

# ANIMAL TRACEABILITY IN YOUTH LIVESTOCK PROGRAMS

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Livestock is one of the most popular projects in 4-H and FFA programs, with an estimated 1 percent of animals that enter the US food chain being from youth livestock programs. Because these animals become a part of the food chain, they are subject to regulations outside of exhibition policies. Education of youth related to their animals' health and well-being, food safety, and subsequent public health and perception are vitally important learning outcomes of youth livestock programs.

A common misconception by many youth livestock families is they are not livestock producers; they often consider themselves as simply livestock exhibitors who treat livestock exhibition more like a sport. It is important to remember that the public will consider anyone who owns animals as a livestock producer and any of their actions (both good and bad) can have a significant impact on public perceptions of animal agriculture. Animal identification (ID) requirements in youth livestock programs teach youth that they are a part of a larger livestock industry in which individual animal ID and traceability are very important.

Animal traceability is the process of tracking an animal back to its farm of origin and any other locations where it has been commingled with other animals. Examples of places where animals are commingled during youth livestock programs include shows and sales. The necessary parts of livestock traceability in both normal production and youth exhibition programs include:

- Official Animal ID.
- Premise ID.
- Certificate of Veterinary Inspection.

## Official Animal ID

Official animal ID can vary by state, but by federal ruling, livestock that are required

to be officially identified for interstate movement must have tags with a 15-digit animal identification number beginning with 840 (numerical code for USA) and have the US shield on them. It is against federal law to remove official ID. In Tennessee, official animal ID includes:

- “840 tags” (RFID or visual).
- National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags — Used in specific animal disease programs.
- Breed registry tattoos.

Some livestock shows and sales may have requirements over and above a particular state's official animal ID requirements (for example requiring the 840-RFID tag for all animals). It is important to check the specific policies for these livestock events in order to meet their animal ID requirements.

## Premise ID

The premise ID is a seven-digit, alphanumeric code that is associated with a specific location (farm, exhibition center, sale barn). The premise ID is a method to designate the farm of origin for an animal and any other facility that it may have visited. With proper record keeping, it is possible to track an animal's movement using the official animal ID and the premise ID.

## Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI)

The Certificate of Veterinary Inspection, or CVI, is documentation that a particular animal has been inspected by an accredited veterinarian and been found to be healthy and safe to attend a show or sale. Official animal ID is an important part of the CVI as it ties the animal to the CVI. It is generally required for entry into another state. Specific requirements can

vary by state, so it is important to check the policies of any states in which animals will be transported to or through. In Tennessee, a current CVI is also a requirement for exhibition. An exhibition CVI is valid for 90 days for in-state animals and 30 days for out-of-state animals.

## Animal Traceability

When the animal ID and the premise ID are linked, a history of the places that an animal has been can be recorded. If there were a disease outbreak at a livestock show or sale, all of the animals that were present would be known, and they could be traced back to their farm of origin. It is also important that when an animal is sold, its official animal ID is transferred to the premise ID of the new owner.

This animal tracking is not possible without a record of the official animal ID and the premise ID of the animal owner and a record of the animals that were at a show or sale. Official animal ID that is not linked to a specific premise is just a tag and is of little use in the tracking of animal movement.

When official tags are distributed from a central location, which is common for youth livestock exhibitions, youth must have a premise ID and the distributor of the tag must associate the specific tag to the premise ID of the youth. In Tennessee, this is done with 840-RFID tags for beef cattle and swine shows. The final step is for the tag distributor to report the official animal ID and premise ID information to the appropriate state agency. In Tennessee, this is the Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA).

In Tennessee (and most states), obtaining a premise ID is free and easy to do. It is available through TDA at: [tiny.utk.edu/TDApremiseform](http://tiny.utk.edu/TDApremiseform).



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W 793 11/18 19-0103

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