Canada’s Livestock Traceability System

Canada works closely with international organizations in developing and adopting best practices in agriculture, including animal health, traceability and food safety.
NAFTS has four key objectives:
- Emergency Management
- Market Access
- Industry Competitiveness
- Consumer Confidence

These objectives will help NAFTS meet their vision of:“... a secure National Agriculture and Food Traceability System to better serve citizens, industry and Government. The system will provide timely, accurate, and relevant traceability information to enhance emergency management, market access, industry competitiveness and consumer confidence.”

Traceability, the ability to follow the movement of livestock or food from one point in the supply chain to another, is making the agriculture industry stronger and more competitive while delivering food safety benefits to both our domestic and international markets.

Many livestock sectors have solid foundations for traceability. For example, animal identification is already mandatory in the cattle (beef and dairy), bison, swine and sheep sectors which is regulated and administered nationally. Whereas the poultry sectors have industry developed and administered systems for collecting traceability information.

Working Globally
Canada works closely with international organizations in developing and adopting best practices in agriculture, including animal health, traceability and food safety. Consumers in many international markets view traceability as a desired attribute in agri-food products and as an assurance of product safety.

Canada works with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Codex Alimentarius Commission and the World Veterinary Association (WVA) in adopting best practices in agriculture and agri-food products management and production. All these groups acknowledge the importance and value of traceability for its contribution to animal health and food safety.

In Canada
Recognizing industry’s leadership and foresight in building the foundation for animal traceability, the federal, provincial and territorial agriculture ministers committed in 2006, to implement a National Agriculture and Food Traceability System (NAFTS), beginning with livestock and poultry.
In Alberta

Alberta is proud to provide safe, consistent, high-quality agriculture and food products for consumers around the world. The province of Alberta exports a variety of primary and processed agricultural and food products (agri-food) that includes livestock and poultry. One of our most celebrated products is our great-tasting beef. Alberta is the largest beef cattle-producing province in Canada, with more than 5 million head of cattle and calves, accounting for over 40 per cent of the National herd.

Alberta's Traceability system uses various components of Traceability, such as tags, tattoos and paper-based records, which have been used by both industry and government for years. These long-standing tools have now been combined with new procedures and additional tools to create a livestock traceability system that goes from farm-to-fork – our home to yours.

There are three components of traceability – premises identification, animal identification and animal movement which help reduce response times and allow for a quicker containment or rescue of animals in a disease outbreak, technological disaster like a release of chemicals from an accident, or natural emergency such as a fire or flood.

Traceability is the ability to follow the movement of livestock or agri-food products from farm-to-fork!

The three components of the livestock traceability system:
1. premises identification,
2. animal identification,
3. animal movement.
Premises Identification (PID)

Each province and territory in Canada has the delegated responsibility to implement a PID system that supports NAFTS. Premises Identification is a way of linking livestock and poultry to land locations. The information collected through the provincial Premises Identification System allows industry and government to locate animals and notify owners of an emergency that may affect their livestock or poultry more quickly and accurately than previous programs.

In Alberta, participating in Premises Identification has been mandatory since January 1, 2009 under the *Animal Health Act*.

Owners of livestock and poultry that are bred, kept, raised, displayed, assembled or disposed of are required to apply for a provincially assigned Premises Identification Account and Premises Identification Number(s) for the parcels of land and/or operations where they have livestock or poultry. Operators of commingling sites (auction marts, feedlots, etc.) are required to have a Premises Identification Account and a Premises Identification Number for every site they operate.

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**Traceability has three pillars:**

1. **Premises Identification (PID)**

Farms, ranches, acreages and commingling sites that have livestock animals as defined in the *Alberta Animal Health Act*. As well as, commingling sites where animals owned by different owners are kept together either temporarily or permanently.

**Commingling Sites** include:

- an abattoir under the *Meat Inspection Act*
- animal artificial insemination centres
- animal embryo transfer stations
- assembling stations
- carcass disposal sites
- boarding stables
- community pastures
- fairs and exhibitions
- feedlots
- livestock markets
- an establishment operating under the *Meat Inspection Act (Canada)*
- meat facilities under the *Meat Inspection Act (Alberta)*
- race tracks
- renderers
- research facilities
- veterinary clinics
- veterinary laboratories
- veterinary hospitals and
- zoos
Animal Identification

Animal Identification gives us the ability to identify livestock, either as individual animals or as a lot of animals, depending upon the species. Canada’s *Health of Animals Act* includes the authority for animal identification requirements.

The implementation of animal identification programs is at different stages among the species as industry and government work together to design and implement traceability systems. The cattle (beef and dairy), bison and sheep industries use nationally approved radio frequency identification (RFID) tags to individually identify each animal. Producers in the elk industry identify individual animals through non-RFID tags and a paper-based system. The swine and poultry industries typically identify their animals as lots rather than individually because of their production methods.

Animals covered by PID

Under the *Animal Health Act*, Animals refers to the following animals in captivity:

- alpacas
- beef cattle
- bees
- bison
- cervids (such as elk and reindeer)
- dairy cattle
- donkeys
- doves
- ducks
- fish acquired, propagated, reared or kept in accordance with a class A commercial fish culture license
- issued under the *Fisheries (Alberta) Act*
- fur-bearing animals as defined in the *Fur Farms Act*
- geese
- goats
- guinea fowl
- horses
- llamas
- mules
- peafowl
- pheasants
- pigeons
- poultry
- quail
- rabbits raised for the production of meat
- ratites (flightless birds such as ostrich and emu)
- sheep
- swine
- wild boars
- yaks

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3 Animal Movement

Animal Movement allows for tracing livestock and poultry backwards or forwards through the production supply chain based on animal movement records. Animal movement is largely nationally driven, but Alberta has maintained an industry-government system for managing animal movement of beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep and horses for over a decade.

Livestock traceability systems provide government with the ability to rapidly trace an animal throughout its life cycle. The system provides timely, accurate and relevant information to enhance emergency management, market access and industry competitiveness as well as consumer confidence. Once animals move into food production they come under the Food Safety system.

Traceability provides assurance of safe quality agri-food products to consumers around the world.

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On Traceability in Alberta:
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