department of Agriculture, (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) published the Final Animal Disease Traceability Rule "Use of Electronic Identification Eartags as Official Identification in Cattle and Bison" in the Federal Register. According to the rule, sexually intact cattle and bison 18 months of age and older, as well as all rodeo, exhibition, and dairy cattle moving interstate, must be identified with visually and electronically readable tags to be considered officially identified. This rule will take effect on November 5, 2024.

For United States (U.S.)-born cattle and bison, official electronic identification (EID) tags begin with the prefix 840-, indicating that the animal was born within the US. Similarly, EID tags for Canadian-born cattle begin with 124- and Mexican-born cattle with 484-. These country codes, along with manufacturer codes, are defined in International Committee on Animal Recording standards, the Global Standard for Livestock Data.

Cattle and bison imported into the United States from foreign countries are required to be officially identified. These tags should not be removed. However, if an imported animal loses its original official identification, a new official identification must be placed before traveling interstate or internationally, or completing regulatory testing requirements. After November 5, 2024, as per the 2024 published rule, this new tag must be both electronically and visually readable. However, placing an 840-official EID tag in an imported animal's ear would inaccurately indicate that the animal was US-born. To address this, USDA-APHIS has created an import EID tag that is blue and lime green in color and contains the prefix 964-, the U.S. shield, the words "Unlawful to Remove", and the letters "IMP" to indicate an imported animal.

While visually identifying the tags in the field is not an issue, personnel in state offices responsible for processing certificates of veterinary inspection or regulatory testing may be unable to distinguish the difference between an IMP tag and a non-official 900-series tag by looking at the tag number. Furthermore, animal health officials have advised practicing

veterinarians and producers for years that a 900-series tag is unofficial. Adding a 900-series IMP tag as official identification contributes to the confusion of the traceability system already felt by many producers and veterinarians. Additionally, if a veterinarian or producer is aware that an imported animal has lost its country-of-origin tag and is not legally permitted to place an 840-series tag, they would need to contact the state animal health office to receive an official IMP 900-series tag. This process may lead to a lack of compliance, delays in movement or testing, and could potentially jeopardize the traceability of foreign-born animals.

RESOLUTION:

The United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) urges the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) to develop an educational campaign and prioritize outreach efforts to accredited veterinarians and producers on the availability and proper use of the non-840 official identification ear tags for certain imported cattle and bison including updating the Category II USDA National Veterinary Accreditation Program modules on animal traceability. Additionally, USAHA urges USDA-APHIS-VS to make an Application Programming Interface available through the USDA Enterprise Messaging System that will provide programmatic access to validate 900- series electronic identification tags as official international tags.

FINAL RESPONSE:

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Veterinary Services (VS) recognizes the concerns of the United States Animal Health Association (USAHA) and appreciates the opportunity to respond.

APHIS focused outreach efforts on promoting awareness and proper use of the non-840 official identification ear tags (“import tags”) for certain cattle and bison. These efforts included:

- Updated the National Veterinary Accreditation Program (NVAP) Module 12 on Animal Disease Traceability;
- Provided monthly updates through the Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Information Sharing Call for external and internal stakeholders;
- Conducted outreach to APHIS VS Field Operations personnel, including Area Veterinarians in Charge, Animal Identification Coordinators, and Field Veterinary Medical Officers;
- Engaged with Program Managers of ADT Cooperative Agreements; and
- Participated in stakeholder meetings and conferences as allowable by budget.

Additionally, non-840 official identification ear tag validation may be conducted through the [Animal Identification Number Management System](#) (AIMS). AIMS is accessible via the USDA eAuthentication system, an identity verification platform for granting access to USDA online applications.