

Nueces Agriculture

"IMPROVING FOOD & FIBER PRODUCTION"

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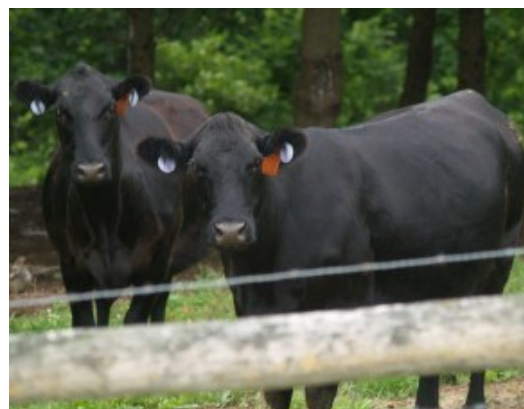
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15 Most Common Cattle Breeds in the US

RANCHR

With around 80 cattle breeds in the United States, it can be challenging to decide which is the best cattle to raise for your ranch. Here are the most common cattle breeds in the United States, what makes them popular.

1. **Black Angus** - Highest Grade Beef
2. **Holstein** - Most Milk Production
3. **Red Angus** - Best Maternal Instinct
4. **Hereford** - Most Adaptive
5. **Jersey** - Highest Quality Milk
6. **Charolais** - Best for Crossbreeding
7. **Limousin** - Highest Yield of Meat
8. **Shorthorn** - Most Fertile
9. **Simmental** - Most Versatile
10. **Texas Longhorn** - Most Intelligent
11. **Gelbvieh** - High Weight Gain
12. **Salers** - Best for Calving
13. **Highland** - Best Quality Meat
14. **Belted Galloway** - Most Resilient
15. **Dexter** - Best for Smaller Ranches



PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

When Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Time 8:30 AM

Where.... A&M AgriLife Ext. Office

Call to Pre-Register (361) 767-5220

710 East Main, Ste. 1, Robstown, TX

Fee: \$50.00 (Includes study manuals)

A Private Applicator is defined by law as a person who uses or supervises the use of a restricted-use or state-limited use pesticide for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity.

FARM WORKER PROTECTION SAFETY TRAINING

When Friday, May 2, 2024

Time 8:30 AM

Where.... A&M AgriLife Ext. Office

For Information Call (361) 767-5220

710 East Main, Ste. 1, Robstown, TX

Pesticide handlers and workers must be trained every year unless they are certified applicators. All participants in this training will be issued cards verifying they have successfully completed the required training and given a copy of the sign-in roster for their employer's files.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



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NuecesCountyAgriculture

2024 AUXIN TRAINING



2024 DICAMBA REQUIREMENTS

Auxin Herbicide Training is required of all licensed applicators wanting to purchase and apply Dicamba products. The Nueces County Extension Office will be offering two training sessions to go over the new 2024 requirements for these products. Classes are free and each offers 1 TDA CEU in Laws and Regs.

Registration will be from 8:30am-9am.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

TRAINING DATES:

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

9:00-10:00 AM

710 E. MAIN AVE., STE. 1

ROBSTOWN, TX

361.767.5223

FEBRUARY 16, 2024

9:00-10:00 AM

710 E. MAIN AVE., STE. 1

ROBSTOWN, TX

361.767.5223

USDA to launch the National Agricultural Classification Survey

By: AG Daily; January 11, 2024

Already preparing for the 2027 Census of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service will conduct the National Agricultural Classification Survey starting Jan. 24.

The survey, an important step in determining who should receive a 2027 Census of Agriculture questionnaire, will go to approximately 250,000 recipients to ask if they conduct agricultural activity. The results of the survey will ensure that every U.S. producer, no matter how large or small their operation, has a voice and is counted in the highly anticipated and influential agricultural census data.

"This survey helps illustrate the breadth of American agriculture and enables USDA to get a complete count of all farmers and ranchers," said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. "Every response matters. Even if a recipient believes that the survey does not apply to them, we ask that they respond to the few screening questions."

NASS encourages recipients to respond securely online using the unique survey code mailed with the survey. Completed questionnaires may also be mailed back in the prepaid envelope provided. NASS requests that each person who receives the survey respond promptly.

"The NACS ensures that everyone who produces and sells, or normally would sell, \$1000 or more of agricultural products in a calendar year are represented in these vital data," said Hamer.

Referenced by countless national, state, and local decision-makers, researchers, farm organizations, and more, the once-every-five-year Census of Agriculture remains the most comprehensive source of data on American agriculture. The data tell the story of American farmers, ranchers, and growers over time, and inform agricultural policies and programs that impact operations across America. USDA will release the 2022 Census of Agriculture data in February 2024.



If a producer did not receive the 2022 Census of Agriculture or the NACS, NASS encourages them to sign up to be counted. All information individuals report will be kept confidential, as federal law requires. For more information with the survey, call 888-424-7828

Livestock Record Keeping

Documenting Details That Aid in Breeding Decisions, Herd Selection, and the Integrity of the Herd Book

By: Backyard Goats; September 1, 2023



-by Rebecca Krebs Livestock record keeping is a fundamental component of every goat breeding program. Records streamline herd management and provide the information necessary to improve herd health, production, or conformational traits through selective breeding. In registered herds, correct records preserve the accuracy of generations of pedigree and performance data. Let's look at what facts are important to record and how to keep track of them.

