



**\*NOTE:** Many producers are reporting a wait time of up to 4 weeks to receive the RFID tags they have purchased. Please provide yourself with ample time for the tags to be ordered, implemented, and recorded in 4-H Online prior to the NO EXCEPTIONS deadline of June 1 at 11:59 PM CDT.

## Q: What has changed for 2026?

A: There are two main changes to the Livestock Identification and DNA process starting in 2026. The first change is that ALL MARKET animals: market beef, market swine, market wether lamb and market wether goat will require RFID tags. Market beef and market swine have required these in the past, the change is the addition of market wether lambs and market meat goat wethers. As in the past, Commercial breeding heifers, breeding swine, and grade/crossbred dairy cattle also require an RFID tag.. This change does not affect poultry and rabbit projects. Please read the identification requirements table in the 2026 State 4-H Fair Book or the South Dakota 4-H Animal Ownership and Identification Guide to find out what your animal will need. The second change is that we will be utilizing new DNA envelopes and expect ALL 2026 DNA envelopes to be returned to your county office, which will then be sent back to the state office. Whether your 2026 DNA envelopes are fully completed, unused, or damaged, they must ALL be returned to 4-H and CANNOT be saved for a future year.

## Q: What is an RFID tag and why are we requiring that State Fair market animals use them?

A: RFID stands for Radio Frequency Identification. An RFID tag is an electronic ear tag that can be scanned quickly and accurately to identify an individual animal. Why the change to RFID?

- **Alignment with USDA regulations and disease traceability** – USDA Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) rules increasingly require RFID identification, including official “840” tags for many cattle moving interstates and those shown in exhibitions. USDA-APHIS is also encouraging electronic ID use in other species to improve the ability to quickly trace animals during a disease event, helping protect animal health and the livestock industry.
- **Industry education and real-world application** – RFID is becoming a standard tool across the livestock industry. Using it in 4-H helps youth learn modern identification and traceability practices they will encounter in production and exhibition settings.
- **Efficiency and ease of use** – RFID tags can be scanned quickly and accurately, making it much easier to read tags during check-ins, weigh-ins and in-show circumstances.
- **Consistency with other states and shows** – Many states and livestock shows already require RFID tags for exhibition animals, helping ensure consistency and compliance across events. (e.g. Kansas requires 4-H RFID tags for all market and commercial animals.)
- **Tamper-proof identification** – Most RFID tags are considered tamper-proof. Many animals already have RFID tags in place, and by not requiring a specific brand, color, or 4-H tag, exhibitors have flexibility to use the RFID option that best fits their management and exhibition plans.

## Q: What is the difference between an 840 tag and a tag with a nine hundred number?

A: Tags that start with 840 vs 9xx tags:

- 840 tags are 15-digit official USDA tags and designate the USA as the animal’s country of origin. However, you may need a “Premise ID” to purchase them. Any place that holds livestock (farms, ranches, vet clinics, and exhibition grounds) should have a Premise ID in place. If your farm/ranch does not have a Premise ID, you may apply for one using the [SDAID website](#). If you are a county educator, and your exhibition grounds do not have one, we recommend having your county fairgrounds apply by using the [SDAID website](#), and then you may purchase official 840 tags under that ID. If you do not wish to do that, but still want to utilize 840 tags, you may be able to purchase these tags through your local vet clinic.

- Tags starting with a 9xx number are known as Manufacturer Tags. They are electronic ID tags with a 15 digit number, but the first three digits indicate the manufacturer of the tag (982 for Allflex, 985 for Destron Fearing, 942 for Z Tags, 949 for Y-TEX) These are meant for on-farm use and are NOT official USDA tags, but since SD 4-H is only requiring the use of an RFID/EID tag for 2026, not an 840 tag, they should work for our intended use. We would recommend sticking to the manufacturers listed as they also supply USDA approved 840 tags.

\*If you have questions about tag-related acronyms, [Leedstone](#) has a great page that explains what each one means!

**Q: If my market wether lamb/goat has a non-RFID scrapie tag, do I need to add a separate RFID tag?**

Yes, market wether lambs and market wether goats must have an RFID tag. In this case, both tags will need to be recorded in 4-H Online prior to the ID deadline of 11:59 PM CDT on June 1st. It is recommended that livestock only has one official ear tag (ex. Scrapies tag for sheep/goat). To meet the SD 4-H RFID/EID tag requirement for market animals, we recommend using a non-840 RFID tag if your sheep/goat has a non-RFID scrapie tag. The USDA website lists special circumstances where two official tags are acceptable; however, these situations usually require additional documentation (e.g., premise ID and scrapie flock number match).

