

Livestock identification and movement: sheep and goats

Identification of livestock in Western Australia is required by law under the Biosecurity and Agriculture Management (Identification and Movement of Stock and Apiaries) Regulations 2013 [BAM (IMSA) Regulations].

The regulations also require the use of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS).

Identifying your livestock assists in maintaining Australia's biosecurity systems that assure trading partners of our ability to trace disease and residue issues effectively. It supports our live export, chilled and domestic markets. It also deters theft and can assist in recovering stolen animals.

Owners must register

All sheep and goat owners must be registered with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

On registration you will be issued registered identifiers (stock brand, earmark and pig tattoo) and a property identification code (PIC) for the property where the animals are kept. A PIC card is issued that lists the properties that the owner has nominated to run stock on and the registered identifiers for use with the stock.

For more information, see the following publications / webpages:

- Livestock ownership, identification and movement in Western Australia
- Registering as an owner of stock
- Application for registration as an owner of stock

Registered identifiers

Registered stock brand – two letters and one number

Your registered brand consists of two letters and a number. One of the letters may be 'lazy', lying on its side to the left.

Sheep and goats are branded when fitted with an NLIS tag bearing the brand (or associated PIC) of the current owner in the correct ear. See Table 2.

Registered earmark – combination of two shaped notches

Your earmark is a combination of two shaped notches taken out of the ear in the correct location, A to E, as illustrated on your registration certificate. See Table 2.

Sheep only need to be earmarked once in their life. Earmarking goats is optional.

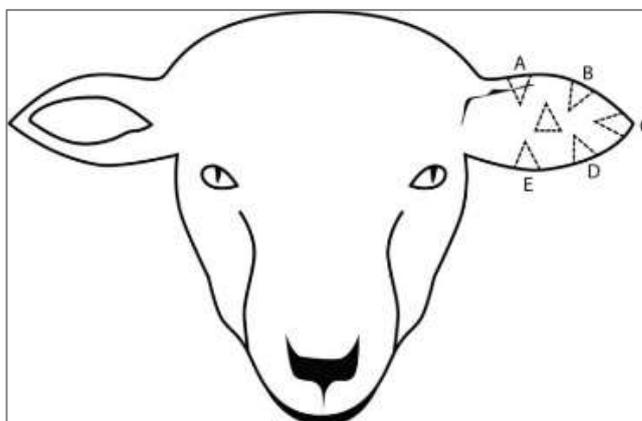


Figure 1. Diagram showing the position of an earmark

The appearance of an earmark will alter if it is applied from behind the ear instead of from the front. This will not be your legal earmark and may belong to someone else (see Figures 2a and 2b).

The earmark must be at least 12mm across at its maximum point when it is applied. Only approved earmarking pliers can be used.

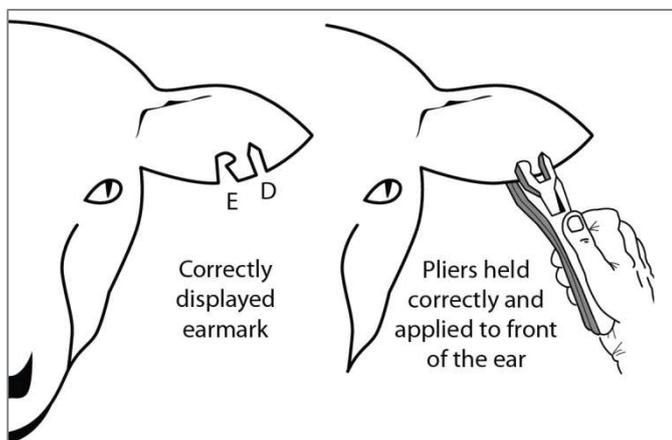


Figure 2a. Correct method of applying an earmark

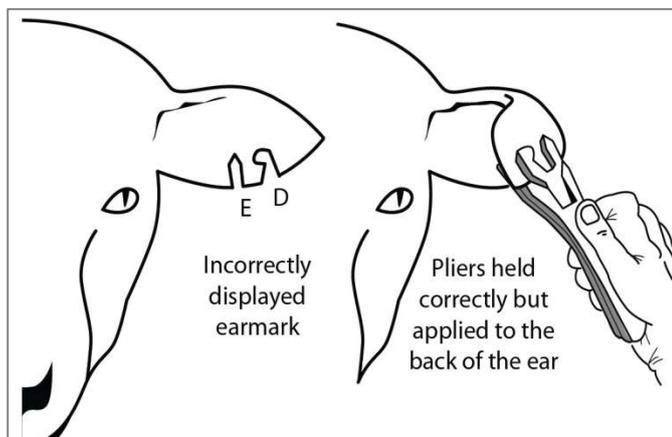


Figure 2b. Incorrect method of applying an earmark

Age, tattoo or cull marks must be placed in the ear opposite to that of the registered earmark. The ear with the earmark must not have any other marks, tags or tattoos other than pink NLIS tags.