What facts should be recorded?

- **Heat Cycles:** Most does are consistent in how often they come into heat. If you plan to take your doe to an outside buck for stud service or artificially inseminate her, mark the date every time she comes into heat. You can make advance arrangements with the buck's owner or the A.I. technician if there is a pattern. After the doe is bred, if she shows no signs of heat when you would normally expect her to — yay! — there is a good chance that she is pregnant.
- **Breeding Dates:** Recording the date(s) a doe is exposed to a buck is helpful since you know her due date and, therefore, can feed and manage her correctly for her stage of gestation, as well as prepare for kidding beforehand. Furthermore, if a doe is exposed to multiple bucks over the course of the breeding season, recording which buck she was exposed to on which date(s) will help eliminate pedigree errors or the extra fees associated with DNA testing her offspring to verify their sire.
- **Escapees:** Anytime you find an escaped goat in or near the opposite sex's pen, it's worth noting it in your records, even if you don't think any breeding occurred. Does, for example, have been known to jump into the buck pen, get successfully bred, and jump out again? That note will explain a few things down the road when Daisy looks suspiciously fat, and it may help identify the sire of the oopsies.
- **Parentage:** Even if your goats aren't registered, keep track of their parents so that you can make informed herd selection and breeding choices based on the desirable or undesirable traits each goat passes to its offspring. Accurate parentage records establish your reputation as an honest breeder for registered herds. A registration mistake, though unintentional, is difficult to recover from since no one wants to risk buying goats with dubious pedigrees.
- **Birth Dates:** Kids' birth dates are required for registration. You'll also need their birth dates to provide age-specific care, such as vaccinations or parasite control.
- **Kidding Ease:** Jot down a few remarks about the outcome of each birth. Does that give birth without complications or intervention are the goal of every good breeding program, whereas does with a history of kidding complications should be removed from the breeding herd since they are more likely to pass on those tendencies to their daughters and granddaughters.
- **Number/Sex of Kids in Birth:** Birth records aid in identifying hereditary litter-size trends in a line of goats. Both the number of kids in the birth and their sex is also required information on registration applications.



- **Mothering Ability:** Mothering instincts are hereditary and influence the survivability, health, adaptability, and growth of dam-raised kids. Good mothers attentively clean, feed, guide, and protect their kids. Replace does that routinely reject or neglect their kids.
- **Milk Production:** In dairy herds, milk, butterfat, and protein production records are essential to determine which goats are assets as milkers and breeding animals. Record production officially through the Dairy Herd Improvement program or unofficially in a notebook. Additionally, does of all breeds need to produce enough milk to raise healthy kids.
- **Kids' Growth Rates:** Genetics, nutrition, and management influence kids' growth rates. Take note of kids that grow slowly compared to their peers. Management aside, these issues can point to congenital health problems, poor resistance to parasites, or an unproductive mother. Records of live and/or hanging weights are important if you raise meat goats that must reach a specific size by market time. Cull lines of goats that fail to thrive or don't meet weight gain goals in favor of retaining thrifty goats.
- **Body Condition Scores:** Regularly evaluating and recording each goat's body condition score reveals whether current management practices produce satisfactory results or should be modified (e.g., increasing feeding for heavily lactating does that have difficulty maintaining weight).
- **Health Log:** Document parasite treatments or preven-

tatives, hoof trimming, vaccinations, antibiotic treatments, or any other health maintenance or veterinary procedures. This health log will help you remember when the goats are due for another deworming, vaccination, etc. It is critical to ensure and document that you are adhering to correct milk and meat withdrawal periods after the administration of drugs. Plus, a meticulous health log highlights goats that deal with health problems more frequently than the others

- **Identification:** All your records are pointless unless you have a reliable method of tying those records to specific goats. Tattoo, tag, and/or microchip each goat with a unique identification number you can file its records under. Goat registration organizations require at least one of these forms of identification for registration.

Electronic livestock record keeping

Electronic livestock record keeping has the advantage of streamlined storage, easy transport, and quick access anywhere on the farm. You can find a goat record-keeping app or farm record-keeping software with a wide selection of features that help you keep track of every important detail. Or creating a basic goat record-keeping spreadsheet may suit your needs just fine.

Electronic records, however, are at the mercy of finicky devices, power outages, software glitches, and a myriad of other issues. Regularly back up electronic records so they aren't completely lost in such an event.

Paper livestock record keeping

Compared to electronic records, paper records take more space to store and must be carefully organized for easy accessibility. But, considering that one little glitch won't obliterate everything, some people feel that the tangibility of pen and paper in hand outweighs modern convenience. Store irreplaceable paper records in a fire- and water-resistant file cabinet.

Make livestock record keeping simple and organized. If it's a burden, you won't add entries while the details are fresh in your mind. Leaving nothing to memory is the key to accurate livestock record keeping that helps you achieve your herd goals and build customers' respect and confidence.

The Ins & Outs of Livestock Registration

By: Callene Rapp, Grit; August 3, 2023

Increase the value of your farm animals by keeping up on livestock registration for your herd.

