

Animal Identification Process for Mississippi Junior Livestock Shows



Background

For over a decade, Mississippi Junior Livestock Shows used retinal imaging to document animal identification (ID). In recent years, an alternative animal ID process was requested to save on time and travel necessitated by the retinal image process. In April 2019, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) announced a new process of requiring RFID tags for animals in shows and exhibitions. To be proactive, the Mississippi Livestock Show directors approved the use of 840 USDA official electronic identification (EID) tags in matched sets as our animal ID process. This publication describes the entire ear-tagging process and how the tags will be used in our livestock nomination process. *Note: This ear-tagging process replaces retinal imaging of livestock.*

Ear Tag Order Form

In several junior livestock shows, animals are shown by weight and are identified by ear tags sold through the Extension 4-H livestock specialist's office in the MSU Department of Animal and Dairy Sciences (ADS). The following shows require that an ear tag be purchased from ADS for each animal to be nominated by junior exhibitors.

- Market steers (*must be nominated for State Fair and Dixie National Junior Round-Up in September*)
- Market lambs (*must be nominated for State Fair and Dixie National Junior Round-Up in September*)
- Haired sheep (*must be nominated for State Fair and Dixie National Junior Round-Up in September*)
- Market goats (*must be nominated for State Fair and Dixie National Junior Round-Up in September*)

- Commercial beef heifers (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)
- Wether dams (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)
- Commercial meat goat does (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)
- Market hogs (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)
- MS bred barrows (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)
- Commercial gilts (*two nominations, one for State Fair in September and one for DNJR in December*)

The ear tag order should be mailed to the Extension 4-H livestock specialist along with a check for the total price of the tags. There is typically an ear tag order deadline in early August for all livestock to be nominated and exhibited at that year's Mississippi State Fair. Another ear tag order form is emailed after the Mississippi State Fair for the new livestock that are eligible to be nominated and exhibited at that year's Dixie National Junior Round-Up. All ear tag order forms should be accompanied by a check written to **4-H Livestock Show Foundation**.

As stated above, Mississippi Junior Livestock Shows will use the 840 USDA official EID tags in matched sets for our animal ID process for the 2020–2021 show season. A major change from the ear tags used in previous years is that there is one type of tag for all beef cattle (steers and commercial beef heifers), one type of tag for all sheep and meat goats, and one type of tag for all hogs (market hogs, Mississippi bred barrows, and commercial gilts). See the blue box on the 2020–2021 Ear Tag Order Form below. Simply enter the number of beef cattle tags, sheep/meat goat tags, and/or market hog tags needed.

Date: _____

ADS Use Only: Check # _____

Date Mailed _____

2020-2021 Ear Tag Order Form

TO: Extension Agent/FFA Advisor (All tag orders must go through you.)

FROM: Department of Animal & Dairy Sciences

Please send your order for ear tags by **August 7, 2020**, along with a check for \$3 per tag (tags will not be mailed without payment) payable to: **4-H Livestock Show Foundation** and mail to: **Dean Jousan, Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762.**

Beef Cattle Tags # needed _____
(market steers/commercial beef heifers)

All Sheep/Meat Goat Tags # needed _____
(market lambs; wether dams; haired sheep; market goats; commercial meat goat does)

Market Hog Tags (State Fair only) # needed _____

Market hog tags, commercial gilts, and MS Bred Barrows for the 2021 Dixie National Junior Round-Up, and tags for new commercial beef heifers, commercial meat goat does, and wether dams, will be ordered after the 2020 MS State Fair.

TAGS SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

Name _____

4-H County/FFA Chapter _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

All tags must be ordered through the Extension Agents or FFA Advisors. No tags will be mailed to anyone else. If you send personal checks, you will be responsible for any fees or problems with checks.

Extension Agents/FFA Advisors are to personally tag (or be present at tagging of) each animal to verify the correct tag goes in the correct animal. Your signature on your file of entries verifies this has been done.

