



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



South Dakota 4-H

Animal Ownership and Identification Guide



Animal Ownership

All livestock (beef, goat, dairy, poultry, rabbit, sheep, and swine) must be owned:

- a) Solely by the 4-H exhibitor, or
- b) The exhibitor in partnership with other member(s) of his or her immediate family. Immediate family is defined as members of a household, including parents, legal guardians, and siblings.

Leasing Animals

Livestock lease agreements are acceptable for all classes of livestock. The best experience in animal projects can be found in daily care and management of the project, but that is not available to all youth. Like many 4-H project areas, animal projects provide an opportunity for youth to work with a caring adult/mentor to gain experience working with livestock or animal projects. From an experiential learning standpoint, eligibility for youth leasing animals can be considered when youth cannot gain experience due to:

- Lack or absence of adequate facilities to house animals
- Limited or no financial means to own and take care of animals
- Absence of adult/mentor with knowledge/experience to successfully raise animals

The South Dakota 4-H Animal Projects Lease Form is available on extension.sdstate.edu or from County Extension Offices, and it must be uploaded to 4-H Online by June 1. Please see the Animal Lease Requirements Fact Sheet on the SDSU Extension website for more information.

Breed Registration Papers

Copy of breed registration paper for registered or purebred animals must be uploaded with the 4-H Member entries for State Fair in the FairEntry enrollment system by 11:59 p.m. CDT **August 1**. Registration papers must show one of the following:

- a) The member's name as owner, or
- b) The name of the exhibitor and/or co-owner who is a member of the exhibitor's immediate family (see immediate family definition above)

Registration papers must reflect ownership as of June 1 if purchased. The portion of the registration paper showing purchase date must be uploaded with the rest of the registration paper.

In leasing situations, exhibitors must upload registration papers to their entry in FairEntry by August 1. The same animal owner name listed on the South Dakota 4-H Animal Lease Form must appear on the registration paper; therefore, the registration paper does not need to be in the exhibitor's name. Registration papers must be available at the time of check-in at State Fair.

Exhibition

Once an animal is exhibited at a 4-H show under a youth member's name, only that individual may exhibit the animal at South Dakota 4-H shows for the remainder of the program year.

In order to be eligible for exhibition at a South Dakota 4-H livestock show, the exhibitor must complete the following by the deadline outlined below. **NO LATE NOMINATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS OR ENTRIES SHALL BE ACCEPTED:**

Due by 11:59 p.m. CDT June 1

- Animal ownership
- Animal identification in 4-H Online
- Animal Lease Form in 4-H Online (if applicable)
- DNA Samples to local county extension office (market animal exhibitors only)

Due July 1

- Youth Livestock Literacy certification (YLL)

Due by 11:59 p.m. CDT August 1

- Animal registration papers (if applicable)
- South Dakota State Fair Entries in FairEntry



Mandatory Identification of Animals

All animals must be individually identified, and uploaded to the 4-H Member records on the 4-H Online enrollment system.

- Individual counties and other shows or contests may use different information deadlines and/or rules, but for South Dakota State 4-H, these deadlines and information minimums must be met.
- NOTE: DNA samples are required for Market Beef, Market Sheep, Market Swine and Market Meat Goats for State Fair exhibition.
 - **NO LATE NOMINATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS OR ENTRIES SHALL BE ACCEPTED.**
- All Ownership Verification, including Rabbit and Poultry must be entered into 4-H Online by the ownership deadline listed below.
 - **NO LATE NOMINATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS OR ENTRIES SHALL BE ACCEPTED.**

Species	Identification Method For State Fair Exhibition	Deadline for Ownership and 4-H Online Registration (Date as of the current year)
All Market Animals must have RFID Tags and DNA Samples.		
Breeding Beef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered heifers must have an ear tattoo corresponding to her registration paper as a primary identifier, plus a secondary identifier such as a USDA "840" (Bangs) RFID tag, RFID tag or herd tag. • Commercial heifers must have either a USDA "840" (Bangs) RFID tag, or general RFID tag as a primary identifier, plus a secondary identifier such as a tattoo, herd tag or freeze brand. 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Breeding Meat Goat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tattoo and Registration Paper (Registered Does ONLY) • USDA Official Scrapie ID 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Breeding Sheep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Official Scrapie ID 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Breeding Swine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear notched and RFID Tag 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Dairy Cattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear Tattoo and Registration Paper for registered cattle or Official USDA "840" Tag and Registration Paper. • Grade and Crossbred cattle must have a USDA "840" or other RFID Tag. 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Dairy Goat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Official Scrapie ID OR Tattoo and Registration Paper for registered goats 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbered Leg Band 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Rabbit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear tattoo in left ear 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Market Beef	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFID tag as a primary identifier, plus a secondary identifier such as a tattoo or herd tag. • DNA Sample 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Market Goat (Wethers only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Official Scrapie RFID tag OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ RFID tag (not scrapie) PLUS USDA Official Scrapie tag • DNA Sample 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Market Sheep (Wethers only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Official Scrapie RFID tag OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ RFID tag (not scrapie) PLUS USDA Official Scrapie tag • DNA Sample 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT
Market Swine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear notched and RFID Tag • DNA Sample 	June 1 by 11:59 PM CDT



How to Tag Market Animals with an RFID Tag

4-H youth should RFID ear tag animals under the direction and guidance of an adult.

