Animal identification is the action of affixing ear tags to your dairy animals. The ability to identify individual animals works with the other pillars of traceability; premises identification and animal movement, to track where animals have been transported and when. Animal identification helps industry and government to locate animals to confine a disease outbreak more quickly and accurately. According to the national regulation, all cattle in Canada must be tagged with approved radio frequency identification (RFID) tag before leaving the farm of origin.

With the upcoming implementation of proAction by Dairy Farmers of Canada, it will be a requirement for all dairy cattle to be identified at birth with two ear tags bearing the same number. One of these tags must be an RFID and the other is a visual for management. This method of identification will apply to all dairy animals, regardless of their registration status, to meet the industry standard requirements for traceability and identification. Calves sold before 14 days of age may be identified with a single RFID ear tag, also commonly known as a “beef tag.”

Benefits of having Dual Tagging for dairy | RFID button and visual tag with matching unique number:

- Enhances visual recognition of animal for herd management
- Harmonizes herd management ID systems for all dairy animals in Canada
- Ensures a back-up in case of tag loss and one number for the life of the animal

What do the numbers mean?

The first 3 digits represent the country of origin while the last 9 are unique to that animal. 124 is Canada’s 3 digit identifier.

Across Canada there are two main suppliers of approved tags for dairy animals; National Livestock Identification for Dairy (NLID) and Agri-Traçabilité Québec (ATQ). NLID administers tag numbers and distribution for all dairy breeds/dairy animals (registered or non-registered) outside of Quebec, while ATQ administers tag numbers and distribution within Quebec.
Did you know that Ultraflex identifiers are available at NLID?

- Ultraflex tags are made of a suppler and flexible plastic and they have shown greater durability and resistance to extreme climates.
- The rounded shape of the rear portion of the tag forms to the animal’s ear, making it less likely that the identifier will catch on “tag traps” such as chains, feeders, baler twine, etc.

**POSITIONING THE IDENTIFIER**

- The identifiers with black buttons (female part) must be positioned in front of the ear, where they are protected by the curvature of the ear.
- Place the identifier between the two principal veins in the ear, in the first third of the ear next to the head.
- For maximum retention, it is better to use a new hole when re-identifying an animal.

* Please refer to the factsheet that can be find on the DFO website under **Tools and Guidelines** at the following link: *For Better Retention – Ultraflex*

**You can order dairy approved tags at NLID:**

- Calling NLID toll free number at 1-877-771-6543 or visit their website: [www.holstein.ca/Public/en/Services/NLID](http://www.holstein.ca/Public/en/Services/NLID)
- Print and complete the [NLID Order form](http://www.holstein.ca/Public/en/Services/NLID) and mail/fax back to: NLID, Box 2065, Brantford, Ontario, N3T 5W5, Fax: 519-756-3502

According to dairy industry principles, calves sold before 14 days of age may be identified with a beef approved tag which is a single RFID ear tag (yellow button RFID tag). Approved beef tags can be purchased at tag dealers or producers can order directly at CCIA website: [https://tags.canadaid.ca/en/](https://tags.canadaid.ca/en/)

Have questions? Contact [proAction@milk.org](mailto:proAction@milk.org)