

# MEMBERSHIP TIPS

by Jerry Cassady, director of member services



## Electronic identification

*Accurately identifying each animal is a primary responsibility for every seedstock producer.*

Proper identification of each animal in your herd is a requirement for registration and has both visual and management benefits. By identifying your cattle individually with the various forms of accepted identification, breeders can accurately keep track of each animal in the herd.

This helps producers assign accurate parentage, track an animal's health history and document overall performance, allowing them to determine which animals are earning

their keep and, equally important, which ones are not.

Low-frequency electronic identification (EID) tags are small "button-like" tags that contain an embedded microchip and are placed in the animal's ear. You may also see these described as radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. Each EID tag has a unique 15-digit number printed on the button, and these tags can also be read by scanning the tag with an electronic EID reader.

There are several options available, however only the "840 coded" tags will be accepted by the American Angus Association as an accepted form of electronic identification. The 840 coded tags are tamper-evident and designed to last for the life of the animal.

Advances in technology regarding animal identification include the development and adoption of these EID tags. The USDA recognizes low-frequency 840 coded EID tags as the official form of animal identification and the only official tags for use in interstate movement.

In addition, some states already require the use of 840 coded EID tags for cattle movement and tracking.

## Updated Rule 105: Primary Identification Marks

Action from the recent Association Board of Directors meeting included updating Rule 105 to allow the use of EID as a form of primary identification of registered Angus cattle, if you also use a secondary form of ID (see sidebar).

However, it is important to note the use of EID for registration will only be accepted when using 840 coded tags. The accepted 840 coded tags are the USDA-approved tags for official individual animal identification. They have a unique 15-digit number that always starts with "840," which is the country code for the United States.

## Data capture

Producers can either use portable or stationary electronic EID readers to gather data from the tags. Some portable readers look like wands that can be waved over livestock to collect information. Stationary readers can be incorporated into gateways that cattle can walk through or mounted on the chute or scale to identify the animal during processing and/or capture a weight simultaneously.

### *Rule 105: Primary Identification Marks*

a. Application and method of primary identification. Each breeder shall be responsible for ensuring that the animals they register bear a form of primary identification prior to application for registration. If electronic identification is to be utilized by a member as the primary form of identification, it can only be used in conjunction with a secondary identifier. Acceptable secondary forms of identification will include parentage markers, tattoos, freeze brand, hot brand, and/or a visual tag.

The EID tags are read electronically rather than visually, which can reduce human error. Additionally, the tags do not require animals to stand completely still for them to be read, which allows them to be scanned in the field, during feeding, in the chute or anywhere your animals happen to be.

The data collected from the readers is then fed into the producer's computer system, which can be connected via the internet to cloud-based tracking systems or simply stored for future access.

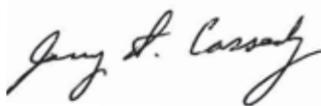
## Considerations

Before you commit to using EID as primary identification for your program, consider the availability of the tags, cost associated with the tags and the electronic tag reader, and the necessary equipment and software to capture resulting data.

In addition, realize only the 840 coded series of tags will be accepted as primary electronic ID for registration, and be prepared to provide a secondary form of ID to accompany the EID tag to meet registration requirements for the Association.

## Summary

Properly identifying your animals with an accurate ID system provides you and your customers many benefits that can keep your program on the right track. The adoption of EID tags for livestock management is becoming the norm rather than the exception, and the popularity of this technology is spreading across the beef industry. 



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*Editor's note: For additional information regarding the use of eID tags, contact the Member Services Department at 816-383-5100 or email me directly at [jcassady@angus.org](mailto:jcassady@angus.org).*



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