>>>> DO NOT GIVE OUT TAGS TO INDIVIDUALS FOR TAGGING. <<<<

Description of the 840 EID Ear Tags

The USDA 840 EID ear tags are important for animal traceability purposes. This tagging system follows the requirements of the animal disease traceability (ADT) framework for both visual and electronic identification, and the tags are recognized in a standardized information system between federal, state, and industry officials. Because Mississippi is using these tags, the Extension 4-H livestock specialist must report to the Mississippi state veterinarian who gets each tag (more will be explained about this later). The USDA 840 tags in a matched pair consist of an EID button with a matching visual ID ear tag. Each 840 tag contains 15 digits and begins with the numbers 840 (the USA country code), while the remaining 12 digits on the tag are unique to the individual animal. Note that both the male and female parts of the EID tag contain the US shield. On the male portion of the EID tag, notice that it is unlawful to remove this tag. The electronic piece is in the center of the female portion of the tag.

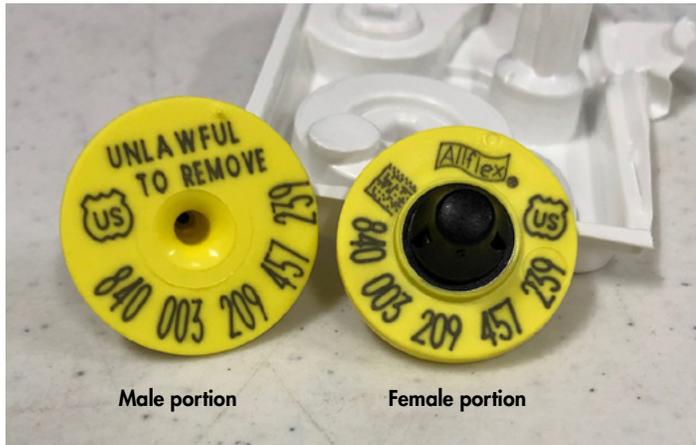


Figure 1. Male and female parts of an EID tag.

Mississippi Junior Livestock Show Ear Tag System

When you purchase ear tags, you will receive them in strips that are perforated. Each strip will contain the visual tag paired with the EID button and back. You, as an Extension agent or FFA advisor, are responsible for tagging all animals in your club or chapter. Read the note on the bottom of the ear tag order form. The following pictures are examples of the ear tags being used this year, along with a brief description of them. *Note: The pictures do not reflect the size difference of the visual tag and the EID tag.*



Figure 2. Swine ear tags. The green tag on the left is the visual tag, which will be inserted into the outer side of the left ear. Note that the 12 numbers at the top of the visual tag match the 12 numbers (after the 840 USA country code) on the yellow 840 EID tag on the right. The yellow EID tag will be inserted in the inner portion of the right ear.



Figure 3. Beef cattle ear tags. The green tag on the left is the visual tag, which will be inserted into the inner portion of the middle of the left ear. Note that the 12 numbers at the top of the visual tag match the 12 numbers on the yellow 840 EID tag. The yellow EID tag will be inserted in the inside middle portion of the right ear.



Figure 4. Sheep/meat goat ear tags. The green tag on the left is the visual tag, which is usually inserted into the outer portion of the middle of the left ear. Note that the 12 numbers at the top of the visual tag match the 12 numbers on the yellow 840 EID tag. The yellow EID tag will be inserted in the inside middle portion of the right ear.



Figure 5. Tagger with black insert (left) and without black insert (right).

For all ear tags, you should use the Allflex Red Total Tagger. Other brands of taggers will not work with this set of tags. You can purchase this tagger at most animal health stores. You can also purchase the Allflex Red Total Tagger online. Notice in Figure 5 that the left photo has the black insert in the tagger, and the photo on the right has the black insert removed. It is recommended that you purchase two Allflex Red Total Taggers so you can leave the black insert in one tagger and out of the other tagger. Note the following reminders about when to use this tagger.

1. When you are inserting any visual tag into livestock (beef cattle, sheep/meat goats, or swine), you can use the tagger with the black insert.
2. When you are inserting an EID tag for sheep/meat goats or swine, you *must* use the tagger *with* the black insert.
3. When you are inserting an EID tag for beef cattle, you *must* use the tagger with the black insert *removed*. The reason is that the EID tag for beef cattle is larger and thicker than the EID tag for sheep/meat goats and swine, so the black insert must be removed for the beef cattle EID tag to be properly inserted.

