



National Livestock
Identification System
Cattle

Australia's system for livestock identification and traceability



safe *meat*

mla
MEAT & LIVESTOCK AUSTRALIA

What is the National Livestock Identification System-Cattle?

NLIS-Cattle is Australia's system for the identification and tracing of livestock. It is a permanent whole-of-life identification system that enables individual animals to be tracked from property of birth to slaughter for food safety, product integrity and market access purposes.

NLIS-Cattle provides the facility for cattle to be electronically identified at the time of transaction, in saleyards and at the time of slaughter.

Cattle movements between properties will be progressively logged in a secure central database – the NLIS database. When integrated with post slaughter tracking systems, the NLIS database allows for rapid and accurate tracing of cattle in the event of a disease outbreak or residue incident.

NLIS-Cattle is an enhancement of the existing tail tag identification system that has operated successfully for the past 30 years.

NLIS is a Safemeat program managed on behalf of industry and government by Meat and Livestock Australia. Major national and state producer, feedlot, agent, saleyard and processor representative organisations, together with Commonwealth and State governments, endorse the NLIS.

Why is identification and traceability so important?

A recent Commonwealth government study* estimated the overall economic loss as a result of an FMD outbreak to be between \$2 billion and \$13 billion. Though NLIS will not prevent a disease outbreak, it will be able to reduce the financial and social impact of a disease epidemic due to its accurate identification and rapid traceability capabilities.



How does NLIS work?

For the past 30 years Australia has used the tail tag system to identify the last property on which the cattle have been run. The system has worked well but is limited in traceability because the tail tag only indicates the Property Identification Code (PIC) of the property from which the cattle have been dispatched.

NLIS-Cattle uses machine-readable Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) devices to identify cattle throughout the life of the animal. NLIS endorsed devices come in the form of an ear tag or rumen bolus/ear tag combination. Each device contains a microchip encoded with a unique number linked to the PIC of the property of origin.

Cattle identified with NLIS devices can be electronically read as they move through the livestock chain. At time of reading, each owner's PIC can be recorded and linked to the NLIS device. This transaction information is then stored in the secure central NLIS database.

Once full transaction recording is in place, a life record of an animal's residency, and which other animals it has interacted with, will be established. It is this centrally stored electronic history of an individual animal's residency that will enable rapid and accurate traceability.

What does NLIS cost?

Participants need to identify cattle as they are moved off the property with an approved NLIS device, which range from around \$3.50 (\$2.50 in Victoria) to \$5.80 per animal. A compatible applicator is also required, ranging between \$20 and \$150. Prices quoted exclude GST. In some states only a transaction tag is required for some animal movements.

The full on-farm management benefits can be realised for the cost of a reader, set of weigh scales, a computer, and appropriate software; or the cost of integrating existing components if already in use.





Do I have to participate?

All state and territory governments, together with industry have agreed to aim for the introduction of NLIS-Cattle by 1 July 2005, with some states commencing earlier. State governments underpin NLIS with legislation governing the use of NLIS approved devices and specifying penalties for misuse.

The use of NLIS, in addition to property accreditation, is also a requirement of supplying the EU market.

Producers can choose the level of participation that best fits their business. Three levels of participation, each with differing levels of obligation and benefit, are available:

- 1 Identifying cattle only with NLIS devices
- 2 Using NLIS as an on-farm management tool, or
- 3 Using NLIS to its full potential by integrating carcase feedback with individual animal performance data.





Key benefits for the Australian livestock industry

- Reduction of the financial and social impact of a livestock disease epidemic or residue incident due to enhancements in livestock identification and traceability.
- Being prepared for international customers demanding whole-of-life, property-of-origin traceability.
- Maintaining access to restricted markets such as the European Union market.
- Ensuring domestic and export consumers continue to have confidence in Australian beef and dairy products.
- Upholding Australia's reputation as a quality producer by underpinning the integrity and safety of Australia's beef and dairy products.

Key benefits for producers

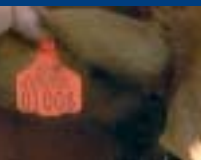
The benefits derived from NLIS are dependant on how producers use the technology in their business and can include:

- Improved management and breeding decisions by using individual animal performance data linked to carcase feedback to fine tune compliance with customer specifications.
- Time saved and more accurate individual animal data due to automated electronic recording.
- Reduced stock theft through improved proof of ownership.

* Productivity Commission 2002, Impact of a Foot and Mouth Disease Outbreak on Australia, Research Report, AusInfo, Canberra.

More information?

- Contact your state department of agriculture for the rules regarding NLIS-Cattle in your state
- Go to www.nlis.com.au
- **1800 654 743**



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