Equipment Needed: Ear Tagger that works with the RFID tag brand you are using, Disinfectant Solution, and RFID tag.

Step 1

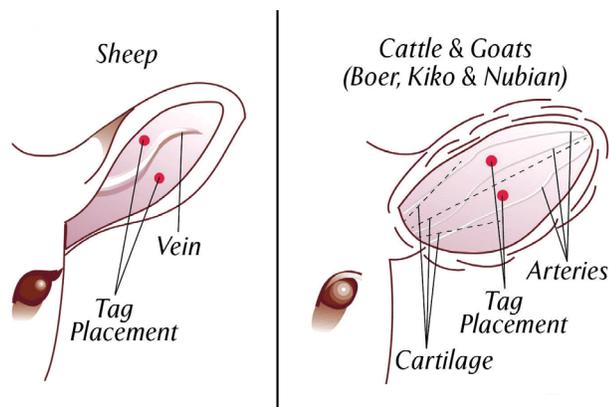
Properly secure the animal. Movement of the animal's head or body may cause injury to the handler or livestock, or result in improper tagging. A small amount of feed can be offered during or after the tagging process as a reward.

- For swine, confine in a small pen, hog boards to restrict movement, or use a hog snare to completely secure the hog. Piglets can be held against a person's body.
- For cattle, a chute or head catch is preferred for safe, secure restraint. A halter can be used to secure a calf to a sturdy post using a quick release knot.

Step 2

Identify the tagging site on the animal's ear.

- Proper hygiene and cleanliness during the tagging process is necessary to reduce the risk of infection. Use rubbing alcohol or a disinfectant solution to clean the jaw of the applicator and the point of the tag that goes through the ear. Also, make sure the tagging site on the animal's ear is clean.
- Tags should be applied in the middle-third of the ear between the upper and lower ribs for cattle. Swine tags should be placed either above or below the main vein in the middle third of the ear.

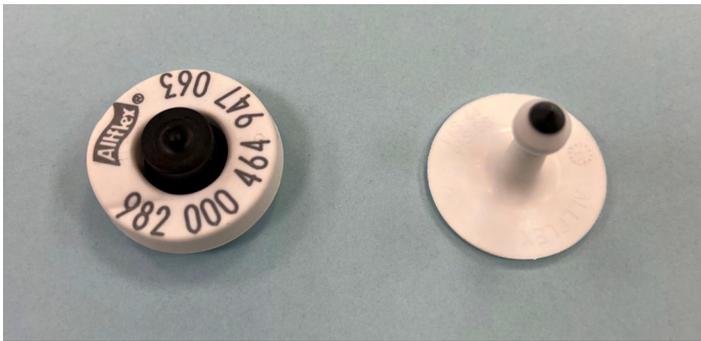


Ear tag placement diagram. Photo by Premier 1 Supplies.

Step 3

Select an RFID tag to place in the animal's ear.

- Make sure both parts of the tag list the same RFID identification number.
- Place the male portion of the tag, or stud, on the applicator pin and the female component under the retaining spring.
- Before tagging the animal, check alignment of the tagger by closing the jaw of the applicator to the point where the two halves meet; the stud should be centered with the hole.



RFID tag (non-840) example.



RFID Scrapie tag example. Photo by Premier 1 Supplies.

For more examples and a summary of RFID tags, visit USDA-APHIS at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/adt-device-ain.pdf>

Step 4

With the correct tagging position located, firmly close the applicator in a fast manner and release. Apply the tag with the button part entering from the front (inside) of the ear. The visual ID component should be read from the back (outside) of the ear for swine.

- Remember to record the RFID tag number applied to the animal as well as any other forms of identification the animal already has (herd tag, tattoo, ear notches, etc.)

Step 5

IMPORTANT: Verify “Air Space” and tag application to ensure proper healing and retention.

Inspect placement after tagging to ensure there is sufficient space between ear and ear tag. This can be done by turning the tag in a circle or gently pulling each side of the tag away from the ear to increase air flow and verify the stem/button is secured.



All market animals in Market Beef, Market Goat, Market Sheep and Market Swine intended for 4-H competition at the South Dakota State Fair are required to submit DNA samples. A DNA sample must be self-identified and submitted to the County Extension Office by June 1st of the current year for State Fair eligibility. Market animals will only be allowed to participate at the State Fair if a DNA sample is on file by the deadline, regardless of the participating status in the County 4-H Achievement Days/County Fair. **NO LATE NOMINATIONS, CERTIFICATIONS OR ENTRIES SHALL BE ACCEPTED.**

South Dakota 4-H does not share DNA samples with other shows.