How to Insert Visual and EID Tags for Sheep/Meat Goats

1. Be sure to use the Allflex Red Total Tagger *with the black clip in place* for inserting visual and EID tags for sheep/meat goats.
2. Remember that the visual tag with the larger last four digits must be inserted in the outside of the animal's left ear, and the smaller EID tag must be inserted in the inside of the animal's right ear.
3. Loading the tagger with a visual or EID tag for sheep/meat goats:
 - To load the tagger with a visual tag for sheep/meat goats, depress the spring clip with the black clip in place and insert the green female visual tag. Slip the green male part of the tag on the red applicator pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to

make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The visual tag goes on the outside of the left ear of the sheep/meat goat.

- To load the tagger with an EID tag for sheep/meat goats, depress the spring clip with the black clip in place and insert the yellow female EID tag. Slip the yellow male part of the tag on the red applicator pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The EID tag goes on the inside of the right ear of the sheep/meat goat.
4. Before inserting the visual and EID tags for sheep/meat goats, clean the ear where the tag is to be inserted to remove any debris. The ideal location to insert the tag is between the second and third elastic veins in the center of the animal's ear.
 5. Spray the male portion of the tags with a chlorhexidine disinfectant solution diluted in clean water or some other residual wound spray before inserting the tag to reduce the incidence of infection.
 6. Grab the ear and apply the tag between the second and third elastic veins in the center of the ear. When the tags are inserted, be sure to grip the taggers firmly so that the tag is properly sealed.
 7. Monitor your animal for a few days after application to ensure the ear does not become infected.

How to Insert Visual and EID Tags for Swine

1. Be sure to use the Allflex Red Total Tagger *with the black clip in place* for inserting visual and EID tags for swine.
2. For swine, the visual tag with the larger last four digits should be inserted with the visual tag on the outside of the animal's left ear, and the smaller EID tag must be inserted in the inside of the animal's right ear.
3. Loading the tagger with a visual or EID tag for swine:
 - To load the tagger with a visual tag for swine, depress the spring clip with the black clip in place and insert the green female back of the tag (there is no writing on this part). Slip the green male part (with the visual tag number) of the tag on the red applicator pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The visual tag goes on the outside of the left ear of the swine.

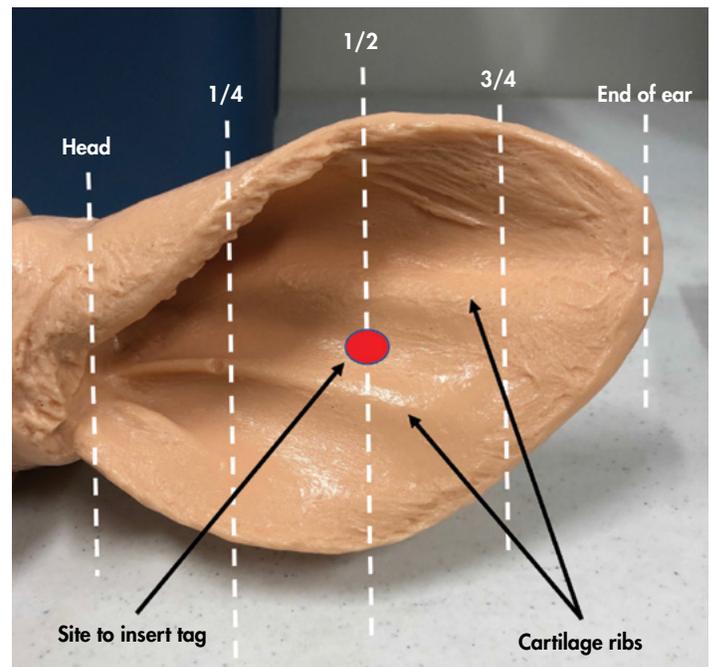
- To load the tagger with an EID tag for swine, depress the spring clip with the black clip in place and insert the yellow female EID tag. Slip the yellow male part of the tag on the red applicator pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The EID tag goes on the inside of the right ear of the swine.
4. Before inserting the visual and EID tags for swine, clean the ear where the tag is to be inserted to remove any debris.
 5. Spray the male portion of the tags with a chlorohexidine disinfectant solution diluted in clean water or some other residual wound spray before inserting the tag to reduce the incidence of infection.
 6. Grab the ear and apply the tag in the correct location as described in item 3. When the tags are inserted, be sure to grip the taggers firmly so that the tag is properly sealed.
 7. Monitor your animal for a few days after application to ensure the ear does not become infected.

