

# NLIS Information

## [About National Livestock Identification System \(NLIS\)](#)

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) is Australia's system for the identification and traceability of cattle, sheep and goats. It was introduced in 1999 to enhance Australia's ability to trace cattle during disease and food incidents, but was expanded to also include sheep and goats in 2009. NLIS reflects Australia's commitment to biosecurity and food safety and provides a competitive advantage in a global market.

NLIS is endorsed by major producer, feedlot, agent, saleyard and processor bodies. In addition to this, it is underpinned by State/Territory legislation, which forms the regulatory framework for the system.

## [The importance of the NLIS](#)

As Australia exports two-thirds of its beef and veal production, around 200,000 people are involved in the red meat industry, including on-farm production, processing and retail. Australia is free from most agricultural and aquatic pests and diseases and its 'clean and green' reputation provides a major trading advantage, so an animal disease epidemic or chemical residue incident could cripple the industry and lead to the collapse of export markets.

## [How the NLIS works](#)

The NLIS combines three elements to enable the lifetime traceability of animals:

- an animal identifier (a visual or electronic ear tag known as a device)
- identification of a physical location by means of a Property Identification Code (PIC)
- a web-accessible database to store and correlate movement data and associated details

As animals are bought, sold and moved along the supply chain, they must be tagged with an NLIS-accredited tag or device. Each movement they make to a location with a different PIC is recorded centrally on the NLIS Database by people with NLIS accounts. NLIS accounts are free to open and operate.

Using this information, the NLIS is able to provide a life history of an animal's residency, and to discern which other animal's livestock may have come into contact with. The NLIS is required to facilitate the traceability of animals in accordance with the National Traceability and Performance Standards.

Statuses may also be assigned to individual animals (provided they are electronically tagged) or to properties to record pertinent information about these animals and properties on the NLIS. For example:

a device status may be assigned to a device to indicate that the device is damaged, lost, has been stolen or that its animal has been vaccinated against a particular disease

a property status may be assigned to a PIC to indicate that the property is LPA-accredited or EU-accredited, or that all of the animals on a property may have been exposed to a residue or contaminant.

Any device or property statuses that indicate that any animals may pose a biosecurity or health risk are reported to processors to ensure that the affected animals are tested at slaughter. This maintains the safety, quality and integrity standards of Australian red meat and livestock and reduces the impact of a potential livestock disease epidemic or residue incident.

# Property Identification Codes (PIC)

A PIC is made up of eight unique characters that are assigned by Local Land Services to properties with livestock. The PIC system allows for the tracing of livestock for disease and chemical residue purposes.

It contains the following information:

- The first letter is 'N' for New South Wales.
- The second letter is a check digit that allows computers to automatically confirm that the PIC is valid and has been correctly entered.
- The next two numbers are for the Local Land Services district.
- The final four numbers make up your property number.

This code also enables the property occupiers to purchase identification devices, identify the property for movement recording and enrol in industry quality assurance programs.

PICs are fundamental to the operation of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). PICs provide traceability to specific properties, which is important in the event of disease control or residue problems. NLIS is a part of Federal and State Government biosecurity strategies to trace meat from paddock to plate and to safeguard our domestic and export markets.

You can obtain a PIC by completing a registration form and paying the prescribed fee. Registration forms can be obtained from your local LLS office either in person or by calling and arranging to have the form faxed or emailed to you.

An online form is available on the LLS website [www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au) – this form can be filled in and submitted online.

For LLS ratepayers who currently don't have a PIC there will be an \$11 (including GST) registration fee which will last as long as the landholder remains a ratepayer. For non-LLS ratepayers the PIC registration fee is \$66 (including GST) for three years.

## Buying, selling and moving livestock

Each time that livestock are bought, sold or moved from one property (PIC) to another, a livestock movement must be recorded on the NLIS database.

The information required to record a livestock movement varies depending on where the animals have moved from and to, and on the type of identification attached to the livestock.

For cattle you can record movements of livestock with electronic RFID tags or a visual tag number with the livestock moved onto/off my property function.