Registering livestock can, in many cases, increase an animal's value. Prospective buyers will often pay more for livestock with registration papers. Not only do the papers prove that the animal is indeed a member of a specific breed, but they can also give the new owner some idea of what to expect in terms of performance. In addition, it shows that you value your animals.

Certain sires and dams in every breed have reputations — sometimes good and sometimes bad. Finding certain names in a pedigree can prepare the new owner for not only what the animal is capable of, but what abilities his or her offspring could likely inherit.

For example, the American Quarter Horse is a breed that can shine at a variety of different jobs, but a horse with parents that excel in cattle and ranch work will be more likely to do well at that job than one with different bloodlines. Not that any horse can't be trained to do well at those jobs, but having parents that excelled at the type of work you expect from your new horse will give you a greater degree of confidence that the animal should be able to perform well.

Inbreeding is a continuous concern, especially with rare breeds, and registering your animals helps your breed association to monitor if certain sires are being overused, so they can encourage the use of other sires. While technology, such as artificial insemination, gives breeders access to sires they wouldn't ordinarily be able to use, it can also lead to popular sires becoming overrepresented. This has happened in several breeds, most notably the Holstein. Overuse of a handful of sires known for one or two desirable traits has led to a population that suffers from a lack of genetic diversity.

Closed herdbooks and open herdbooks

The type of registry most people are familiar with is the traditional "closed herdbook" registry. For an animal to qualify for registration, both sire and dam must also be registered. Each association has different policies, but only in the rarest of cases will animals be allowed in if both parents are lacking papers.

Generally speaking, registering offspring is the responsibility of the owner of the dam.

To register an animal, an application is submitted to the registry, usually one application for each individual. An exception is in the case of swine, where the entire litter can be registered, and then, once the best animals are identified, they can be issued individual certificates.

By contrast, an "open herdbook" will accept animals without registered parents, but animals must meet the standards for appearance, and the known history of the herd must support their inclusion. There are very few registries that are open, and these are usually for rare breeds that are adding new populations as they're discovered. Most open herdbooks eventually move to closed ones after it's relatively certain that no new groups are likely to be discovered.

pedigree information when it's known, don't confuse a handwritten or typed pedigree with the official registration certificate from the breed association. The certificate means the information has been verified by a neutral party (the association), and is as accurate as possible. A pedigree, while valuable, doesn't have the same level of authentication as the certificate.



Whatever the breed, some form of permanent identification is almost always required for registration. This can be a tag, tattoo, or brand, or, in some cases, a microchip. Some associations for breeds that have a high degree of physical variability, such as Pineywoods cattle or Arapawa goats, require photos of the individual animal as well. These become part of the permanent record of the animal with the association, and in case of lost paperwork, can be used to verify that the animal is indeed what it's supposed to be.

Tattoos and microchips are permanent and not easily altered, but the

downside is that the animal will have to be in hand to verify identity. Brands are also permanent, but are somewhat more difficult to administer, and questions arise about how humane branding is. Tags have the advantage of being relatively easy to apply, even for an inexperienced person, and they can be seen from a distance. The drawback is that they can be removed.

Some associations that register larger and more valuable animals, such as horses and some breeds of cattle, will also require DNA typing. This is relatively easy to do, and is usually done by collecting a hair sample.

Most associations collect some type of fee for registering animals. Depending on the breed, some registration fees are quite expensive, while others can cost only a few dollars. Many rare breed associations make registration free for members in order to make it as easy as possible for members to submit applications. In the case of breeds numbering only a few hundred individuals, capturing information on every animal is critical.

Paper trail

It's the seller's responsibility to transfer registration paperwork to the new owner. In a perfect transaction, the seller will give the buyer a copy of the registration certificate, and will submit the original to the association for transfer to the new owner. This allows the association to keep track of where each animal has gone.

Sometimes, however, sellers will give the originals to the new owners for them to submit, which works so long as the new owners actually do it. Oftentimes, though, good intentions go awry and the paperwork doesn't get filed. This is problematic in that it provides a chance for animals to be lost to the association, and the breed. If papers are lost, and animals are sold again without paperwork, it can become challenging, if not impossible, to recover those animals into the breed.

This can be a huge disappointment to new owners who purchase animals in good faith that they're registered, only to find out that they're not — and depending on the rules of the association, registration may not be recoverable.

For a small, critically endangered breed that only registers a handful of animals a year, this can be a catastrophic loss. Most small associations value recovering purebred animals and will put forth every effort to make sure all individuals that can be registered or recovered are, but this requires a tremendous amount of work — effort that could be avoided if breeders and owners only take the time to make sure paperwork is submitted properly.



Heritage breed conservation

In the case of an organization such as The Livestock Conservancy (TLC), data submitted by breed associations informs which breeds are included on the Conservation Priority List (CPL), and in which category.

Registration numbers are the only objective data TLC can use to accurately track population data, and while they understand that there will inevitably be animals that slip through the cracks and are lost to the registered population, data from associations is the only verifiable information they have to go on. TLC maintains relationships with associations governing the breeds on the CPL,

and every year asks for registration data for the previous year to help categorize breeds and make sure their resources are going where they're needed most.