NLIS identification

The BAM (IMSA) Regulations underpin the NLIS, requiring sheep and goats to have an accredited NLIS ear tag bearing the registered brand or PIC of the owner.

The accredited NLIS ear tag meets the branding requirements.

When the animal is on the property of birth, use the NLIS tag that is colour coded for the year of birth. This should be placed in the right ear for females and left ear for males.

The year of birth colour system has eight colours. Each colour designates a year on a rolling cycle starting with black and ending with sky blue, returning to black.

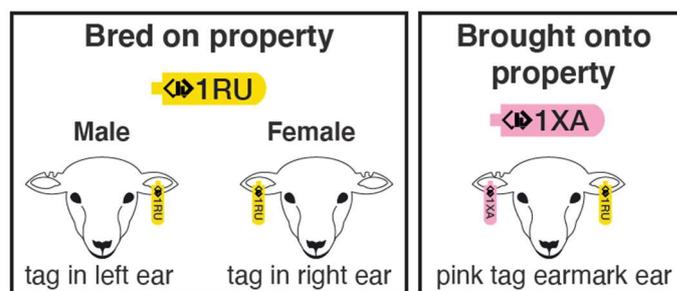
Pink is used for post-breeder tags to show that sheep have been brought onto the property, usually from a different owner.

Year	Year	Colour	pink tag = post-breeder tags must be pink
2013	2021	yellow	
2014	2022	red	
2015	2023	sky blue	
2016	2024	black	
2017	2025	white	
2018	2026	orange	
2019	2027	light green	
2020	2028	purple	

Table 1: NLIS sheep/goat year of birth colours

NLIS visual tags

If using visual tags, when sheep or goats are sold, the new owner must apply an additional pink NLIS tag in the opposite ear to the year of birth coloured tag (in the earmark ear) before leaving the property.



Owners using a PIC on their visual tags must be aware that if they move their stock between their properties with different PICs e.g. agistment blocks, they will have to re-tag those animals according to PIC of location.

Using the brand on the visual tags means that re-tagging is only necessary when the stock are moved to a property with a different brand, usually when they are sold to a new owner. This is the least time consuming option.

Sheep / goat identification	Female	Male
Earmark	Left	Right
Year of birth coloured tag	Right	Left
Pink tag	Left	Right
Cull/age mark tattoo	Right	Left

Table 2: Correct ear for sheep / goat identification placement

NLIS electronic devices

NLIS accredited radio frequency identifier (RFID) tags, NLIS electronic devices, are available for use. These devices have the PIC of the property they are purchased for on the outside as part of an individual 16-character identification number. They can only be used on this property.

If electronic devices are fitted, the RFID is scanned by a reader and its details are used to record on the NLIS database the movement of stock to a new PIC. No additional tags are required.

The new owner must identify those animals with a pink NLIS visual tag prior to the stock leaving the property to saleyard or slaughter.

NLIS devices can be purchased from your rural supplier or directly from an approved manufacturer.

All NLIS ear tags – visual or electronic - must remain in the animal for life. An animal can only have one electronic device.

South West land division

Sheep in the South West land division must be identified with an accredited year of birth coloured NLIS ear tag bearing the brand or PIC of the owner and their registered earmark when they are weaned, before they reach six months of age or before they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first.

Goats in the South West land division must be identified with an accredited year of birth coloured NLIS ear tag bearing the brand or PIC of the owner when they are weaned, before they reach six months of age or before they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first. Earmarking is optional.

Outside the South West land division

Sheep outside the South West land division must be fitted with an NLIS ear tag of the correct year colour, printed with the current owner's brand or PIC and be earmarked when they are first shorn or before they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first.

Goats outside the South West land division are not required to be tagged while on the property of birth, or property of capture if they are rangeland goats. However, to claim ownership, all goats should be tagged with an NLIS ear tag bearing the brand or PIC of the owner.

All goats moving off the property, other than direct to slaughter or under an exemption, require an NLIS tag before being moved.

Identification exemptions

- **Unweaned lambs/kids** – if moved with their correctly identified mother between properties with the same PIC, do not need to be identified.
- **Rangeland goats** – harvested rangeland goats can be sent direct to slaughter from property of capture without an NLIS tag.

Properties outside the South West land division operating as a rangeland goat depot have a standard operating manual that must be adhered to.

Compliance with operating procedures provides permission to receive untagged captured goats for subsequent direct consignment to an abattoir without tagging. Please contact the DPIRD Manager (Stock Identification and Traceability) for further information.

Approved identification

The BAM (IMSA) Regulations allow breed societies that have a preferred system for identifying animals to use the society mark instead of the registered earmark.