For sheep & goats you can record movements of livestock with the mob-based movement onto/off my property function.

## Tagging livestock

All livestock should be identified with an NLIS-accredited device before being moved off a property.

If you are moving an animal off its property of birth you will need to tag the animal with an NLIS-accredited **breeder** (white) device. Once an animal has been tagged the tag should remain with the animal for life but if it stops working/falls out and the animal is no longer on its property of birth, tag the animal with an NLIS-accredited **post-breeder** (orange/pink) device to maintain lifetime traceability for the animal.

It is an offence to remove an NLIS tag from an animal and apply another tag, unless the animal's breeder (original) tag is not working or has fallen out.

## What is the NLIS Database?

With cattle, the NLIS system relies on an electronic database to track all the movements of the cattle. This database is maintained by Meat & Livestock Australia (MLA) for the whole of Australia.

As tags are manufactured, the numbers (both RFID and Visual ID) are uploaded to the database and stay there under your PIC account until the cattle are moved off.

As stock is moved through the saleyards or to an abattoir, they are automatically scanned and moved for you. If you purchase stock through a private sale or move your stock to agistment, you are responsible for making sure the stock movements are updated on the database.

The database can be accessed at [www.nlis.mla.com.au](http://www.nlis.mla.com.au)

NOTE: Even though you may have ordered tags that are registered to your PIC, you cannot access the database until you have created an account.

## How do I access the NLIS Database?

The first step is to go to the NLIS website and create an account –

[www.nlis.com.au](http://www.nlis.com.au)



Step 1 - You will need to read and agree to the NLIS Terms of Use.

Step 2 - You will then need to choose your account type – make sure you select “Producer” so that you can get access to the features you need.

Step 3 - You will then need to provide your account details, ie: Property/trading name, PIC number plus your name and address. You must also have an email address to set up an account as this is the main form of communication with the NLIS database.

Step 4 – The last step is for you to create a password for your NLIS account.

MLA will then confirm your address details against the PIC register and send you a user name to your email address which will then give you access to your account on the database.

## **What paperwork do I need to comply with NLIS?**

Each time livestock are bought, sold or moved off a property, the livestock consignment must be accompanied by a form of movement documentation. Usually this is a National Vendor Declaration (NVD), but other forms of movement documentation such as a Waybill or Travelling Stock Statement may also be used. The information required to record a livestock movement varies depending on where the animals have moved from and to, and on the type of identification attached to the livestock.

### ***A National Vendor Declaration –***

National Vendor Declarations (NVDs) are one form of movement documentation. NVDs usually accompany movements of livestock (all movements of sheep and goats must be accompanied by a form of movement documentation, although they are voluntary for movements of non-EU accredited cattle). They contain information which is commercially required and are sometimes combined with Waybills (e.g. all LPA NVDs are combined with a Waybill).

A copy of the NVDs/Waybill should be retained for at least seven years by all parties involved in a movement of livestock. LPA NVDs are a type of NVD which are available to individuals who are registered and accredited with the Livestock Production Assurance (LPA) program.

Once you are registered and accredited with LPA, you can order LPA NVDs online at any time. Electronic LPA NVDs, or eDecs, are available for online purchase in multiples of five. Purchasing eDecs will ensure that you always have the most up-to-date version of the LPA NVD.

You can also order LPA NVDs by calling 1800 683 111 (9am - 5pm Monday-Friday, Sydney time). For more information about ordering LPA NVDs, visit the Livestock Production Assurance Vendor Declaration page on MLA's website.

The latest versions of each LPA NVD are listed below:

<b>Species</b>	<b>Issue Date</b>	<b>Version Number</b>
<b>Cattle</b>	April 2013	C0413
<b>Sheep and lambs</b>	April 2013	S0413
<b>Goats</b>	April 2013	G0413
<b>Bobby calves</b>	April 2012	BC0412
<b>EU cattle</b>	April 2013	E0413

### ***A Transported Stock Statement –***

These are available from any Local Land Services office in books of 10 or 25. They are frequently used by stock transporters to meet the NSW Police requirements of moving stock (used to be called a Trucking Permit). They provide only the basic information of the stock being moved, origin and destination properties and owner details.

