



Improving RFID ear tag retention



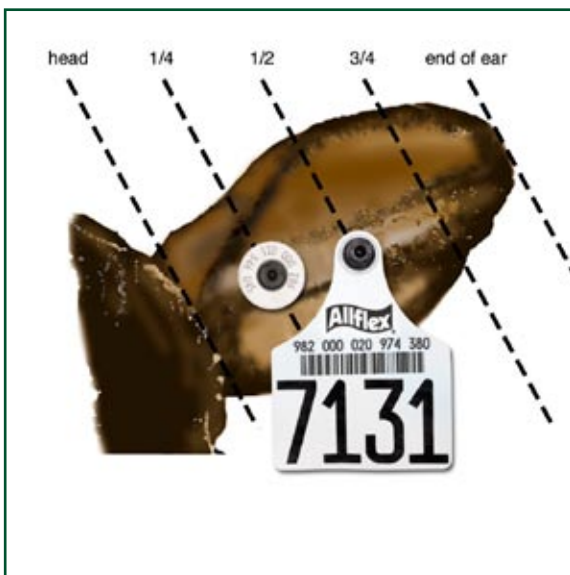
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Cow-calf producers are an integral part of Canada's cattle identification system. By adopting a couple of best practices, producers can minimize cost and effort due to lost mandatory tags.



The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency (CCIA) is responsible for approving the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, and has approved ones that have demonstrated exceptional retention in trials. Critical to optimal tag retention is ensuring that the RFID tags are applied

to the proper place in the ear and with the proper applicator. This saves

you, and others in the industry, money with fewer lost tags and fewer tags needing to be replaced, either while in the herd of origin, or after leaving the herd. Also with fewer tags lost, if a trace-back is required, there is less time spent looking for ID numbers that are no longer valid, saving the overall industry additional cost and effort.

Clay Ross, Regional Manager with Allflex Canada, manufacturers of the tags, offers two important tips for cattle producers to obtain the best RFID tag retention. "Place the RFID tag as close to the head as possible and use the manufacturer's current model of tag applicator." Producers should use the photos on this page as reference for proper location of the tag in the ear. Based on his observations when investigating the loss of a large number of RFID tags, Ross concluded, "Use of different manufacturer's tag applicators or the use of older models of applicators is almost a guarantee that tag loss will occur at a later date." After RFID tags are correctly inserted, producers can do their part to ensure that tags stay in place for the life of the animal. Heifer calves retained as replacement breeding animals may stay in your herd for several years. Your feeding system may impact the retention of RFID tags over the long-term. Poly twine works great for its intended use - tying bales of hay or straw. However, baler twine has always been an enemy of ear tags, and this has proven to be especially true with the thicker RFID round tags. Be sure to take a few extra minutes to remove twine from bales prior to feeding. Too often, when left as one of those "I'll do it later" jobs, it never gets done.

In summary, to improve RFID ear tag retention and save money: place tag close to the head; use the proper tag applicator; and remove baler twine from bales prior to feeding.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Livestock Development Branch at (306) 787-9112.

SASKATCHEWAN PASTURES RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION TAG PILOT PROGRAM



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Watch for Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags at or during field demonstration days at both Beacon Hill and Valjean community pastures in the near future.

The Saskatchewan Pastures Program is working with producers and community pasture patrons to see first hand the value of RFID tags. At present, there is a lack of information on the value of RFID in field operations. Two Saskatchewan community pastures are being used for RFID demonstration projects in 2008: Beacon Hill pasture in the Northwest and Valjean pasture in the South.

RFID tags are an integral component of the livestock industry's response to traceability of livestock to enable the containment and eradication of animal diseases. The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency currently requires that calves have RFID tags in place, while cows are not required to have these until December 31, 2009.

The demonstration projects will provide valuable field experience and enable a better understanding of the benefits and challenges facing the livestock industry when using the tags. The two demonstration sites allow for RFID tags, readers and recording software to be tested under live field conditions. This summer, patrons of the pasture, cattle producers and others will be invited to attend demonstration days, where they will have the opportunity to observe and ask questions on the use of RFID equipment. The projects will provide insights into animal retention of RFID ear tags, the costs associated with the equipment and software, and

the future for recording information on animal weights and medical treatments.



Correctly-placed RFID tag.

The Saskatchewan Pastures Program is committed to working with patrons and the livestock industry in the promotion of animal and herd health through field research.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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