2025 Kansas 4-H Livestock Ear Tag Procedure

All animals that are nominated for the Kansas State Fair and/or the Kansas Junior Livestock show in 2025 will be required to use a Kansas 4-H EID (electronic identification) ear tag. This will apply to market beef, commercial heifers, market lambs, commercial ewes, all meat goats, market swine and commercial gilts.

Ordering the Tags
The Kansas 4-H EID tags will be ordered from the KSU Youth Livestock Program in the Department of Animal Sciences & Industry. Please refer to the order deadline dates listed in the agent email, online, or on the top of the order forms. **Beef** tag orders must be submitted by **December 15, 2024** without being considered a special order. **Small livestock** tag orders will be due by **January 15, 2025**. Payment must accompany the tag order form to be accepted. This year, we will be going back to using the one-page paper form. *However, extension units should email a copy of their completed form to Lexie Hayes (adhayes@ksu.edu) before mailing it to ensure their tag needs are included in the state count.* The agent responsible for managing 4-H/EID tags needs to sign the form, and mail it, along with the check made payable to Kansas State University, by the deadline. Additional resources regarding 4-H/EID tags are posted on the KSU Youth Livestock Program website, under the "EID Tags" tab.

The options for approved sheep and meat goat EID tags continue to be limited. The best option available is the new small ruminant lightweight EID tag we used last year (2024). It will be small and square in shape, similar to the one used about 10 years ago. The black (or blue depending on the tagger) insert MUST be used to apply the new sheep and meat goat tags. The EID button is significantly smaller in size than other versions, so it is imperative to use the insert in order to avoid the tag getting stuck in the tagger. It is also very important to use disinfectant when tagging, as well as pull apart and spin the tag components after application.

The Kansas 4-H EID tags come in bags of 20, and one bag is the minimum order. Counties are welcome to share tags from a bag with another county. The unit that the tags are initially issued to must keep a record of any tags that they send to another unit, as well as an accurate record of the families and animals each tag is applied. Including a secondary form of identification with the animal tagging records (scrapie tag, ear notches, etc.) is encouraged. ***It is also important that units use the oldest tags first***, because we have reached the point that we have started repeating the 5-digit visual 4-H tag numbers. Once we return to a specific tag series for specie, old tags can no longer be accepted for state nominated animals.

Tag orders received from all Kansas extension units are collected, combined, and a bulk order placed on behalf of the state. Beef tags are ordered first, followed by the small livestock tags. The tags will be distributed to individual units once they are received and processed. The KSU Youth Livestock program does not maintain a constant supply of tags. Traditionally, beef tags are available in late-January, with small livestock tags ready by March 1.

Expired Tags
Kansas 4-H EID tags 5 years old and older will no longer be accepted in state nominated animals. The manufacture date should be listed on the bottom of the label on each bag of tags. Tags that were issued prior to 2020 are ***not eligible*** in livestock projects that will be state nominated for the Kansas State Fair Grand Drive and/or KJLS. This includes visual tag numbers ***45200-60000***, for all species. However, leftover tags from 2019 and before may still be used in county fair only animals.

*Only 840 tags are accepted in cattle and hogs that will be state nominated. The original 982 EID tags issued as part of the grant-funded RFID technology pilot program will not be accepted for these two species.

Record Keeping Responsibilities
The extension professional within a unit who is responsible for managing the tags for livestock projects is responsible for maintaining the tagging records for the animals in which the tags are applied. Records for Kansas 4-H EID tags that are official (840) tags need to be kept for five (5) years.

FAQ's

Q: What tag applicators are needed for the new tags?

A. The Allflex red Total Tagger with the red blunt pin will work with the EID tags. These taggers can be purchased a local supplier, or one of several livestock equipment suppliers. Additionally, in 2023, the Kansas Department of Agriculture used grant funds to purchase new Allflex taggers for each extension unit. The new taggers are gray in color, with a blue pin and insert, model # UTT3S.

Q: Does my county have to use the EID 4-H tags for our county fair animals?

A. NO. Counties have always had flexibility in the method they choose to identify county fair show animals. This ranges from: tags from a local supplier, to the "traditional" visual-only Kansas 4-H ear tags (discontinued; no longer available), to the Kansas 4-H EID ear tags.

Q: What if we tag an animal for county fair only and the 4-H member decides at a later date to nominate that animal for a state show?

A. If your county uses the old traditional Kansas 4-H tag (discontinued), or another non-EID tag, for county tagging, you will can remove that tag and replace it with the Kansas 4-H EID tag. Then, use the new EID tag for county fair management. The Kansas 4-H EID tag will need to be in the animal before the nomination deadline for that species. The visual 5-digit 4-H number is the how the animal will be identified and referred in the online nomination system (Tag ID), the DNA envelope, and other related documentation. *Additionally, the visual portion of the tag MUST be correctly matched with the appropriate EID button*. They are sent correctly matched from the manufacturer. If you need to confirm they are correctly matched while tagging an animal, you may use the barcode stickers or refer to the Allflex website. If you are using up old, expired EID tags and a family is on the fence, tag the animal with a new, eligible Kansas 4-H EID tag. Once an animal is tagged with an official ID (840 tag), it cannot be removed.

Q: What is the minimum number of tags that I must order?

A. The tags will come in bags of 20 and one bag per species is the minimum order. Counties may share bags of tags if needed, but will be responsible for tracking the bag and tag numbers in each county to the specific family and animal in which projects are tagged.

Q: How do we record/report the 15-digit EID number if we are not using the technology/reader?

A. The tags will come with two (2) sets of peel-and-stick labels for your use. The labels have the 15-digit EID tag number, a bar code of that number, and the corresponding visual Kansas 4-H number on them. Counties can use one set of labels to record the numbers on their county weigh-in forms/cards and will be required to use one set of the labels for state livestock nominations. The sticker will need to go in the box indicated on the DNA envelope required as part of the state nomination process. *Extension staff should also make a copy or take a picture of their stickers to retain on file, in the event their barcode stickers are damaged or misplaced.*

Q: What if an animal comes to county tagging and already has an official EID tag?

A. It is unlawful to remove an official EID tag and an animal may only have one. Do not add a Kansas 4-H EID tag. Contact the KSU Youth Livestock Program for guidance and eligibility options for state nomination.

Q: What tagging records is our office responsible for maintaining?

A. Extension Units are responsible for maintaining accurate tagging records of the family and animal in which each Kansas 4-H EID tag is applied. Contact information for the owner of the animal must also be readily available in the event of a required traceback. This specifically applies to USDA-APHIS guidelines regarding the distribution of official animal identification, including the 840 EID tags used in cattle and hogs.

Q: What if our county does not currently use the EID tags for county show management but are interested in doing so?

A. Extension Units interested in using RFID technology should contact Dave Kehler directly at dkehler@ksu.edu or 316-377-9470.