



## PIG IDENTIFICATION

### DO I HAVE TO IDENTIFY MY PIGS WITH BRANDS OR TAGS?

Since 2018, state and territory governments have legislated for mandatory National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) requirements for pig traceability including identification. All weaned pigs leaving the property need to be identified with a brand/tattoo **or** an NLIS approved pig tag. There are two methods for identifying pigs:

1. **Slap brand or tattoo** – is the primary choice for most commercial producers in pigs above 25kg liveweight (above 30kg in QLD). Strikers (to apply a slap brand or tattoo) can be ordered through your rural merchandiser (or Local Land Services in NSW). If using the tattoo:
  - All pigs born on the property, before leaving the property of birth, must be branded on the left shoulder with the tattoo assigned by the state or territory authority for that property.
  - All pigs introduced, and those of unknown origin, before leaving the property, must be branded on the right shoulder with the tattoo registered to that property. For subsequent movements, the pig must be branded on the right rump and left rump in that order.
  - SA currently allows pigs under 25kg to be tattooed with a special weaner striker that is pressed into the weaner pig's skin.
  - It is an offence to buy, sell, give away or use somebody else's swine brand or tattoo number on your pigs.

Brands applied by producers must:

- Comply with the state or territory legislation for pig brand size, composition and placement
  - Be directly linked to the property identification code (PIC) of the property from which the pig is being moved
  - Be applied using only tattoo ink or paste approved for that use, and
  - Be applied as per the manufacturer's instructions.
2. **NLIS approved pig tags** – for pigs under 25 kg liveweight. APL supports the use of ear tags in pigs under 25kg. Some owners may also choose this method of identification for larger pigs, particularly for non-commercially produced pigs. Owners should check their state or territory legislation to ensure this method is compliant. If using pig tags:
    - Before leaving the ('breeder') property of birth, all pigs must be tagged in the pig's left ear with a yellow 'breeder' NLIS approved pig tag.
    - Before leaving any other ('post breeder') property, introduced pigs or pigs of unknown origin, must be tagged in the pig's right ear with an orange 'post breeder' NLIS approved pig tag.

- Pigs can have only one 'breeder' tag, but more than one 'post-breeder' tag.

Producers who use tags should note:

- NLIS pig tags are different to NLIS cattle, sheep and goat tags, which are not approved for use in pigs.
- NLIS approved pig tags are printed with the letter "P" in a circle, the NLIS logo and your PIC.
- Once an NLIS approved pig tag is applied, it must not be removed until the animal is processed at an abattoir, meaning a pig can accumulate several ear tags over its lifetime.
- If a pig loses its tag whilst on the property, it must be replaced with the relevant tag for that property.
- NLIS pig tags issued for use on one property cannot be used to identify animals located on another property with a different PIC, and
- NLIS pig tags cannot be sold, given away or re-used and it is an offence to use somebody else's swine brand number on your pigs.

An example of an NLIS approved pig tags are shown below:



### Do I need to identify weaners?

To maintain traceability, weaners must be identified before movement. Most states and territories prefer (and some will regulate) that NLIS approved pig tags only are used to identify pigs under 25kg (30kg in QLD).

Piglets that have not been weaned do not need to be identified, provided they are moving with their mother, who must be correctly identified.

### Are there any other pig identification requirements in my state?

Some states or territories may require or allow alternative identification requirements, such as use of emergency tags, crown brands or permits to move unidentified pigs. Please check with your state or territory authority to ensure you are compliant.

### What are the rules for APIQ<sup>✓</sup>® accredited properties?

For APIQ accredited properties only, property-to-property (P2P) movements of pigs between properties with different PICs, and where the ownership does not change, do not require the pigs to be identified with a tattoo or NLIS approved pig tag. Producers in WA will require a movement document (PigPass NVD or Waybill) for this.



## Using NLIS approved pig ear tags

Producers should consider the welfare of the pig when choosing the appropriate sized ear tag. Apply the tag just before you want to move the pigs to minimise time in which tags can be lost. The tag should be permanent and visually readable at arm's length. At the time of publication, NLIS has finalised arrangements to accredit the following tags:

- Allflex Integra tag (for pigs over 25kg)
- Allflex Litter Max Tag (for pigs less than 25kg)
- Datamars Hog Tag (for pigs over 25kg)

## Tips for tattooing pigs

Tattoos must be legible before and after slaughter. If the tattoo is not legible, the pig is not considered to be properly identified. Technique is important. The difference between a good and bad tattoo often comes down to good application technique, well-maintained tattoo equipment and the use of proper carbon-based tattoo ink.

## What you need

- A tattoo slap marker or striker with your registered swine brand number on it – your department of primary industries may be able to recommend a manufacturer, or you may be able to order one from a local rural supplier.
- Carbon-based tattoo ink/paste – available from most rural suppliers.
- An ink pad – you can make one from a shallow dish and a piece of foam. It should be large enough to cover the whole tattoo marker.

## Preparation

- Ensure tattoo equipment is in good condition i.e. all needles are intact, and not bent, broken, or blunt
- Ensure tattoo symbols are installed correctly and in the right order (test on foam or cardboard)
- Clean the tattoo equipment with a wire brush to remove build-up of ink/paste, dirt and hair
- Do not dilute the ink or the tattoo will be too faint
- Soak your ink pad with carbon-based tattoo ink, and
- Hose off dirty animals before tattooing so that the tattoo is applied to a clean piece of skin.

## Application

- Ensure you are holding the tattoo marker the right way up
- Press the tattoo marker into the inkpad ensuring all needles are covered in ink
- Aim for a flat surface on the back or shoulder of the animal, with the intent of making a vertical or near-vertical mark.
- A full swing of the hammer is not necessary, as the weight of the hammer in its downward motion is sufficient to allow the dye to penetrate the skin and leave behind a clearly legible tattoo.
- This should not cause bruising or injury. Applying the marker harder will not improve the quality of the tattoo

- Reapply ink to the tattoo marker for every pig, and
- Check the tattoo marker regularly, and clean and maintain it as necessary.

## Where can I get more information about PigPass?

### PigPass Helpdesk

☎ 1800 001 458

✉ [helpdesk@pigpass.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@pigpass.com.au)

[www.pigpass.com.au](http://www.pigpass.com.au)

## Where can I order my NLIS approved pig tags?

NLIS approved pig tags are available through rural suppliers or directly through a tag manufacturer. You will need to provide your PIC when ordering and producers should consider the welfare of the pig when choosing an appropriately sized ear tag.

## Where can I get more information about PICs and tattoos/brands?

### NSW Local Land Services (LLS)

☎ 1300 795 299

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/animals-and-livestock/nlis/pigs>

### VIC Agriculture Victoria Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (AgVic)

☎ 136 186

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/national-livestock-identification-system/NLIS-pigs>

### QLD Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF)

☎ 132 523

- <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/farms-fishing-forestry/agriculture/livestock/pigs/branding>

- <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/business-priorities/agriculture/animals/pigs/getting-started/small-numbers>

### SA Department of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA)

☎ 1800 654 688

[https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal\\_health/pigs/nlis](https://pir.sa.gov.au/biosecurity/animal_health/pigs/nlis)

### TAS Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE)

☎ 1300 368 550

<https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/animal-industries/identifying-selling-moving-livestock/buying-and-selling-pigs>

### WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD)

☎ 1300 926 547

<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/livestock-biosecurity/nlis-and-identification-pigs>

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