How to Insert Visual and EID Tags for Beef Cattle

1. Be sure to use the Allflex Red Total Tagger *with the black clip in place for inserting visual tags and with the black clip removed from the tagger for EID tags for beef cattle*. It is recommended that you purchase two taggers so you can keep one with the black clip in place and one with the black clip removed.
2. Remember that the visual tag with the larger last four digits must be inserted in the inside middle of the animal's left ear, and the smaller EID tag must be inserted in the inside of the animal's right ear toward the middle portion of the ear.
3. Loading the tagger with a visual or EID tag for beef cattle:
 - To load the tagger with a visual tag for beef cattle, depress the spring clip with the black clip in place and insert the green female visual tag. Slip the green male part of the tag on the red applicator pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The visual tag goes toward the middle of the inside of the left ear of beef cattle.
 - To load the tagger with an EID tag for beef cattle, depress the spring clip *with the black clip removed* and insert the yellow female EID tag. Slip the yellow male part of the tag on the red applicator

pin. Squeeze the handle of the tagger to make sure the male and female parts of the tag are in alignment. The EID tag goes on the inside of the right ear of beef cattle.

4. Before inserting the visual and EID tags for beef cattle, clean the ear where the tag is to be inserted to remove any debris. The ideal location to insert the tag is between the second and third elastic veins in the center of the animal's ear.
5. Spray the male portion of the tags with a chlorohexidine disinfectant solution diluted in clean water or some other residual wound spray before inserting the tag to reduce the incidence of infection.
6. Grab the ear and apply the tag between the second and third elastic veins in the center of the ear. When the tags are inserted, be sure to grip the taggers firmly so that the tag is properly sealed. (The photo below depicts the recommended site for inserting a visual tag in the left ear of cattle. You would use the same strategy to insert an EID tag in the right ear of cattle.)
7. Monitor your animal for a few days after application to ensure the ear does not become infected.



Use of Nomination Forms to Complete Online Entries

Once your livestock are properly tagged, it is critical to properly complete nomination forms for each animal. The following section outlines the area on each nomination form where the animal ID information is to be recorded. This excerpt is from a beef commercial heifer nomination form. Note that the exhibitor should write the four-digit visual ear tag number (circled in blue), followed by the complete 15-digit USDA 840 number (circled in red). The other area of importance is the physical location where the animal is maintained (circled in green). When nomination forms are submitted to each Extension office, the Extension agent will complete the process by entering each animal in the Extension Intranet Online Livestock Show Entry Program. This year, Extension agents will enter the four-digit visual ear tag number, the complete 15-digit USDA 840 number, and the physical location where the animal is maintained. All of this information will be downloaded by the Extension 4-H livestock specialist and submitted to the state veterinarian for disease traceability purposes.

Lost Visual or EID Ear Tags

The USDA 840 EID tags from Allflex are tamper-proof tags, and it is unlawful to remove the tag. It is possible for an animal's visual tag to be ripped out of its ear accidentally (by another animal, from the animal catching its ear on something, or some similar situation). If this happens, the Extension agent should visually inspect the animal to verify that it has been lost. The agent must notify the Extension 4-H livestock specialist so that a generic visual tag can be issued for that animal; this generic tag will be linked to the EID tag number in the database. The new visual tag will have a code printed on it, and the Extension 4-H livestock specialist will write the four-digit number on the visual tag before it is mailed to be placed in the animal's ear by the Extension agent. If an EID tag is lost but the visual tag is still present, the animal will be administered a new set of a visual tag with a matched EID tag. These new numbers will be updated on the animal's nomination form and in the online entry system.

Animals with Existing EID Tags

The USDA 840 EID tags from Allflex are tamper-proof tags, and it is unlawful to remove them. If you have an exhibitor whose show animal has an EID tag already in place, do not remove the existing EID tag. The Extension agent or FFA advisor should record this EID number on the nomination form and report this to the Extension 4-H livestock specialist. A generic visual tag can be issued for that animal with a four-digit number that will be linked to the existing EID tag number for that animal. This four-digit visual tag number will be entered on the nomination form and in the online entry program to update that animal's entry.

