

PigTrace Canada

Traceability Ear Tags for Breeding Swine



Background

Consumer concern over food safety and security has made traceability a standard business practice in many sectors. The Canadian Pork Council and Canada's provincial pork organizations have responded by developing a swine traceability system branded as **PigTrace Canada**. Its main objective is the quick trace-back of swine and the identification of affected farms in the event of crisis such as a disease outbreak or food safety issue.

Benefits

The added security of a national traceability system will give Canada's pork producers a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. The ability to quickly identify affected swine and farms will improve the pork industry's chances of returning to international trade as soon as possible following a major disease outbreak. This is critical to reducing financial impacts from market disruption, loss of market share, and trade barriers following a major crisis event.

Progress to Date

Beginning in 2006, Canadian swine producers have registered their premises and adopted the national slaughter tattoo numbering scheme. These have been key building blocks for PigTrace Canada. Slaughter tattoo numbers allow trace-back to the last farm-of-residence before market hogs are sent to slaughter. When coupled with a national registry of market hog movement information from packing plants, tattoo numbers provide a simple, cost-effective method for tracing the movements of swine going to slaughter.

Next Steps: the National Ear Tag

The next significant building block in our system is the addition of a new type of identifier designed for breeding stock, a national ear tag. Tag numbers will eventually be used to report the movement of individual breeding swine from premises-to-premises. Tags are being made available for order starting October 1, 2009, which will begin prepare the national breeding herd for these future movement reporting requirements.

Tags Options Available

All tag options display a 9-digit traceability ID number that is unique worldwide. Producers can select a custom animal ID to be printed below the traceability ID number for barn management.

ID numbers are printed on the male panel portion of the tag; two panel styles are being made available:



Rectangular



Trapezoid

Producers can then choose from three styles for the female portion of the tag:

- a visual button,
- a secondary panel, or
- an electronic FDX-RFID button

Producers must have registered premises through their provincial pork organization before ordering traceability ear tags

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why should I tag my breeding animals?

- A. (1) This is the next phase of the Canadian Swine Traceability program, which is designed to mitigate the effects of a foreign animal disease. Although it's currently voluntary, federal regulations are in draft form.
(2) The tags are very cost-competitive and may be used for barn management by requesting an optional, custom identifier be printed on them for management purposes.
(3) Cull sow buyers may require a national ear tag when selling culled breeding swine for slaughter.

Q. Is this mandatory?

- A. Not yet, but it eventually will be. This is a phased-in approach to implementing federal swine traceability regulations under the Health of Animals Act, which are currently being drafted by the federal government.

Q. Why is traceability important?

- A. Traceability helps to identify pathways where infected animals have moved, potentially infecting other farms and swine. Animal movement information is used to contain and reduce the spread of highly contagious swine diseases so they can be eliminated. Other benefits to the pork sector include reinforcing our domestic and export market access, and improving the competitiveness of Canadian pork products in the international marketplace.

Q. Why is quick trace-back of swine important?

- A. Animal health officials need to identify and locate all affected swine and farms during a disease outbreak. Reducing the response time will reduce the impacts of the disease. Use tags that are registered to your premises, otherwise you may take on another disease status during a disease investigation.

Q. What could happen in the event of disease outbreak in swine?

- A. The economic impact of foot-and-mouth disease in Canada has been estimated at \$13 to \$45 billion (trade losses, 41%; direct processing impacts, 14%; direct farm impacts, 11%; and tourism impact, 9%). It may take 6 to 10 months to regain disease-free status, and an additional 4 to 6 years to regain market share.

Q. When will tags be available?

- A. Orders have been accepted by telephone since October 1, 2009. Deliveries will occur within 10-15 business days of placing the order, depending on the method of payment.

Q. How do I order tags?

- A. Orders are placed through the PigTrace Canada by telephone only (toll-free 1-866-300-1825). Tags will be printed and shipped direct to farm from the manufacturer. Acceptable methods of payment include credit card, bank transfer, and cheque. Cheque payments are subject to a hold period of 7 business days once received to ensure payment.

Q. How much do tags cost?

- A. All prices include male and female tag portions, printing, GST, and cost of delivery:

	ORDER VOLUME					
	25	50	100	250	500	1000
Panel-Button	\$0.87	\$0.75	\$0.65	\$0.59	\$0.57	\$0.56
Panel-Panel	\$0.96	\$0.84	\$0.74	\$0.67	\$0.65	\$0.63
Panel-RFID	\$2.16	\$2.04	\$1.94	\$1.83	\$1.78	\$1.76

Q. What size are the tags?

A. Both styles of male panel are 2-¼" (57mm) wide x 1-½" (38mm) high. The visual and electronic FDX-RFID buttons are 1-⅛" (29mm) in diameter, and the secondary female panel is 1-¾" (44mm) wide x 2-¼" (57mm) high.

Q. What colour are the tags?

A. Both styles of male panel are yellow in colour, with the Canadian Pork Council logo displayed prominently to distinguish it as the official national traceability tag for swine. Producers have the option of selecting from three varieties of female portions: a button, a secondary panel, or an electronic FDX-RFID button. The button and secondary panel are available in optional colour varieties: yellow, white, green, red, orange, and purple. The electronic FDX-RFID button is available in yellow only.

Q. When do I tag my pigs?

A. (1) Currently, breeding swine can be tagged at any time for management purposes, but upcoming federal regulation will require animals selected for breeding to be tagged before their first off-farm movement.
(2) Untagged, culled breeding swine can be tagged on-farm, immediately before being shipped for slaughter if required by your marketer.

Q. What if I want to use my own numbers?

A. (1) There is space on tags to write your own numbers with a permanent marker, or
(2) At no extra cost producer's can request printing of their own custom barn management numbers.

Q. Can I use the national traceability tag in animals other than breeding stock?

A. Tags are primarily intended for use in breeding swine; however, they may be used in other stages of swine production if the producer chooses. Once Federal regulations come in to effect, all tag identifiers must be reported when the animal is transported. Tags are not intended for use in species other than swine.

WORKING TO PROTECT ANIMAL HEALTH & YOUR BUSINESS

Definitions

Producer: Individuals or corporations that (a) own, produce or raise swine, or (b) own the facilities used to house, produce, or raise swine.

Premises: Any land parcel, based on certificate of title, where swine are produced, housed, raised or marketed. Premises identification provides animal health officials with the location and appropriate contact information for each livestock premises in the event of disease outbreak.

Provincial Pork Organization: The official pork producers association in your province of residence.

Traceability: The ability to locate and track an animal's movement from premises to premises throughout its lifetime.

Canadian Swine Traceability System: An industry-led initiative to track swine movements in Canada, coordinated through the Canadian Pork Council and its member provincial pork organizations.

PigTrace Canada: Brand name for the Canadian Swine Traceability System and associated program administration.