One of the functions of a breed association is member support and outreach. Raising awareness of the good qualities of a breed takes time, and often money. Registration fees pay for more than the paper you're given; they help the breed association fund those efforts. Websites, promotional material, and advertisement in publications are all a result of an active membership base that takes care to register their animals and pay the required fees. If you raise a particular breed, you benefit from the association's efforts, directly and indirectly. This is especially true of breeds with critically low numbers.

Maybe you have all that pedigree information in your head. You know it, so what does it matter to anyone else? Consider what might happen if someone had to assume ownership of your herd under unfortunate circumstances. If you haven't registered your animals, and you're no longer able to provide that information, the animals you've carefully selected for several generations are worth no more than grade animals. If no one can verify what they are, they may be very likely to be sold at the sale barn. And then all your years of hard work go down the drain.

Are there any instances when registration doesn't make sense? A few. Most commercial cow-calf operations won't register calves destined for the feed lot. Most of the time, though, those operations will make use of bulls that are registered and have pedigrees and data to back up their selection as herd sires. Also, if you're absolutely certain that some of your animals are destined for the home freezer, it may not make sense to register those. But registering the ones that are good enough to be breeding stock will help provide data to the association, and keep the best in the registry loop.

All in all, if you're going to raise a purebred animal, the advantages to keeping your herd registered and up to date far outweigh any disadvantages. It takes a little time and effort, but a record of your hard work can be invaluable.

Buying a 4-H Pig—Making the Right Choice

The Best Pig Breeds for 4-H

By: Janet Garman, Countryside Magazine; June 14, 2022



If only buying a 4-H pig breed was as easy as grabbing the first piglet you see and raising it to market weight! Wouldn't that be hilarious and interesting? Making the right choice in choosing a 4-H pig breed takes quite a bit of thought, research, and preparation, to get to auction day.

Looking ahead and choosing a breed that will work with a fair schedule is the first important factor. Typically, hogs are grown for four to five months before the 4-H shows start at fairs. The goals include taking a weanling piglet (around 30 pounds) and growing it to market weight of 270 pounds in the months leading up to the county, state, or national fairs. In many cases, the pig is sold at auction after the last show.

The process teaches the 4-H member a multitude of valuable livestock skills. These include:

Selection of breed and individual animal

Nutrition and feed efficiency

Daily feeding

Health

Reproduction

Marketing

Selection of Breed

4-H pigs may be chosen based on what the family farm is already raising. Other students will choose from a local 4-H pig breeder, or branch out and experiment with a new breed that seems to have the right rate of growth.

Health, vigor, rate of growth, and conforming to breed standards all must come together to produce a winning pig.

Conformation counts in shows and learning about the breed standards is important. Avoid choosing a piglet that has disqualifying traits.

When buying a 4-H pig breed, be prepared to pay considerably more than a feeder piglet.

Nutrition and Feed Efficiency

This component seems to be the trickiest for the inexperienced 4-H pig owner. The feed efficiency value is the amount of feed required for one pound of gain. The goal in many timelines is 1.5 to 1.8 pounds of gain per day.

Of course, pigs, being pigs, will do their very best to enjoy more than the feed they require. This often results in separating individuals who have a faster rate of gain, from the others.

Expert Advice from a 4-H Family

I spoke with a local family that has been involved in 4-H for many years. They repeatedly earned top marks at local fairs, and their hogs always earned top money at the auction. The Tice family of En-Tice-Ment Stables in Davidsonville, Maryland was eager to discuss how they raised and showed 4-H pig breeds.

Deana and Joe Tice and their children, Victoria, Josh, and Justin were brought up in 4-H. They were familiar faces at our local fairs and helped me cut through the fog of raising 4-H pig breeds. I spoke with Deanna and Josh. When they began showing pigs, they found a good local farmer who was raising show pigs.

Deana explained that timing the piglet purchase is a key point in being successful. If the fair you will compete in has an earlier calendar date, you will get piglets earlier. For the later fairs, you are looking for a sow who is due to farrow later in the spring.

They went on to explain that there is a science to it all. Your goal is to reach the market weight of 260 to 280 pounds by the fair. Josh and his siblings learned to manage the rate of gain so that the pigs didn't get too big for the market. The lessons included cost-effective feeding, taking extensive notes, and determining the rate of gain.

Deana added that the eventual separating of piglets so that they didn't overeat from their neighbor's feed pan, added work to the whole process. It's not as simple as just feeding the pigs and walking away!

Josh Tice mainly raised Yorkshire pigs for his 4-H pig projects. His sister, Victoria, holds a grand champion for her work with a Duroc, and their brother Justin raised both Duroc and Berkshire.

The Tice's let me know that crossbreeds are also a good choice. One crossbreed is referred to as a blue butt. These are a result of Hampshire/Yorkshire or Hampshire/Chester White. These crosses result in a bluish marking over the rump which is how the name came to be used. The blue butts make a good 4-H pig breed and are excellent for meat production.

Common Breeds of 4-H Pigs

- Hereford
- Yorkshire
- Duroc
- Berkshire
- Hampshire
- Chester White
- Tamworth
- Gloucestershire Old Spot
- Red Wattle



Characteristics

Each breed has at least one characteristic that makes it a good choice for 4-H pig shows. Yorkshire sows are great at mothering, so if you plan to keep your pig and breed it, the Yorkshire would be a great choice. Berkshire, Chester White, and Durocs are often chosen for their profitability.