**Q: Isn't livestock only supposed to have one official USDA tag?**

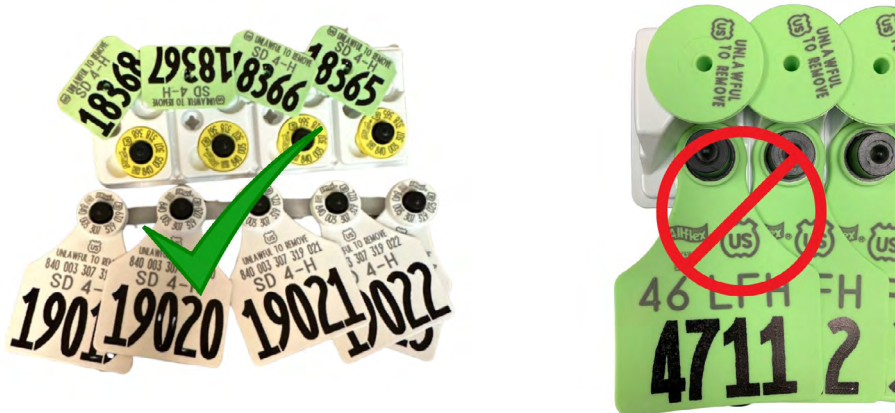
A: It is recommended that livestock only has one official ear tag (ex. Scrapies tag for sheep/goat). To meet the SD 4-H RFID/EID tag requirement for market animals, we recommend using a non-840 RFID tag if your sheep/goat has a non-RFID scrapie tag. The USDA website lists special circumstances where two official tags are acceptable; however, these situations usually require additional documentation (e.g., premise ID and scrapie flock number match).

**Q: Can I purchase these tags through my local vet clinic?**

A: In most cases, yes, your vet should have access to tags that meet this RFID requirement. Please contact them well in advance to the ID deadline so that there is ample time for the tags to be ordered, implemented, and recorded in 4-H Online prior to the deadline of June 1 at 11:59 PM CDT.

**Q: We have extra 4-H tags from previous years available; do those meet this RFID requirement?**

A: Please take a look at the tags below. The tags on the left meet this requirement because they are official USDA 840 RFID Tags and can be read by an RFID wand. The tags on the right are visual tags, NOT RFID tags, and DO NOT meet this RFID requirement.



**Q: I have a breeding animal. Do I need a RFID tag for them?**

A: Commercial breeding heifers must have an RFID tag. Grade and crossbred dairy cattle must have an RFID tag. Breeding swine must also have an RFID tag. Please ensure that your breeding animal meets the requirements for its respective species. You can find those requirements clearly outlined in the 2026 South Dakota 4-H Animal Ownership and Identification Guide.

**Q: I have a market ewe/market doe or a wether dam/wether doe. Where are their identification requirements?**

A: Market ewe and market doe classes have been removed from the South Dakota State Fair 4-H market lamb and market goat shows. These animals will be identified as wether dams/wether does and will follow either the breeding sheep or breeding meat goat requirements listed in the 2026 South Dakota 4-H Animal Ownership and Identification Guide. Please note that the wether dam/wether doe classes will be evaluated by their respective specie's market show judge.

**Q: My 4-H'er isn't sure which market animals will be going to state fair yet. Do I need to put an RFID tag in all of their potential projects?**

A: All Livestock ID information is due in 4-H Online June 1 at 11:59 PM CDT and there will be absolutely no exceptions for late IDs or DNA submissions. If you are approaching that deadline and a decision has not yet been made, we recommend tagging all potential livestock projects that may require a RFID tag and entering the information into 4-H Online as well as completing the DNA nomination process for those animals (when applicable). While this isn't the most cost-effective option, it allows flexibility for the 4-H'er to choose which animals will be eligible to attend State 4-H show.

**Q: I entered my animal's information wrong in 4-H Online and I didn't realize until after June 1<sup>st</sup>. What can I do?**

A: 4-H families will be able to edit animal ID information in 4-H Online until June 1st at 11:59 PM CDT. At that time, all information will be locked, and neither the 4-H families or county educators will have access to edit. 4-H families will have 7 days to alert their county educators of change requests. County educators will share that information with the state 4-H office. In the case of a wrong tag number or ear notches entered, a photo of the correct tag/notches may be required.

**Q: When you scan an RFID tag, what information does it share and where does that information go?**

A: The RFID tag only shares the tag number onto the RFID reader's screen. We will then use that number to verify that it matches the information in FairEntry/4-H Online. Scanning the RFID tag does not share any personal information.

**Q: If an exhibitor does not have an RFID tag by June 1, what are their options?**

A: Due to the No Exceptions Late Policy, they will not be eligible to exhibit animals that require RFID tags in the 4-H shows at the South Dakota State Fair. HOWEVER, they may be allowed to exhibit at the county level depending on the county's rules and regulations.

**Q: My animal lost/damaged its tag, and it is after June 1<sup>st</sup>. What do I do?**

A: First, collect evidence on the lost or damaged tag (picture of the damaged tag, ripped ear, and pictures of other identifiers for that animal such as the tattoo, scrapies tag, ear notches, etc.). Contact your county educator immediately and explain the situation and provide the images. The county educator will then notify the state office who will then determine if a replacement tag may be utilized and updated in the system. The State 4-H Office will maintain a record of animals who have received replacement tags, and a certain percentage of that list will be randomly selected for their DNA to be pulled.

**Q: We have extra animals in case we need to substitute down the road. Do they need to meet all of these ID requirements?**

A: Yes. All Livestock ID information is due in 4-H Online June 1 at 11:59 PM CDT and there will be no exceptions for late IDs, DNA submissions, or substitutes. If you are approaching the ID/DNA deadline and are unsure which animals may be exhibited, we recommend entering the ID information for all potential animals into 4-H Online as well as completing the DNA nomination process for those animals (when applicable). While this isn't the most cost-effective option, it allows flexibility for the 4-H'er to choose which animals will be eligible to attend the State 4-H show.

SDSU Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer in accordance with the nondiscrimination policies of South Dakota State University, the South Dakota Board of Regents and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Learn more at [extension.sdstate.edu](https://extension.sdstate.edu)

© 2026, South Dakota Board of Regents