



USING ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION ON FARM

The main reason for electronically identifying cattle is to be part of the national identification and traceability program known as NAIT. This program is designed to enhance the current cattle identification and traceability system and will increase biosecurity.

By recording more information on the livestock, there is an opportunity to greatly improve the feeding, breeding and management. Because this information can be recorded very quickly and at little cost, more data can be collected and analysed to improve efficiency.

Once the tags are purchased to meet the requirements of NAIT, there is the opportunity, at very little extra cost, to utilise the advantages of EID for farm management

WHY USE EID?

Electronic ear tags allow the identity of the animal to be recorded electronically. This is not only done instantly but the correct number will always be recorded.

Once the animal number has been recorded, other information can then be added electronically. This may be production information such as weight, pregnancy status or milk production or it may be animal treatment such as vaccines. Importantly, information with regard to chemical withholding periods can be automatically calculated and stored.

Once this information has been collected, the information can be analysed as a basis for better informed management decisions. The information can be assessed in a simple spreadsheet, in the programs provided with readers and scale heads or in one of the many commercially available herd management programmes.

Once the information is recorded, it can be retrieved automatically the next time the animal's number is read in the yards.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU NEED?

Firstly, you will need a tag reader. This may be either a hand held or "wand" reader or an automatic race panel reader for larger numbers of stock throughput. Either type of reader will read and store the numbers or transmit the numbers to a data collector.

Depending on the herd size and the quantity and type of information to be recorded, there is a large range of options with regard to data collection equipment. For most operations, information can be stored quickly and easily in the electronic scale head. There are a number of other possible ways of collecting the data including the use of a laptop computer.

ANALYSING DATA

As all the information is collected in an electronic format, the analysis of the information can be done very quickly and easily without having to rewrite the data and manipulate it manually. This allows for quick and accurate analysis and the ability to produce effective management reports.

Electronic reading and recording will ensure that all the data is correctly recorded. For more information on the NAIT NZ mandatory scheme please go to the NAIT website, www.nait.org.nz .

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