Taste (<https://heritagefoods.com/blogs/news/heritage-pork-taste-chart>)

Raising for taste? The Duroc and Tamworth are leaner meat breeds. Berkshire is considered in a class by itself by many pork producers. The taste is smooth and mellow. Duroc is a great meat hog with a good fat to lean ratio and marbling. The expected flavor profile for each breed is easily discovered on the Livestock Conservancy website and many breed associations as well.

What about the Smaller Heritage Breeds?

The reason you don't see many Kunekune and American Guinea Hogs in 4-H pig shows is that they can't fairly compete against the larger hog breeds. There is a push in some areas to add smaller pig breed competitions. The smaller breeds are enticing to the younger children wishing to compete in 4-H pig shows. The grow-out period can be lengthy. The longer time to reach market weight of 150 to 180 pounds can be a drawback to showing these pigs at 4-H shows.

Infrastructure

Before buying a 4-H pig and bringing it home, have a fenced-in area in place. Piglets are easily trained to an electric wire fence. The lowest wire should be only a few inches off the ground for piglets. You don't want them to learn they can duck under the fence to obtain freedom!

A small hut, run-in shed, or A-frame shelter heavily bedded with hay is all the pigs need to shelter from bad weather. Most pigs will burrow under a thick blanket of hay to stay toasty warm.

Water should be provided at all times. Your best bet is a shallow large container that cannot be easily be tipped over. Pigs are playful and inquisitive.

Final Advice

Josh Tice has the following advice for future 4-H pig participants. If you aren't sure if showing pigs is the right thing for you, do your research before buying a 4-H pig. Putting time into the homework on pig breeds, livestock management, and pigs, in general, is the first step. Learn what is needed for optimal pig health. Go to the local fairs and watch others showing their pigs. Listen to the feedback from the judges. Take lots of notes.

How to Treat Foot Rot in Cattle, Goats, and Sheep

How Yeast Can Present in Chickens and also Cause Horse Hoof Problems

By: Janet Garman; Countryside Magazine; July 27, 2022 regularly vetted for accuracy.



Thrush and an overgrowth of yeast are often behind a case of foot rot in cattle and other livestock. Foot rot in cattle and all livestock needs to be taken care of as soon as possible. Sheep foot rot can happen if the sheep are pastured in muddy fields. Standing in mud while grazing leads to the perfect conditions for foot rot. Goats kept in areas where they have no dry spot to stand often get thrush. The hooves have a distinctive, unpleasant odor. The animal may become lame from the inflammation caused by bacteria and yeast. Even poultry can suffer from illness relating to thrush and yeast overgrowth. Since we cannot control the weather, and many of us cannot add dry pastureland during the rainy season, how do we treat and care for animals with foot rot?

How Hoof Rot in Cattle Begins

Take a look at how the hoof rot in cattle occurs. Bacteria and fungi need a few things in order to flourish. Warm, moist conditions are the favorite of fungi. The particular fungus most often seen in cases of foot rot in cattle is *Chrysosporium spp.*

The initial problem can be caused by wet conditions or foot injury. This leads to lameness and pain. Bacteria gain entry and cause further problems and lead the way for fungi to cause thrush, a smelly irritating condition in hoof rot.

Signs of Hoof Rot

In cattle, the back claw portion of the hoof is often involved. Also, the inflammation can be seen between the two sides of the cloven hoof. It is extremely painful for the animal to walk on and the cow will start to bear weight on different parts of the hoof. This leads to more lameness.

How to Treat

The most often used remedy for foot rot in cattle is copper sulfate foot baths. It should be noted that thrush and foot rot in cattle is one of the highest causes of economic loss for the cattle industry. Animals that are in pain do not eat well, convert feed into meat as well, or breed as well as healthy animals.

Hoof Rot in Sheep, Goats, and Horses

Just as with foot rot in cattle, other ruminants can suffer too. Sheep hoof rot and sheep illnesses resulting from hoof rot need to be addressed immediately. Proper and frequent hoof trimming does help control the conditions in which yeast thrive. The organisms most likely to cause sheep foot rot and goats are *Fusobacterium necrophorum* and *Dichelobacter nodosus*. Certain times of the year when moist, wet ground is likely, give the organisms just the right conditions to grow. An overgrowth of bacterial hoof rot then invites yeast organisms to also flourish. A small irritation between the digits of the hoof is all that is needed for the organism to gain entry and cause disease.

How to Recognize and Treat Hoof Rot

The animal will exhibit lameness as a sign of hoof rot. If you are doing routine hoof trimming, you may notice a reaction from touching the tender spots. Sometimes the hoof rot area is hiding between the digits of the hoof. It looks like a red, irritated scrape and is tender. The animal may pull away and act very agitated when being treated.

As with foot rot in cattle, treatment is often copper sulfate foot baths. In addition to using copper sulfate or the commercial product known as Thrush Buster, I will also spray the irritated tissue with an antibacterial wound spray.

