



Livestock ID System Q & A

Do we need to be concerned about health or disease spread from the ID process?

- Extra caution has been taken in the swine derby program to reduce the risk of disease spread. In most cases with sheep, goats and beef, disposable towels will be used to prevent possible respiratory disease spread. Some sites may choose to have some heavy bath towels on hand for use with beef that are difficult to keep dry with paper towels, but will only use it on one animal. With sheep and goats it is suggested that the collector wear disposable gloves to prevent the possible spread of sore mouth and that they change the gloves after each family. Disinfectant wipes may be used on retinal imaging camera lenses. Sites concerned with footrot should consider using footbaths. Also insure minimal hoof damage and keep the chute area and holding pens well bedded. Ideally, each family's lambs and kids should be kept separate from the next family's lambs and kids.

Do all breeding animals need to be verified also?

- No, just market animals with the exception of breeding gilts. If a gilt or ewe lamb is verified, it would be eligible for either the market or breeding divisions, just as it is now. However, an exhibitor will need to decide before the fair which division it will show in, since it cannot show as both market and breeding.
- Market heifers that are verified will not be eligible to be ID'ed or exhibited as breeding heifers.

Do commercial heifers need to be tattooed or verified?

- Yes, commercial heifers need to be tattooed to be eligible to show, just like they have in the past. However, they do not need to be verified through this process.

Can a 4-H member verify at more than one verification site?

- No, they need to attend only one site. If there is a conflict of dates, the 4-H'er needs to go through their local county office to attend another county's site.

Can a 4-H'er attend a site other than the one assigned to them?

- Only if there are personal conflicts such as family celebrations, school events, etc. and ONLY if prior arrangements are made with both their home county and the host verification site county.

What if--a county that is NOT a verification site has a 4-H'er weigh and tag at their county weigh in and then decide afterwards that they want to verify for State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben. Can they then go to a verification site if one is available?

- That exhibitor would need to make special arrangements with both their home county and the host verification site county prior to the verification date.

If a youngster attends a county weigh-in (non-verification site) in mid-Dec, and then decides he/she would like eligibility to enter State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben, so attends another weigh-in site later in the month, does the calf have to be re-tagged and re-weighed or can he just have DNA or retinal images collected?

- If a 4-H'er's county is a verification site, they should have their animal done at that time. This requires some planning and pre-thought, but that is a life skill that they will hopefully learn from 4-H. If the home county is not a verification site, they would be reweighed, retinal imaged and possible hair collected, but would not be retagged at the verification site.

How will snow dates be publicized and how will cancellations be handled?

- Host counties and those attending there will need to make some arrangements for publicizing cancellations. Likely they will identify a common radio or TV station to post announcements. This emphasizes the necessity of both host and home counties prior awareness of what 4-H'ers are planning to attend verification sites and where.

Does the state fair verification process need to be done to animals that will only show at the county fair?

- No, only animals that want to be eligible to show at the Iowa State Fair or Ak-Sar-Ben need to go through the verification process. Animals only competing in the county fair will go through the weigh-in procedures the same as usual (official tag, weight and ID form) and at the regular county weigh-in site whether that site is a state fair verification site or not. Only animals being identified for the state fair or Ak-Sar-Ben need to go through the verification process.

What type of checks will be done on the Champion animals at the State Fair and Ak-Sar-Ben?

- The winners of each class will be immediately retinal imaged when they exit the ring and the images will be analyzed before the animals are allowed to show for champion.

What is the maximum number of animals an exhibitor can verify?

- Exhibitors are allowed to verify six market beef animals, fifteen market lambs, 10 meat goats and eighty market hogs (20 purebred Derby, 20 crossbred Derby, 20 purebred market and 20 crossbred market) for nomination purposes at the Iowa State Fair.

What if I want to exhibit a steer as a breed steer?

- To be eligible to exhibit as a breed steer, the steer must have the registration tattoo in the ear and identify the tattoo, breed and sire information on the verification form. Registration papers are not needed during the winter weigh-ins, however the above mentioned breed information must be included on the verification form. **All breed information must be on the ID form by Jan. 31st on file at the State 4-H Office.**

Now that the market animal is verified, what else do I have to do?

- Entries still need to be made with the county extension office prior to the July 1 deadline for the Iowa State Fair, and the August deadline for AkSarBen. Verifications do **NOT** serve as an entry.

