

NLIS (Sheep & Goats) Update

For Show Societies

AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

June 2018

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide Victorian agricultural show societies with an update on Victoria's transition to an electronic tag based NLIS (Sheep & Goats).

PROGRESS TO DATE

In August 2016, Minister Pulford announced that Victoria would transition to an identification system for sheep and goats based on mandatory electronic tagging and movement recording on the NLIS database. The key driver is to ensure that sheep and goats can be tracked quickly and reliably during disease and food safety emergencies, protecting Victoria's \$6.7 billion per annum livestock industries.

The announcement was the stimulus for a range of preparatory work involving all sectors of Victoria's sheep and goat industries.

Key milestones have recently been reached, with scanning of electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags now mandatory in Victorian saleyards, abattoirs, knackeries and when producers receive sheep or goats directly from another property.

Operators of agricultural shows are now required to ensure that electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags on the sheep and goats exhibited at the events that they conduct are scanned, with movements reported to the NLIS database using the 'sighted' function.

RULES AND TIMETABLE

A copy of the updated *Electronic National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) (Sheep & Goats) Standards - March 2018* and the implementation timetable are available via the following links:

[Standards- March 2018](#)

[Timeline](#)

SCANNING OPTIONS

Show societies have the option of using a wand reader to scan electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags themselves or, for events where a large number of sheep or goats are expected, engaging a scanning contractor.

For information on scanning contractors in your area, or advice on how to scan electronic tags on cattle, sheep or goats and uploading data to the NLIS database, please call Marnie Dortmans, Agriculture Victoria's Senior Officer - NLIS, on 03 5336 6835 or 0428 997 009.

Please note that tag readers suitable for reading electronic NLIS (Cattle) tags will also read electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags. Shows have for some time been responsible for scanning NLIS (Cattle) tags on exhibited cattle and reporting the presence of animals to the NLIS database using the 'sighted' function.

If sheep or goats are to be auctioned at a show or similar event, the party conducting the auction is responsible for scanning tags and uploading movement records to the NLIS database.

INTERSTATE SHEEP AND GOATS

Interstate sheep and goats entering Victoria to attend an agricultural show or similar event must be identified with a visually readable NLIS (Sheep) tag, according to the rules of the state or territory from which they originate.

Interstate sheep or goats leaving a show, regardless of their destination, will not require an electronic NLIS (Sheep) tag. There is no plan to remove this electronic NLIS (Sheep) tagging exemption for interstate sheep and goats entering Victoria to attend a show or similar event.

GOATS

Goats have been part of the NLIS (Sheep & Goats) since its commencement in 2006.

There are five distinct categories of goat with anatomically different ears as follows:

- rangeland (feral)
- dairy
- meat
- fibre
- miniature/companion

An electronic NLIS (Sheep) tagging exemption is in place for rangeland (feral) goats, all dairy breeds and for some miniature breeds that have no ears or only rudimentary ears, eg Elfs.

Dairy goats have vascular ears that often become badly infected after tagging, regardless of the tag used. This is the reason why dairy breeds in Victoria are not required to be tagged with an NLIS ear tag.

ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

If you have technical questions about scanning electronic NLIS tags or the uploading of data to the NLIS database, please call Marnie Dortmans, Agriculture Victoria's Senior Officer - NLIS, on 03 5336 6835 or 0428 997 009.

For further information, please email your questions to Michael Bretherton, Manager Sheep EID - Delivery, at michael.bretherton@ecodev.vic.gov.au