Hoof rot in horses is less serious although horses do need to be treated for thrush infections as soon as possible. The organism causing thrush in horses is *Spherophorus neophorus*. Thrush in horses is primarily seen on the area referred to as the “frog” on the underside of the horse’s hoof. This horse hoof problem needs to be treated so that the hoof does not deteriorate. Lameness, limping, and tenderness are signs that need to be checked. Your farrier can offer helpful treatment options and perform more frequent trims to keep the problem from recurring. The stalls should be kept dry and free from urine and feces build up. A diluted bleach solution is sometimes used to treat the thrush infection. Essential oil users have told me that they use a diluted solution of tea tree oil to treat thrush. In any cases of alternative treatment, consult your veterinarian.

Thrush and Yeast in Poultry

Thrush caused by yeast and bacterial infections is not limited to animals with hooves. Controlling yeast and bacteria during wet rainy seasons is important to many species on the farm. Last winter we had a challenge from a yeast infection in our chickens resulting from the cold, wet conditions followed by warm, wet, muddy conditions. Two of our hens exhibited sick chicken symptoms and we discovered they had contracted sour crop which led to yeast growth in their throats. The yeast spores can accumulate in the throat and cause blockage. Removing the yeast growth manually using tweezers was the vet’s recommendation. Finally, I had the vet come out to the farm to see what I was dealing with. I was told that the yeast was forming a membrane that was keeping the hens from swallowing any food or water. As soon as I would clear their throats, the membrane would regrow, again closing off the esophagus. While the vet did prescribe an oral medication, the treatment did not work. The hens were lost. Thankfully, it was not a contagious strain that could be passed among the flock. The ground was covered as best we could with dry wood chips. This was the only time we have ever seen this phenomenon occur and it was quite time-consuming and sad.



Can Problems Like This be Prevented?

Keeping your animals strong with good nutrition and optimal living conditions are the best ways to prevent infections leading to hoof rot and yeast infections. Feeding garlic and herbs to poultry, and adding raw apple cider vinegar (1 tbsp to 1 gallon) to the poultry waterers helps keep their immune systems strong and less attractive to bacteria and fungi. Treat all irritations in the hoof area quickly and improve the conditions as best you can to prevent foot rot in cattle and other ruminants.

Livestock Ear Tags vs Tattoos: Which is Better for Your Agribusiness?

By: Farmbrite; February 2, 2023

Livestock ear tags and tattoos play an integral role in animal identification and disease traceability. These two animal identification methods are widely used in communal and commercial farms across the globe. Other methods of livestock identification include branding, ear notching, painting, and the use of microchips.

So, which is better? Livestock ear tags or tattoos? In this article, we'll examine the pros and cons of livestock ear tagging and tattooing as essential farm management practices. We'll also detail the steps to follow when tagging or tattooing your livestock. Let's start with the basics.

What is an Ear Tag?

An ear tag, also known as an animal identification tag is a small piece of metallic or plastic ear attachment meant for identification purposes. The tag bears the animal identification number, letter, or alphanumerical. The animal identification ID number is usually used to indicate sex, sire, problem, date of birth, and other crucial information about the livestock.

Tags are fixed onto the livestock ears using a special pair of pliers also referred to as an applicator. You can buy ear tags and their applicators from farm equipment dealers or online marketplaces.

Federal and state ear tags are supplied and regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS.

Types of Animal Ear Tags

Ear tags differ depending on shape (button-shaped or flag-shaped), size, color (yellow, blue, red), and material (plastic or metallic). Currently, ear tags are classified as electronic or non-electronic.

In a move to enhance animal disease traceability, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is engaging the public to approve Radio Frequency Identification RFID ear tags to be the only legitimate form of cattle identification for interstate movement.

How to Tag Your Livestock

The process of applying ear tags to livestock is quick and simple and you can do it yourself. Indeed, you can follow the manufacturer's directions and apply the tag appropriately. That said, you should ensure that you choose the appropriate tags for the animal. In addition, ensure that you abide by the county, state, and national animal identification guidelines, especially if the livestock will be moved across states. Below are the steps you should follow when tagging your animals.

1. **Assemble the tools** Have in place the instruments needed for applying ear tags. These include ear tags, an applicator, disinfectant, and gloves. Also, ensure the tag have information that you want to capture including sire, sex, date of birth, and so forth.
2. **Catch and restrain the animal** You should restrain the animal to avoid getting injured or applying the tag wrongly. Small livestock such as calves, goats, and sheep can be held and tagged by a single person. Be careful with newborn calves because their mothers are overprotective and might gore you. Perhaps, you can use a calf cage to tag newborn calves without getting gored. For bigger animals, use a halter, nose lead, or head gate to restrict head movement.



3. **Determine where to apply the tag** Tags shouldn't be applied too far inside the ear. This site has thicker tissue and might hold the tag tightly resulting in infections such as necrosis. Similarly, tags placed on the extreme exterior part of the ear are likely to be ripped out or snagged. The appropriate location should be between the ribs in the middle one-third of the ear.

4. **Disinfect** Always disinfect the applicator and site for the tag by wiping it with 70% alcohol or any other disinfectant before starting to apply the ear tag. This way, you will prevent germs from getting into the pierced site.