## **I didn't keep a copy of a movement's documentation (such as an NVD). Can I still record this movement?**

For all cattle, and for electronically ear-tagged sheep and goats, you can record a livestock movement on the database without an NVD/Waybill serial number.

Please note that, for EU-accredited cattle, failure to enter an European Union Vendor Declaration (EUVD) number will result in the animals losing their EU accreditation.

For sheep and goats with a visual tag, you will not be able to complete your mob-based movement on the Database without an NVD/Waybill serial number.

## Your NLIS database responsibilities

### Stock movements “ONTO” your property

<b>Born on property:</b>	None (the device manufacturer uploads the device numbers to the database when they are dispatched to you).
<b>Purchase stock through the sale yards:</b>	None – the saleyard will record the movement on your behalf.
<b>Purchase stock privately:</b>	You will need to record the transfer on the database (or have a third party do this on your behalf).
<b>Move stock onto your property from another property which has a different PIC number:</b>	You will need to record the transfer in the database (or have a third party do this on your behalf).

### Stock movements “OFF” your property

<b>Animal dies on the property:</b>	You update database (optional – not mandatory).
<b>Sell direct to slaughter:</b>	None (the abattoir will notify the database that the animal is now deceased).
<b>Sell through a saleyard:</b>	None – the saleyard will record the movement on your behalf.
<b>Sell into a feedlot:</b>	None - the feedlot will record the movement on your behalf.
<b>Sell stock privately:</b>	None (the receiver of the stock will need to record the movement to the database).

# Cattle NLIS Information

## What is required when cattle are moved?

All cattle leaving a holding must be identified with an NLIS device. This can either be with an NLIS ear tag or a rumen bolus. The NLIS ear tags need to have the Property's PIC (Property Identification Code) printed on the tags.

There are two colours of NLIS tags:

White tags are called Breeder tags – these are used in cattle that you have bred yourself on your property.

Orange tags are called Post-Breeder tags – they are used on cattle not bred by you or as emergency replacement tags if a beast loses a tag or does not have a tag and must be sold.

## Where do I order the NLIS tags?

NLIS tags can be either ordered at your local Rural Merchant store or your local LLS office. The approximate time for you tags to arrive is two weeks; if you need your tags urgently then courier charges will apply for overnight or express delivery.

## What happens if I have to sell my animals in an emergency before I have had a chance to identify them with an NLIS device?

Special (emergency) NLIS tags are available from your local LLS office.

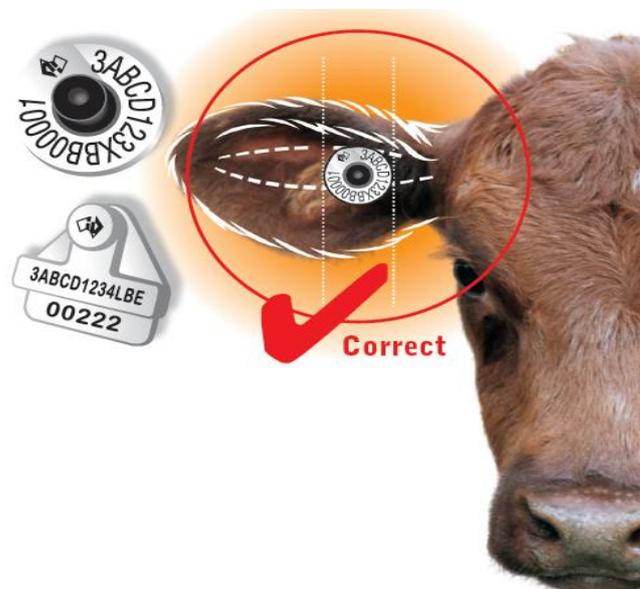
## Do I put a tag in each time I move an animal?