Conclusion

For the 2020–2021 Mississippi Livestock Show Season, we will use the 840 USDA Official EID tags in a matched set for our animal ID purposes to replace retinal imaging. Following these steps will ensure that your county's livestock are properly tagged and nominated for upcoming state junior livestock shows in Mississippi.

MISSISSIPPI COMMERCIAL BEEF HEIFER NOMINATION FORM FOR 2020 MISSISSIPPI STATE FAIR AND 2021 DISTRICT AND DIXIE NATIONAL JUNIOR ROUND-UP LIVESTOCK SHOWS

Instructions: Complete this form in its entirety (including signatures) and return to your Extension Agent / FFA Advisor. Entries must be received by your Extension Office by **September 1, 2020**. All entries must be sent to Dean Jousan, Box 9815, Mississippi State, MS 39762.

Exhibitor's Name _____ Exhibitor's Birth Date _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

_____ -OR- _____
 County Name/Number _____ 4-H County _____ FFA Chapter _____

Exhibitor's Ethics Certification Number _____ Premise I.D. Number _____

4-Digit Visual Ear Tag # _____ **Complete USDA 840 #** _____

MS Bred: Yes _____ No _____ (Check One) _____ (State of origin of heifer) _____ MS Bred Tag No. _____

Breed Classification of Heifer: (Circle One) English Breeds Cross
 American Breeds Cross _____ European Cross Breeds _____

I Plan to Show this Commercial Heifer at: (Circle All That Apply) State Fair _____ District Show _____ Dixie National Junior Round-Up _____

Physical Location Where Heifer is Maintained _____

We hereby certify that the above information on breed of this commercial beef heifer is true and correct to the best of our knowledge. We understand that the final decision as to breed will be determined by the breed classifier(s), regardless of animal characteristics or paperwork submitted, and we are aware there is no appeal.

We agree to feed, fit, and exhibit this commercial beef heifer according to the rules and regulations of the Mississippi State Fair, District Livestock Shows and Dixie National Junior Round-Up, and will not administer any drug or substance to this commercial beef heifer not approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and will abide by all withdrawal times relative to the administration of legal drugs, feed additives, or substances approved by FDA or USDA by the date of the show. Furthermore, we authorize and will consent to having a tissue sample, blood sample, urine specimen, or other bodily excretion drawn from the animal for the purpose of analysis to determine the presence, if any, of illegal drugs or substances.

We agree to allow any employee of the MS Department of Agriculture, Board of Animal Health, Mississippi State University Extension Service or any Vo-Ag Advisor to inspect the above listed commercial beef heifer at the physical location stated at any given time without advance notice, provided, however, the exhibitor, parent, guardian or property owner be present. If the animal is not at the physical location given without justifiable cause, the animal is subject to being disqualified on a review of the Rules Committee.

We acknowledge that we understand and agree to abide by the rules and regulations as stated in the official premium books of the Mississippi State Fair, District Livestock Shows and Dixie National Junior Round-Up. We, individually and together, agree to waive any and all liability of any state, county, or local government officials, employees, or agents thereof, in both their individual and official capacities, as well as the entities of the state, county, and local government, for any injuries, damage or other misfortune that we or our animal may suffer as result of being allowed to participate in this show and events. Further, we, individually and together, agree to indemnify the same parties named in the preceding sentence from any and all claims, suits, or other legal actions or demands of any nature, which they may suffer as the result of our participation or the participation of our animal in the show and the events.

I permit Mississippi State University's Office of Agricultural Communications to record my, my child's, or my family member's image, voice, or both, and own and use those recordings for educational and publicity purposes. I release Mississippi State University and the Office of Agricultural Communications from any claims that might arise from use of these recordings. If subject is under 18, a parent, grandparent or guardian must write the child's name as the exhibitor and grant permission by signing on the appropriate line.

 Signature of Exhibitor _____ Date _____ Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Day Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

 Print Name of Parent/Guardian _____

Email address _____

The above exhibitor is a legal and enrolled member of _____ (4-H or FFA) and I certify this exhibitor as far as eligibility. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge, this commercial beef heifer is entered in the correct breed classification.

Signature of Extension Agent / FFA Advisor _____

Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Day Phone _____

(All blanks must be completed, or the form will be returned for completion.)

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