5. **Tag application** Once you have everything set, it is now time to apply the tag. Note that if you apply the tag correctly, you will avoid issues such as ear infections or the tag falling off. Moreover, a rightly placed tag eases livestock identification. To apply the tag correctly, ensure the parts of the ear tag and applicator are intact and function as required. An ear tag has two parts; the male and female portion. The male part of the ear tag, also known as the stud is the visual panel while the female part is the button. On the other hand, the jaws of the applicator should be correctly aligned to give the best results. And so, you should clamp them to ascertain whether they are aligned properly. With the applicator over the tagging area, place the male portion on the back and the female portion on the front part of the ear. Position everything correctly then press firmly and release the applicator to tag the animal. A sharp sound (clink) will be produced as the two portions of the ear tag join. Now remove the applicator and confirm that the two portions of the tag are interlocked.

6. **Watch the tags** After applying the tags, you should keep an eye on the ears of marked animals to identify, prevent or treat problems such as swelling, pain, discharge, or tissue death. Please consider removing the tag to treat the wound if the swelling, discharge, or pain persists.

How to Maintain the Ear Tag Applicator?

The applicator should be properly cleaned before and after use. It should also be sanitized using an antiseptic or a disinfectant. Keep in mind that sharing ear tag applicators among a group of livestock can easily spread bacterial, fungal, and viral diseases.

Pros and Cons of Livestock Ear Tags

Pros

- Ear tags provide an effective way of identifying the livestock. Non-electronic tags are easily visible by the naked eye while electronic tags IED or RFID store critical information about the livestock. RFID provides automated reporting on animal movement which aids in animal disease traceability.
- The process of applying ear tags is quick and simple. Farmers can do it for themselves.
- Simple non-electric tags are affordable and might not require trained personnel to apply. Some cost as little as \$10.
- If fixed properly, ear tags can last long enough till the livestock is sold.
- Ear tags are available for most livestock including cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs
- Blank ear tags are available for the farmer to write whatever they wish.

You can acquire a wide variety of ear tag sizes and colors

Cons

- Wrongly applied ear tags can result in tissue problems, infections, or severe pain.
- Tags are considered a semi-permanent identification method because they can break or can come out accidentally or by intention.
- Metallic ear tags are associated with infections in dairy cattle and goats.
- The applicator must match the brand of tags.

Some jurisdictions require that ear tags to purchased annually.

Important information about ear tag color

- The blue color is used by the USDA (at least for the identification of sheep and goats). So, don't use it.
- Certain ear tag colors are easier to read and identify than others. Usually, lighter tag colors such as pink, orange, yellow, etc. are easier to read on the animal than dull colors

You do not need to change the color of your ear tags; you can use the same color for ages and all animals in your flock.

What Is a Livestock Tattoo?

Livestock tattooing is the practice of placing permanent marks on the skin of farm animals primarily for identification. A pair of livestock tattoo pliers is used to embed numbers or letter marks on the animal's skin. A tattoo ink is then applied before puncturing marks. This ink remains visible even after the wound heals. Ear tattooing is regarded as an easy and reliable permanent identification method. According to CALS, tattooing is the favorite permanent identification technique for goat breed associations.

Requirements for Livestock Tattooing

You will need tattoo pliers and ink, disinfectant, numbers, or letters (used to pierce the skin and leave the needed mark). You might require gloves and a halter as well.

Steps to Tattoo Livestock



1. Restrain the animal

Restrain the animal. Smaller animals such as kids and calves are held by hand but the large ones need to be restrained using a halter.

2. Identify the site for tattoo

Locate an appropriate site for the tattoo. If tattooing the ear, ensure you avoid piercing the veins. For goat breeds with small ears, you can consider tattooing the tail web.

3. Clean

Disinfect the site for the tattoo using a clean cloth or cotton wool dipped in rubbing alcohol. Ensure you clean all

the wax to get the desired results.

4. Applying tattoo ink

Apply ink generously on the site for the tattoo. You should ink an area larger than the tattoo pliers. Also, stick to the part of the ear without too much hair.

5. Place the tattoo

Confirm that the animal is restrained and place the tattoo plier in the right position. Avoid piercing the veins as this will lead to bleeding and result in a low-quality tattoo. Then clamp the pliers to puncture the ear. Unclamp, lift, and remove the pliers.

6. Apply more ink

Check the piercings and apply more ink into holes to get a visible and long-lasting tattoo.

7. Clean and disinfect the tools

After you're done, clean and disinfect the tattoo pliers for the next use. This way, you will minimize the chances of infecting the next batch of animals.

Pros and Cons of Tattoos

Pros

- Tattoos are permanent identification marks that last a lifetime, a reason why it is used by most livestock registries.
- They are quick, simple, and reliable when compared to other permanent identification techniques such as branding.
- Tattoos can be used singly or together with other identification methods.
- Tattoos are appropriate for all livestock.