NO! The reason for NLIS cattle tags is to use one RFID number to track the one animal throughout its whole life. A tag is never removed unless the original breeder tag has been lost or the beast is dead. To maintain that individual animals whole of life traceability, the new tag would have to be linked to the old tag number on the NLIS database.

## Where do I put the tag – which ear?

The most common NLIS device is an electronic ear tag. It needs to be placed in the right ear of the animal in the middle of the ear as close into the head as possible.

This way it is less likely to be torn out.



## Do I have to replace an NLIS device if it is lost?

Yes, but It depends on –

- If the animal is **still on its property of birth**, replace the lost device with another **white** breeder device.
- If the animal is **no longer on its property of birth**, replace the lost device with your own **orange** post breeder device.

If you find an animal without an NLIS device, you should re-identify that animal. You may notify the NLIS Helpdesk of the old devices (if known) and the new device that it has been replaced with.

## If I buy in cattle and the stock already have an identifier, do I remove that identifier and replace with my own?

**NO! Do not remove an existing NLIS identifier.**

The national database is designed to record changes in residence of cattle during their lifetime against their NLIS identifier number.

It is an offence to remove an existing NLIS identifier.

## What happens if a beast with an NLIS device dies?

You don't have to do anything. If the device can be recovered, it would be good practice to notify the NLIS database, but this is voluntary.

## What happens if I sell direct to Slaughter?

Cattle being sold direct to slaughter will have to be NLIS identified, even if they are going interstate. The law requires cattle to be identified when they are leaving their property.

## Is there any other paperwork that maybe required by the purchaser

**National Cattle Health Statements (NCHS):**

These can be downloaded from [www.farmbiosecurity.com.au](http://www.farmbiosecurity.com.au)

These are statements used to provide other information on the cattle – For e.g. Johnne's disease, current vaccinations, testing and treatments. They are used when you are selling cattle for re-stockers rather than to a slaughter destination.

## I don't have a scanner, how do I read the tag?

NLIS tags are manufactured with 2 numbers – one is the RFID number on the internal microchip (the electronic number); the other is the Visual NLIS ID. The RFID number is the one that the scanner reads and is a 15 digit numerical number that identifies the microchip only and has no meaning to us otherwise. The Visual ID however, is the number printed on the outside of the NLIS device and is somewhat easier to understand.

The first 8 digits refer to the Property Identification Code, the next 3 digits are the manufacturer code, the next is a year of manufacturer code and the final 5 digits are the individual management number for that tag.

Eg. RFID = 982000005686845

Visual ID = NB620000LBZ00100

These two numbers are linked on the NLIS database so that you can read either number and still be able to identify the animal. So producers do not necessarily need to have a scanner – you can use the visual ID number – it's just a bit more work!

# Sheep NLIS Information

The National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Sheep and Goats is Australia's system for identifying and tracing sheep, lambs and farmed goats. NLIS Sheep and Goats were introduced on 1 January 2006. It uses visually readable ear tags printed with a property identification code (PIC). It is complemented by movement documents supplied by consignors that are used for identification and tracking.

NLIS will enhance Australia's ability to maintain access to key export markets and help to quickly contain a major food safety or disease incident. It is being implemented by industry in partnership with governments across Australia.

## What colour tag do I use?

It is recommended that you use the year of birth colour scheme for lambs. Year of birth tags are referred to as Breeder tags and are reserved for sheep you have bred yourself. The colours are as below and repeat every 8 years.

Year	Tag colour	Year	Tag colour
2008	Black	2016	Black
2009	White	2017	White
2010	Orange	2018	Orange
2011	Light green	2019	Light green
2012	Purple	2020	Purple
2013	Yellow	2021	Yellow
2014	Red	2022	Red
2015	Sky blue	2023	Sky blue

**Any year**

**Post-breeder tags must be pink**

Pink tags can be used on sheep not bred by you – called **Post-Breeder tags**. These can be used as replacement tags for purchased sheep that have lost their Breeder tags or for sheep that you have purchased before the requirement to tag commenced.

They are also available as Emergency NLIS tags from LLS offices or saleyards if you run short and need to sell sheep before your tags arrive.