They must have their preferred identification approved by the Registrar of Stock and Apiaries before using this option. See webpage 'Approved identifiers for livestock' for the application procedure.

These owners must still be registered as an owner of stock with DPIRD and also meet any NLIS identification requirements.

Bringing sheep and goats onto your property
All correctly identified sheep and goats brought onto a property need to be identified in the earmark ear with a pink NLIS visual tag imprinted with the brand or PIC of the new owner before leaving the property. It is advisable to tag on arrival to assist in owner identification if animals stray.

Imported sheep or goats (from the Eastern States) that are not correctly identified, must be identified within 14 days of arrival or when they are moved from the property, whichever occurs first.

If introduced sheep and goats have an NLIS electronic device and you wish to use these, they need to be scanned and transferred to your PIC on the NLIS database. A pink NLIS visual tag will be needed if these stock are sent to a saleyard or abattoir.

Identification equipment

All identification equipment and tags can be purchased through rural suppliers or online directly from the manufacturers.

Equipment for applying the registered earmark must not be removed from the property/ies with the PIC they are registered to without a permit from DPIRD.

NLIS tags registered to a specific PIC or brand can only be applied to animals while on the property/ies registered to that PIC unless a permit has been issued by an inspector.

NLIS tags cannot be taken to a saleyard or similar facilities to be applied unless a permit has been issued by an inspector.

Moving sheep or goats – Waybills

Sheep and goats must not be moved off a property without having correct identification and a completed waybill or a National Vendor Declaration/waybill (NVD/waybill). The waybill provides proof that stock are being moved with the owner's consent and it must remain with the stock while they are being transported.

The owner or person in charge of the stock at the property of dispatch has the responsibility to accurately complete the waybill and give it to the transporter before the stock are moved. This may not be the current owner if ownership has changed on property prior to transport.

The documents must be completed in triplicate and all copies kept for seven years. The original must travel with the stock and be handed to the consignee, or recipient of the stock, at the destination. The carrier retains the first copy and the second copy remains with the consigning owner.

An NVD/waybill is a combined form that records sheep or goat movements and also provides additional information about the food safety and health status of the stock. An NVD/waybill is required whenever livestock are moved for sale, export or slaughter.

Access to an NVD/waybill requires accreditation with the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program. Contact 1800 683 111 or go online at www.lpa.com.au. The NVD/waybills are supplied pre-printed with the owner's PIC as either a book (at a cost) or as an electronic form (free).

Plain waybill books are available from the Brands office, call 1300 926 547. They are used in particular circumstances when an NVD/waybill is not required, e.g. transporting an animal to the vet or agricultural show, or between properties owned by the same person.

Regular movement between properties with the same PIC

The PIC card, or a full copy of it, can replace the need to fill out a waybill each time stock move between properties with the same PIC. Properties involved must be listed on the card and stock being moved need to be registered to and identified to that PIC.

It also allows movement of branding and earmarking equipment between the properties.

NLIS database movement recording

Movements of sheep or goats to a property with a different PIC must be recorded on the NLIS database within 48 hours of arrival.

Stock with visual NLIS tags are recorded as mob-based movements (MBM). Sheep and goats fitted with an NLIS electronic device can be scanned with a reader and transferred individually as with cattle.

This is the responsibility of the receiver of the stock to make sure the NLIS database recording is done and includes movements to and from agistment properties.

For sheep and goats sold in saleyards or at public auction, the saleyard operator will record the MBM to the buyer's PIC. This is the one instance where the receiver does not have to do the transfer, however they should still check that it has been done.

Stock owners can create a free NLIS database account through the website www.nlis.com.au.

Stock from other States

Stock imported into Western Australia and accompanied by the 'Health Certificate for Movement of Stock to Western Australia' form (LB1) may not have a waybill.

Stock and waybill inspections

Stock in transit can be inspected for correct identification and waybills by a DPIRD inspector or police officer at any time.

Offences under the BAM (IMSA) regulations

- possessing stock that are not legally identified
- using another person's registered brand or earmark
- possessing another person's registered branding or earmarking equipment
- using another person's NLIS tags
- removing NLIS ear tags
- applying your earmark or NLIS tags to animals on another person's property
- trading or moving animals without correct NLIS identification
- failure to transfer animals on the NLIS database after movement to a different PIC

The penalty for a breach of this legislation may be a fine up to \$20 000.

More information

In Western Australia:

T: 1300 926 547 (1300 WA NLIS)

E: email nlis@dpiird.wa.gov.au

Webpages:

- Moving livestock in Western Australia
- Creating an account and using the NLIS database
- NLIS and identification – sheep
- NLIS and identification - goats

The national NLIS helpdesk:

T: 1800 683 111

E: support@nlis.com.au

W: integritysystems.com.au

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