Ear Tags

Do counties have to tag the animals with their specific county tags?

- Animals may be tagged with either the verification site tag or the home county tag. If there is a site where numerous counties are identifying their animals and somebody wants to make sure the separate tags are used that is okay, but it is not required if a site wants to save time and all use the same county's tags.

What if a county has leftover tags from last year?

- Counties can use two colors of ear tags – this year and last year's colors. Either will be acceptable at the state fair. Other colored tags may now be used for county only animals if needed. Or they can hold over the tags until that color is reused again in the cycle.

Retinal Imaging

Will DNA still be required in addition to retinal images?

- No. For the Iowa State Fair, only retinal images will be utilized for identification.
- Ak-Sar-Ben will continue to use DNA at this time for all species nominated for that show

Will FFA change to retinal imaging?

- Currently, FFA will remain with nose prints and DNA collections

How long does it take to obtain a good retinal image?

- This completely depends on the image collector and how efficient they are. Beginner volunteers who have not practiced much can take a few minutes to capture one eye image. However, practiced and experienced volunteers can obtain an image in about 20-30 seconds, assuming the animal is properly restrained.

How do I properly restrain the animal?

- For beef, putting a halter on the animal and pulling the head to the side each way saves a lot of time and is recommended. For sheep, there are a couple different ways. A person can straddle the lamb while the other is scanning. Others use a lamb stand (sometimes the metal bar along the jaw can scrunch the eye shut making it harder to get an image), and others have found a goat milking stand (one with just vertical bars, much like a beef head catch) works well. There really isn't a rule, just what each person finds works the best.

Do I need to collect both eyes?

- Yes, an image is required for both eyes, and the animal's left eye is to be scanned first.

What species does retinal imaging work on?

- Beef, sheep, and meat goats.

How are the images saved and submitted?

- The retinal images are saved on a programmed compact flash card. Once the weigh-in session is over, the images are uploaded to an online database.

What if my county only has 10 animals that nominate for State Fair?

- Your best option is to either have a surrounding county come and retinal scan your animals, or partner with counties to purchase a machine and alternate your verification dates.

What is the life expectancy of a retinal imaging machine?

- Like any piece of equipment, the amount of care taken mostly determines how long the machine will last. Most all machines have lasted many years and scanned thousands of animals. One great trick is to attach a strap to the end of the handheld device and wear it around your neck. This would eliminate the risk of accidentally dropping the machine on the ground or if an animal knocks it out of your hand unexpectedly. (Key chain straps or binocular straps work great)

DNA Collection (for Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock Show)

Can the DNA be physically handled or touched?

- It is suggested that the hair not be physically handled or touched by anyone. This is to keep the sample safe from any chance of contamination. Handling will not affect the DNA of the sample, however it may cause the roots or follicles to be knocked loose, and the test requires the hair follicle, not the hair itself.

What if blood gets on the hair sample?

- That should have no impact since the DNA is the same in both hair and blood. It may make it more difficult for the sample to dry and be preserved.

Does it matter where you collect the hair?

- On lambs the DNA sample has to be taken from hair not wool. So the best place to take the sample is on the back of the leg down by the foot. The best place to pull hair on beef is the tail switch. The key is to check for visible roots or follicles.

What is the minimum number of hairs needed for an acceptable sample?

- 30 – 40 hairs will need to be taken for a sufficient sample. If one pull of hair is taken and the person is not sure if they have quite enough, another pull should be taken just to be sure.

Can the DNA test tell if the hair has been artificially colored?

- No, the DNA test only uses the follicles on the tips of the hair for genetic identification of animals. It cannot tell if the animal's hair has been artificially colored.

What if an animal has a clone, will they ID the same?

- Clones will have the same DNA, but their noses will take a different print. A major part of the forming of the nose is developed in the womb of the animal carrying the fetus. So even if the animals are genetically identical the noseprints will be affected environmentally.

Paperwork

Who fills out the Verification Form (4-H 106)?

- The Verification Form can be filled out by the Verification Site Coordinator, parent, or 4-H'er. All signatures must be obtained on this form, unless a waiver is submitted.

Who needs to sign the waiver- the exhibitor, exhibitor's parent, or both?

- Whoever is unable to attend – either parent or child or both – must complete the appropriate waiver. If the exhibitor is not in attendance then a signed exhibitor waiver form must be filled out and brought to the verification site. If the parent/guardian is not in attendance then a signed parental waiver form must be filled out and brought to the verification site.