## Where do I get tags from?

NLIS tags are specially printed with your PIC on them, so they must be ordered ahead of time and then sent to you.

Any rural merchandiser store or LLS office should be able to order your tags for you. Various tag manufacturers can make NLIS Sheep & Goat tags.

### Which animals do I have to tag?

All stock must be NLIS tagged before leaving the property of birth.

### What has to be printed on the tag?

NLIS tags for sheep and goats **must** have your PIC and NLIS logo printed on it. You can also decide to get serial numbers or an 8 character name printed on the second side of the tags.

### Terminal 'T' tags – explanation:

Although animals usually get infected with Johne's disease early in life, the infection develops very slowly. Few animals shed significant numbers of the Johne's bacteria in their dung before they are adults. For this reason, young animals usually represent a very low risk of spreading Johne's disease and are sometimes exempted from controls on movements that apply to older animals. The Australian sheep industry and governments have agreed that lambs that meet the criteria for terminal 'T' tag lambs may be traded without restriction as long as they are slaughtered before cutting any adult teeth.

Terminal 'T' tag lamb is: A lamb which is to be slaughtered before it cuts its first permanent teeth and is identified by an NLIS (sheep) 'T' tag.

If terminal 'T' tag lambs are kept in the flock after cutting their first adult teeth, the flock would be at risk of infection.

### Does it have to go in a specific ear?

It is recommended that the tag be put in the opposite ear to the registered earmark. This would mean putting the tag in the left ear for ewes and the right ear for wethers.



## Can I use electronic tags for sheep and goats?

At the moment there are still no clear guidelines on the type of electronic tag to be used in sheep and goats. However, if you use an electronic sheep tag it **MUST** have the PIC printed on the outside of the tag where it can be read visually.

**DO NOT** use electronic cattle NLIS tags in sheep as this may create problems on the NLIS database and affect the traceability of the Australian cattle herd.

## Are there any sheep or goats that are exempt from tagging?

No

## What about feral goats rounded up in the hills – do they have to be tagged?

Feral goats only need to be tagged with an NLIS tag prior to being moved to another property, if the stock are going direct to slaughter or transiting via a depot to slaughter. The appropriate documentation however IS still needed in both situations.

## Do I put a tag in each time an animal moves?

No, there is no requirement to re-tag a sheep each time it moves. The original tag must remain in the sheep.

## I bought some sheep and their tags fell out ... now what?

For purchased sheep that have lost their original breeder tags, it is acceptable for you to re-tag them with your **Post-Breeder tag** and thus maintain traceability.

The same applies to sheep you have bred that lose a tag before being sold – you re-tag them with your **Breeder** tags before going to sale or leaving the property.

## Do I need to record sheep and goat movements on the NLIS database?

Yes! After 1 July 2010 all mob based movements need to be recorded on the NLIS database at [www.nlis.mla.com.au](http://www.nlis.mla.com.au).

## How is a mob defined?

A mob can be as few as one animal. Most sheep and goats are identified with visual tags and so they do not have to be individually scanned as is the case with cattle. The normal practice is for movements of sheep and goats to be recorded on the NLIS database on a mob basis.

## Recording mob-based movements

You will need to have access to the Internet and already have a registered account with the NLIS database. If you have an account for cattle, there is no need to open another account for sheep and goats.

If sheep or goats identified with a visual tag move directly between properties, the person who receives a 'mob' of one or more animals at the destination property must ensure a mob-based movement onto their PIC is recorded. You might need to do this if you sell sheep or goats privately. The seller or buyer can move animals onto the buyer's PIC. If you move your animals to an agistment property owned by someone else, the movement onto their property must be recorded even though you retain ownership.

Owners aren't required to record a mob movement if they buy or sell sheep or goats through a saleyard, send them direct to an abattoir, feedlot or export depot, or exhibit them at a show (check with show organiser if you are in NSW), as it is done for them.

Pounds/Stock holding yards may impound animals that have strayed and move them onto a holding paddock. If ownership can be established, the animals are then moved off the holding paddock and back onto the owner's property.