

National cattle identification and tracing system

It is proposed that in 3-4 years time it will be a legal requirement for ALL cattle to be double tagged and registered on a database held by the DOA. Such a system is needed for the following reasons:

- For effective herd management on farm.
- To control disease outbreaks – to enable early disease detection and notification and implement rapid response measures.
- To learn and be aware of the epidemiology of disease (how diseases spread).
- To have the assurance for food producers and national and international consumers that food producing animals can be traced from farm to fork with knowledge of relevant information eg drugs administered and additional guarantees as to the origin, type and quality of food produced.
- To enable authorities to promptly and effectively trace any source of contamination in the interests of public health.
- To keep in line with world trends to give us the best chance to be an equal competitor in the consumer market. Due to traceability assurances, unjustified trade barriers can be broken.
- Sand Bay abattoir is now accredited to export beef to the EU and a national system of identification and traceability must be in place to meet EU import requirements.

While double tagging and registering cattle is currently voluntary it makes good management sense to tag and ensure each animal is recorded. This is especially important if you are selling your beef/milk for consumption, overseas or local. Public health must be strictly safe guarded.

It is recommended to double tag any calf born after 1st January 2009 with a number and farm code in each ear – if you begin doing this by the time the system is mandatory several of your animals will already be compliant.

After 1st January 2009 ANY cattle leaving your property must be double tagged and these tag numbers recorded on the AMC, cattle will not be accepted at the abattoir unless appropriately identified with numbers and farm codes.

If anyone would like another copy of the proposed identification and tagging system and how it will be phased in please contact the Veterinary Department on telephone 27366.