

USDA'S GOAT IDENTIFICATION REGULATIONS AND HOW THEY IMPACT US

By Ray Hoyt

NPGA Policy

The National Pygmy Goat Association plans to continue to accept tattoos, the 9-digit RFID implants (microchips) currently in widespread use, and the new 15-digit ISO-compliant RFID implants for identification purposes. This usage includes registration of animals and identification compliance at NPGA-sanctioned shows. No recent rule changes have occurred with respect to this policy.

THE REMAINDER OF THIS ARTICLE HAS BEEN FACT-CHECKED BY USDA MANAGEMENT

USDA Official Identification

“Official Identification” as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture includes the following:

- Legible registry tattoos when accompanied by a copy of the registration certificate listing the tattoo number or an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection listing the number and the registry;
- Eartags as approved by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS); or
- ISO-compliant 15-digit RFID implants which read at 134.2 kHz, as approved by APHIS, when accompanied by a copy of the registration certificate listing the number or an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection listing the number and the registry, and a reader that can read the implant.

APHIS has elected not to enforce the requirement that an RFID implant be ISO-compliant in order to be used as official identification until 3/11/14. This means that any RFID implant applied after this date not ISO-compliant will not be acceptable as official identification. Also, the currently used 9-digit RFID implants applied *before* this date *will* be acceptable as official identification for the life of the animal as long as the other requirements are met.

Additionally, between 3/11/14 and 3/11/15, the 15-digit ISO-compliant RFID implants may include either a 3-digit country or manufacturer code as part of the 15 digits. After 3/11/15, all is the same except that the 3-digit code must be the 840 country code rather than any manufacturer code.

Why Be Concerned About USDA's Official Identification Rules?

Certain situations and conditions exist when “official identification” of pygmy goats is required by USDA. These federal requirements include the need to keep records for at least 5 years after the animal is sold or otherwise disposed of. USDA recommends using an electronic format, such as a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which is inclusive of the following information: official identification number, breed, sex, date official identification was applied, date acquired, name/address of previous owner (if applicable), date sold, and name/address of buyer.

Moving goats in interstate commerce. When sexually intact goats such as pygmies that do not meet the definition of low risk commercial goats are moved from one state into or through any other state, they must be “officially identified,” unless they are moving for slaughter or for management purposes without transfer of ownership. This movement also requires that the goats be accompanied by an interstate certificate of veterinary inspection.

Moving goats for purposes of exhibition or sale. When sexually intact goats such as pygmies that do not meet the definition of low risk commercial goats are moved either interstate or intrastate for the purposes of exhibition or sale, they must be “officially identified,” unless they are moving for slaughter.

Notes:

1. *Some states have additional requirements. Contact your State Veterinarian's office for more information.*
2. *The USDA definition of a low risk commercial goat is: “a goat that is raised for fiber and/or meat; is not registered or exhibited; has not been exposed to sheep; is not scrapie-positive, scrapie-exposed, or high-risk for scrapie; is not from a scrapie-infected or source herd; and does not reside in California, Colorado, Illinois, or Michigan.” NPGA-registered pygmy goats do not meet all of the listed requirements of this definition.*

ISO-Compliant RFID Devices

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies from more than 160 countries. ISO is a non-governmental organization established in 1947 and based in Geneva, Switzerland. Its mission is to promote the development of standardization and related activities in the world with a view to facilitating the international exchange of goods and services, and to develop cooperation in the spheres of intellectual,

scientific, technological and economic activity. ISO's work results in international agreements which are published as International Standards and other types of ISO documents. The two ISO standards relevant to this discussion are ISO 11784 and 11785; standard 11784 defines the structure of the microchip information content, and standard 11785 determines the protocol for scanner-microchip communication.

USDA Approved RFID Vendors (Sheep & Goats)

The list of USDA approved vendors is maintained at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/animal_diseases/scrapie/approved-tag-co.shtml

For the purchase of microchip transponder implants and scanners, the sole vendor on USDA's approved list is EZID, LLC of Greeley, Colorado, company representative Elsie McCoy. EZID, LLC has both the new RFID transponder implants and scanners in stock.

Procedures for Ordering RFID Implants

Individual Buyers. To order RFID implants from a USDA-approved vendor, individual buyers must have a Scrapie Program Flock Identification Number, also known simply as a Flock ID, and a National Premise Identification Number or Location Identification Number, also known as NPIN/LIN.

Flock ID: Associated with a group of animals and moves with the animals if they are sold as a flock.

NPIN/LIN: Standardized premise or location ID number associated with the address and remains with the location if the property is sold.

Since it varies from state to state whether the State Veterinarian's Office or the USDA Veterinary Services Office issues these numbers, this procedure should be followed:

- To get a Flock ID or to make sure that your NPIN or LIN has been recorded in the Scrapie National Database, call toll free 1-866-873-2824. Make sure that you provide your NPIN or LIN to this office for entry into the Scrapie National Database so that the RFID device vendor can access it. (The vendor will register your purchased microchips to you in this database by using your Flock ID and NPIN/LIN.) The above toll free number is answered by the officials whether State or Federal that are responsible for issuing Flock IDs in your state (for this to work, your phone must have one of your state's area codes). If you do not have a phone with one of your state's area codes or for some other reason the line does not work, you can call direct to either the State or Federal office listed at the links below for your State and they will assist you or refer you to the correct office.
 - Contact information for State Veterinarian's Offices is listed at <http://www.usaha.org/Portals/6/StateAnimalHealthOfficials.pdf>
 - Contact information for USDA Veterinary Services Offices are listed at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/area_offices/
- In many cases, the office that issues Flock ID can also issue a NPIN or LIN; if not, they will refer you to the correct office for your state.

Bulk Purchases by Clubs/Associations. Clubs or Associations can get a non-producer NPIN by emailing the ADTIS helpdesk at ADTIS.help@aphis.usda.gov. The club or association will need to designate a specific person to be responsible and that person will need to get a level 2 e-authentication which requires going to the responsible USDA office in their area and presenting photo identification. For more information on getting e-authenticated, go to: <https://www.eauth.usda.gov/MainPages/eauthHelp.aspx>. The club or association will also need to get the RFID implant provider to agree to provide them implants for redistribution. Since EZID, LLC is the only vendor currently approved for sheep/goats, they would have to select the bulk purchaser in the USDA's Animal Identification Management System (AIMS) and "ship" the implants to them in the system. The responsible association person would then need to go into AIMS and redistribute the implants to the appropriate member's herd using their Flock ID and NPIN/LIN numbers.