

Texas



# Animal Health Commission Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) Rule Details

*What you need to know*

## **Chapter 50, Animal Disease Traceability, Cattle Identification:**

All adult breeding cattle (>18months), except cattle going directly to slaughter, shall be permanently identified within seven days of change of ownership.

Untagged adult cattle have seven days after purchase to be delivered to a slaughter facility, resold through a livestock market, or have acceptable permanent official identification applied. Slaughter type cattle that will be put on feed prior to slaughter shall also be permanently identified within seven days of purchase.

### **Q: What age/class of cattle must have acceptable permanent identification?**

- Sexually intact adult beef cattle 18 months and older
- Mexican origin event cattle of any age
- Nursing calves, steers, spayed heifers, bulls and heifers under 18 months are exempt (unless heifer has calved)
- All dairy cattle must be officially identified prior to movement, regardless of age

### **Q: Do I need to tag all of my cattle?**

No. Only the classes of cattle mentioned above that have changing ownership are required to be tagged, with the exception of dairy cattle, which need to be identified prior to movement.

### **Q: Can I move my beef cattle directly to slaughter from my farm/ranch without an ID?**

Yes. Ranchers can move an animal from their premises directly to slaughter without an ID because these animals can be traced through plant records. Breeding cattle otherwise changing ownership by private treaty sales, through a market or video auction must have acceptable permanent identification applied within seven days.

### **Q: If an animal already has a silver test tag, orange calfhood vaccination tag, or other official ID device, will it need to have a new tag applied if sold?**

No. Animals sold with an approved official ID will not have to be retagged. Only one official ID is required.

Continued on next page

**Q: If I'm a rail buyer, do I need to tag livestock that I'm sending to slaughter?**

No, unless you keep them longer than the seven day grace period.

**Q: If I purchase adult beef cattle to be turned out to graze or to be bred, am I required to tag them?**

Yes, because you are keeping them longer than the seven day grace period.

**Q: If I buy adult cattle to be sent to the feedyard before sending them to slaughter, am I required to tag them?**

Yes, because they are kept longer than the seven day grace period and they may be commingled with other cattle.

**Q: If I buy adult beef cattle and take them to another market or sell them from my holding pens or sell them as replacements, am I required to tag?**

No, not as long as you sell them within the seven day grace period. The purchaser must tag them within seven days if they are still in his ownership.

**Q: Is my ranch tag with my phone number considered official ID?**

No. A list of acceptable forms of official identification can be found at [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov) , or obtained by contacting any TAHC region office.

**Q: What do I need to do if one of my cows has lost her orange brucellosis calfhood vaccination tag, but still has the ear tattoo?**

The calfhood vaccination tag is an acceptable ID but the tattoo alone is not. Owners can have their veterinarian retag an animal with another orange calfhood vaccination tag if the animal has a legible tattoo, or the animal can be retagged with any other acceptable ID device by the owner, vet, or at most markets if it is being sold at one. A calfhood vaccination tattoo alone is not traceable, and is not an acceptable form of identification.

**Q: Is my ranch fire brand that is registered with the county an acceptable form of official ID?**

No. Although fire brands registered with the county are considered official ID for ownership purposes, they are not considered official ID by the TAHC for disease traceability purposes. Identical fire brands can be registered in multiple counties in Texas and ranch brands usually do not individually identify each animal.

**Q: If I am selling cattle with a breed association registration tattoo, breed association registration firebrand or breed association registration freeze brand, what information do I need to present to prove they are registered?**

If registration information is to be used as a form of official ID, then a registration certificate must accompany the cattle. It is also recommended that owners discuss this issue with their local TAHC animal health inspectors and market management in advance.

**Q: Are buffalo (bison) subject to this rule?**

Yes. Bison must meet the same ID requirements as beef cattle.

**Q: On which ear should the official ID be placed?**

Although the rule does not specify, care should be taken to ensure that any calfhood vaccination tattoos in female cattle are not covered up when applying a button type RFID tag. Vaccination tattoos are found in the middle section of the right ear.

**Q: What about official ID for other species? I no longer have sheep, but still have Scrapie tags and the applicator. Can I use my Scrapie tags on my cattle?**

No. Scrapie tags are designed for the smaller, thinner ears of sheep and goats, and should only be used in those species.

**Q: What if an owner that has been assigned tags moves? Do they need to report it and if so, to whom?**

Metal tags are assigned to an individual and not necessarily linked to a location. Owners may call the TAHC to update their contact information, but this is not a requirement. Texas tags should not be applied to cattle located in other states.

**Q: If a producer from another state sells their cattle in Texas, should tag distributors issue tags to them?**

No. Texas tags should not be issued to a producer in another state.

**Q: Do I need to keep records of individual identification when I sell my animal(s)?**

While keeping records is not required when animals are sold as part of a livestock breeding or production operation, producers are strongly encouraged to do so. Dealers are required to keep records, including individual animal identification, as part of a separate rule.

**Q: Who is responsible for maintaining the information related to eartag distribution?**

All metal tag numbers assigned will be maintained in a TAHC-managed database. The TAHC does not track individual change of ownership transactions.

**Q: Where can I find the complete listing of all Commission approved permanent identification devices?**

Producers may access the complete list at [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov) or by contacting any TAHC region office.

**Q: Do I have to use the free eartags offered, or can I use other acceptable methods of identification?**

No, the free metal tags are not required to be used, but they are one low cost option.

**Q: Will ear tag pliers be provided at no cost or will I have to purchase them?**

A limited supply of eartag pliers may be available at no cost. Because of the limited supply, producers are also encouraged to consider purchasing tagging pliers from any ag supply outlets. Many participating Tag Distributors have metal ear tag pliers available on a check-out basis.

For additional ear tag information, including the nearest distributor of free USDA tags, contact the TAHC Traceability Team at 1-800-550-8242 ext. 733, visit [www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov) or contact your local TAHC region office.

Information Provided by the  
Texas Animal Health Commission  
P.O. Box 12966 - Austin, TX 78711-2966

[www.tahc.texas.gov](http://www.tahc.texas.gov)

800-550-8242



Revised: July 2018