Equipment needed: Needle-nose pliers (or similar), DNA envelope for each animal, and a rag/cloth. (Contact your local county 4-H office for DNA envelopes)

Step 1

Fill out the DNA collection envelope (pictured below). Verify that all information is correct and each section is filled in. Both the 4-H member and parent/guardian must sign each envelope in addition to the sample collector's signature. The parent/guardian listed can also be the collector.

Step 2

Properly secure the animal. Movement of the animal's head or body may cause injury to the handler or livestock, or result in an insufficient collection sample.

- For swine, confine in a small pen, hog boards to restrict movement, or use a hog snare to completely secure the hog.
- For cattle, a chute or head catch is preferred for safe, secure restraint. A halter can be used to secure a calf to a sturdy post using a quick release knot.
- For sheep or goats, confine in a small pen or alley. Catch the sheep or goat under the jaw and have one individual secure the head and neck while the other collects the DNA sample. A fitting stand may also be used.

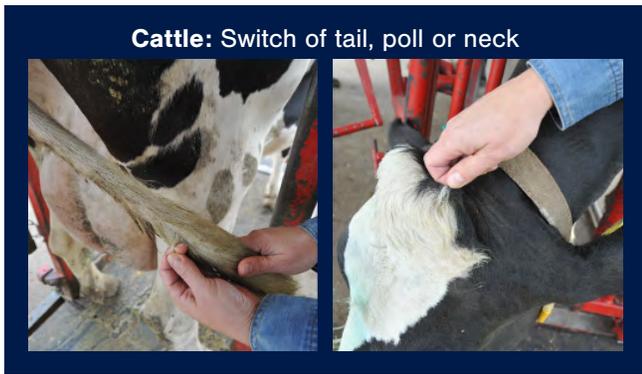
Step 3

Make sure the animal ID matches the ID written on the collection envelope. Be sure to include the ID number from the RFID tag. An ear notch, herd tag, scrapie tag or tattoo number should also be included in addition to the official identification tag.

Step 4

Using pliers, pull hair samples from the animal.

- Hair should be clean and dry.
- Pull hair with root follicles attached. Do not cut the hair. Root follicles contain the DNA needed for testing.
- Place hair with root follicles into the designated envelope.
- Continue collecting sample until there are approximately 20-30 hairs with root follicles in the envelope.
- Once finished collecting samples from one animal, clean/wipe down pliers before collecting from the next animal if collecting multiple samples. Mixed or "dirty" samples can lead to failed testing and/or incorrect results.



All photos courtesy of the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory.

Examples of where to pull DNA hair samples per specie provided by vgl.vetmed.ucdavis.edu

*When pulling hair samples from sheep, do not pull from areas with wool or leg shag. Make sure it is coarse hair with follicles attached.



SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION



2026 Livestock DNA Nomination
*Please complete using **BLUE ink**.*

RFID Tag Number (Full Number Required)

Herd Ear Tag/Notch

Date

County

4-H Member Printed Name

Species (circle one): Beef Sheep Goat Swine

Animal Gender (circle one): Male Female

We have read, and in consideration for being permitted to exhibit at the South Dakota State Fair 4-H Livestock Show (the "Event"), agree and consent to abide by the rules of competition, regulations, schedules and deadlines as identified in the South Dakota 4-H State Fair Book (the "Book"), including the South Dakota 4-H Livestock Integrity Pledge and the IAFE Code of Show Ring Ethics.

4-H Member Signature

Collector Printed Name

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Collector Signature

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DNA Collection Envelope

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Learn more at extension.sdstate.edu.

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Market Swine: Owner Verification Guide For a 4-H'ers Unofficial Use Only*

This is a guide, not an official nomination submission.

4-H Youth/Exhibitor Name(s): _____ County: _____

Mandatory for all Market Swine:

- DNA Sample due to County Office by June 1.

Breed or Commercial	Gilt or Barrow	RFID Tag #	RFID Tag (L/R) Ear	Ear Notch #	Registration # of Animal (Leave Blank if Commercial)	State Fair DNA Collected (Y/N)	Date DNA Collected	Initial Weigh-in Day (Optional)	Initial Weight (Optional)
Ex: Commercial	Barrow	840-003-123-456-789	L	R__ L__		Y	5/1/26	5/1/26	55
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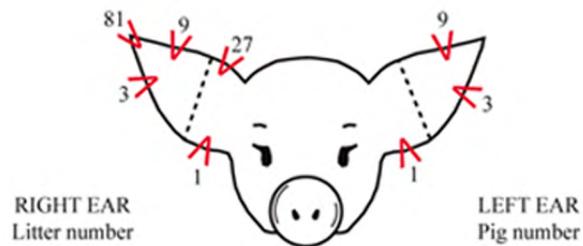


Universal Ear Notching System

The Universal Ear Notching System is the most common method of permanent identification. The following paragraphs explain the Universal Ear Notching System.

Litter Mark (Right Ear)

The right ear is used for the litter mark. All pigs in the same litter must have the same ear notches in this ear. The right ear is on the pig's own right side.



Individual Pig Mark (Left Ear)

The left ear is used for notches to show individual pig number in the litter. Each pig will have different notches in this ear.

