



## NEWS RELEASE

### Texas Animal Health Commission

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# USDA Advancing Animal Disease Traceability: The Transition to Electronic Identification in Cattle and Bison

AUSTIN – The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is currently working with federal, state and industry partners to strengthen its traceability system to protect the long-term health, marketability and economic viability of the U.S. livestock industry. While there are several steps USDA needs to take in order to do this, the most essential one is to move from metal identification tags to electronic identification tags in beef and dairy cattle, as well as in bison.

“The transition from metal identification tags to radio frequency identification (RFID) tags will not happen overnight,” assured Dr. Andy Schwartz, Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Executive Director and State Veterinarian. “The transition is projected to take four years and we want to use this time to educate and encourage Texas cattle, dairy and bison producers to start taking steps toward electronic identification.”

Starting January 1, 2023, only individual official RFID tags will be accepted as official identification for cattle and bison moving interstate, including:

#### Beef Cattle & Bison

- Sexually intact and 18 months or older
- Used for rodeo or recreations events (regardless of age)
- Used for shows or exhibitions

#### Dairy Cattle

- All female dairy cattle
- All male dairy cattle born after March 11, 2013

For questions about current accepted forms of official identification, USDA approved RFID ear tag specifications and premises identification numbers (PIN) contact the TAHC Animal Disease Traceability Department at 1-800-550-8242 ext. 733, [animal\\_id@tahc.texas.gov](mailto:animal_id@tahc.texas.gov) or <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/adt/>.

#### IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

USDA understands producers need time to transition to RFID and has worked with the National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials to establish manageable milestones to achieve this goal.

#### December 31, 2019

USDA will discontinue providing free metal tags. However, approved vendors will still be permitted to produce official metal tags for one additional year. Approved vendor tags will be available for purchase on a state-by-state basis as authorized by each state animal health official through December 31, 2020.

#### January 1, 2021

USDA will no longer approve vendor production of metal ear tags with the official USDA shield. Accredited veterinarians and/or producers can no longer apply metal ear tags for official identification and must start using only official RFID tags.

#### January 1, 2023

RFID ear tags will be required for beef and dairy cattle and bison moving interstate that meet the RFID tagging requirements. Animals with metal ear tags will have to be retagged with RFID ear tags in order to move interstate. Feeder cattle and animals moving directly to slaughter are not subject to RFID requirements.

To read more about the USDAs transition to electronic identification visit <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/traceability/downloads/plan-to-achieve-eid-factsheet.pdf>.

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