Tattoo application tools can be used for a lifetime

Cons

- Tattoos are unobtrusive and might not be easily visible.
 - Tattoos work well with some specific animal colors
- Infection may if the tools are not properly cleaned

Similarities Between Ear Tags and Tattoos

- Both are animal identification techniques
- The tools and the procedure used to apply ear tags and tattoos are almost similar.
- Both are quick and simple methods of animal identification.
- In most cases, tags and tattoos are applied on the ear of the animal.
- Both techniques are approved by the US Department of Agriculture and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- Both methods involve piercing the skin.
- Well done tag and tattoos are easy to read

	Tags	Tattoos
Permanent identification		★
Quick to apply	★	
Easy to read at a distance	★	
Tear or rip out	★	
Purchase yearly	★	
Only buy ink & lost numbers		★
Easily altered	★	

Differences Between Ear Tags and Tattoos

Ear tags

- Tags are conspicuous, easily visible, and readable
- Tags are semi-permanent animal identification method
- Are metallic or plastic object containing the identification number is attached to the ear of the livestock Identification
- Tags are conspicuous, easily visible, and readable
- Metallic ear tags have been associated with infection, especially in dairy cattle
- Ink is not used during the tagging process
- Tags: can accommodate over 15 numbers or letters and are good for keeping records
- In case of a mistake, you can choose a different location and allow the mistakenly done site to heal.
- Not suitable for some kinds of livestock such as horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, etc

Tattoos

- Tattoos are a permanent livestock identification method
 - Numbers or letters are punctured on the skin of the livestock
 - Tattoos are inconspicuous and you have to hold the animal to read the marks
 - Tattoo ink is inactive and has no documented effect on the animal
 - Not suitable for some kinds of livestock such as horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, etc.
 - Appropriate for many kinds of livestock
 - Ink is used for tattooing
 - Tattoos may not exceed 7 numbers or letters per ear thus used for registration purposes
- Mistakes leave a permanent mark on the skin of the livestock.

Livestock Ear Tags Vs Tattoos: Which one should you choose?

When choosing an animal identification method, you should consider the need you plan to solve. As mentioned above, ear tags are appropriate for keeping personal records. This is because they can fit over fifteen numbers or letters which can capture details about sex, sire, date of birth, and more. On the other hand, tattoos are preferred by livestock registries due to their durability. Note that ear tags might not be appropriate for some animals.

That said, ear tags and tattoos are both quick, simple, and reliable animal identification methods. Each of these methods has its pros and cons as listed above. Your choice between the two solely lies in what you intend to achieve.

6 Tips to Make Hay go Further

Feeding hay efficiently is job No. 1 for livestock producers today.

By: Victor Shelton; Farm Progress; January 17, 2024

Most producers will begin feeding hay soon if they haven't already started. Hay supplies are low in many areas. Getting the most out of what you have available becomes very important.

Here are six tips that can help you stretch hay supplies:



1. **Cull poor-producing cows.** Nobody likes to hear that their cows are poor producers, but some are. Or perhaps they didn't get bred back in a timely manner — or at all. Cows falling in any one of these categories should grow some wheels. When winter feed is of a premium, slackers need to go. Besides, prices for cull cows are relatively strong right now.

2. **Feed hay as efficiently as possible.** It might be easier to put out enough hay for several days or even a week, but doing so usually increases waste. Having a little competition between cows when feeding hay is actually a good thing. They are much more likely to clean it up and waste less when they think other cows are after the same bite.

3. **Feed poorer-quality hay first.** This assumes you know relative value of the feedstuffs you have left to feed. Instead of guessing by sight, have your forages analyzed through testing. Poorer-quality hay can also be supplemented as needed. This is easier to do if you have tested hay in advance in order to know its limitations. It's much easier to move from poor quality to good quality than the reverse, especially when the supply is limited. Nobody wants to eat broccoli after having ice cream — not even cows or sheep.
4. **Use bale rings or feeding wagons.** Feeding hay in bale rings or feeding wagons slows down picking and sorting of the hay by livestock. That increases efficiency.
5. **Keep hay out of the mud.** Hay fed on pasture while the soil is dry, in drylots that have enough structure, or in winter feeding buildings all help to keep hay out of the mud. That will result in much less waste.
6. **Consider using small square bales.** Probably one of the most efficient ways to feed hay is one of the least used today — small square bales. Small bales were allocated to the livestock on a daily, as-needed basis. They were usually fed inside the barn in the manger. There was very little waste feeding hay this way. Labor is the most limiting factor for small bales today. However, if you have access to small square bales to finish the hay feeding season, it might be a good alternative.

AG Economist says Livestock Producers Could see Lower Feed costs in 2024

By: Meghan Grebner; Brownfield; January 16, 2024

An ag economist says livestock producers could see some relief in 2024.



In its latest report, the USDA lowered its current year price for corn by a nickel and lowered soybean meal price by around \$10 per ton. University of Missouri's Scott Brown says, "\$4.80 corn and \$380.00 a ton soybean meal. Those are moving in the right direction."

He tells Brownfield producers will need to watch what's happening with the crops in South America. "We keep getting different information about the size of that crop," he says. "A lot of concern about it's going to be a lower crop, which might suggest doing some price protection sooner rather than later. If you're in that camp."

And, he says, it isn't too early to start thinking about corn-soybean acres in the US for 2024. "I could see a lot of interest in planting corn," he says. "Which might be the 'I'm going to hold off on doing too

much risk protection' because if we plant a lot of corn, we have decent weather, probably keep talking about lower prices as we get further into 2024."

He says the lower costs for feed could provide some optimism as livestock producers keep a close eye on their bottom line.

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