Does the waiver form only need signed if the exhibitor is under 18 years of age?

- No, every exhibitor nominating livestock for the Iowa State Fair, regardless of age, needs to follow the specific verification procedures including signing the waivers.

Does a scrapie tag # need put on the verification form?

- Scrapie tags are not required for weigh in, but they are required for reproductively intact animals to sell or exhibit. If they purchased the ewe lambs, they will already have a scrapie tag and it can be recorded on the verification form. If the ewe lamb is home raised, it will not need a scrapie tag until fair time.

Ak-Sar-Ben

What about Ak-Sar-Ben? Can they be done at the same time?

- Yes, all market beef and market sheep/meat goats will have the option to be verified for the Iowa State Fair and Ak-Sar-Ben. Ak-Sar-Ben DNA can be collected at the same time retinal images are taken if the animals are the same for both shows. All Ak-Sar-Ben animals are to pay \$5/head; this includes all species (market beef, market sheep/meat goats, and all swine).

Can animals be eligible for Ak-Sar-Ben only, and not State fair?

- Yes. They need to have DNA samples taken and submitted to the Ak-Sar-Ben office by April 1 (for market beef) and June 15 (for sheep/meat goats) respectively.

Does everything on the DNA envelope have to be filled out for Ak-Sar-Ben?

- Yes, AkSarBen requires all the information on the DNA envelope to be completed.

What about Ak-Sar-Ben swine?

- ALL swine wanting to nominate for Ak-Sar-Ben must be listed on an ID form and have hair DNA pulled. Since all State Fair swine are done at separate, regional sites, either county staff or 4-H families will need to pull hair DNA for Ak-Sar-Ben swine. All Ak-Sar-Ben materials (copies of ID forms, \$5/head payment, DNA samples) get sent directly to Ak-Sar-Ben.

What about the requirements for late identification to Ak-Sar-Ben?

- 4-H'ers will still be able to identify additional sheep and meat goats for shows after Sept. 1, by using the official 4-H tag and a livestock ID sheet due to the county extension office by June 15. Sheep and meat goat animals must be verified with hair samples. Swine must be verified with DNA. County Extension offices may choose to conduct late weigh-in/verification dates for late lambs and pigs or are allowed to have 4-H families pull hair and submit to county offices.

FFA

What is the status of the FFA requirements for the Iowa State Fair?

- At the present time, FFA will continue to use nose prints and DNA samples. Ag instructors should be made aware that county extension offices are not responsible for supplying print cards and envelopes at their 4-H weigh-ins. Exhibitors should visit with their Ag instructors to make arrangements for the verification process

County Details

Can the verification information be hand delivered?

- Yes, the counties can either hand deliver them to the state 4-H office, make arrangements for delivery, or ship them by Fed Ex or UPS a method with a tracking process.

What is the cost and who should the checks be made out to?

- Exhibitors should be charged \$5/head for all State Fair nominated animals. Of that, counties will send \$1/head to the State 4-H Office. Another \$1/head will be billed by Optibrand to county offices. The remaining \$3/head can be used at the county's discretion. All Ak-Sar-Ben animals will be charged an additional \$5/head, which this entire amount goes directly to Ak-Sar-Ben.

Can the information be included in the 4-H newsletter?

- Yes, it can be included in family newsletters or sent directly to 4-H families. Additional information will be provided by Focus to the county offices.

If you question an animal in the barn, do you need to have the exhibitor's permission before checking the animal?

- Yes, and you should have the 4-H'er or a parent/guardian present when you check the animal.

If county fairs want to follow this verification process can they go beyond the State Fair requirements?

- Counties have always had the option of being more restrictive than the state level, but not less restrictive. If a county chooses to ID all their animals for county fair, they have the ability to do so. County staff should visit with the state 4-H office on how to design your local process and what to consider including.

Do verification volunteers also need to go through the Child Protection and Safety program?

- No, they only need to be listed as official volunteers, and approved through the county Extension Council. They will not be in a situation where they are alone with children, and therefore do not need to be processed through CPSP.

What if the individual taking the retinal images or DNA samples has a child involved in 4-H? Should they do anything different?

- Continue to follow the protocol as outlined but include an additional signature on both the verification form and the DNA envelope. The additional signature could be the verification site coordinator or another trained volunteer or staff member.

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