

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Regional Development
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council



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ELECTRONIC ID TAGS TO STRENGTHEN LIVESTOCK BIOSECURITY

Sheep and goats born in Victoria after 1 January 2017 will require an electronic identification tag.

From mid-2017, all saleyards, abattoirs and knackeries will be required to scan electronic tags of sheep and goats and upload the information to the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) database.

This follows the unanimous recommendation of the Victorian Sheep and Goat Identification Advisory Committee and the Victorian Auditor General's Biosecurity-Livestock Report.

Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford today announced a four week consultation period on both the transition package and draft implementation standards to ensure the smooth introduction of the electronic identification system.

Funding to support the transition will be provided based on feedback received and will focus on the phased adoption of electronic identification technology across the supply chain.

Agriculture Victoria will take feedback on the draft standards and transition package to assist with the implementation.

While the current national approach is a mob-based visual tag system, individual electronic tags offer greater traceability, productivity improvement and information for key international trading partners.

Electronic identification tags have been mandatory in the cattle industry for over a decade. In addition to the traceability benefits during a disease outbreak or food safety emergency, the storage of individual animal data provides opportunities for producers to further improve their production systems.

Agriculture Victoria currently retails the cheapest electronic NLIS tags in Australia thanks to a competitive tendering process and increased demand for the tags is likely to deliver even cheaper products to support producers adopting the technology.

Importantly, the price of electronic tags will be cost neutral to producers in the first year.

More information about these changes is available at www.agriculture.vic.gov.au/sheepEID.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Jaala Pulford

"This is yet another example of Victoria leading the way in strengthening our biosecurity systems and boosting our world-wide trade potential."

"Embracing identification technology will help safeguard our access to lucrative export markets and provide opportunities to continue upward productivity gains."

"The Andrews Labor Government will not leave the industry to absorb these system changes alone – we'll work with the sector across the supply chain to aid the introduction of identification tags and scanning technology."