

# Good practice in traceability delivers health and safety control and improves management decisions

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FACTSHEET 10

Traceability of animals is important for quality assurance and disease control and ensures animals can be traced back to their property of origin and all properties and facilities visited during their life.

## Key points

- Traceability is critical in controlling biosecurity, meat safety and product integrity.
- Traceability provides the opportunity to make production and management decisions based on data and an understanding of the performance and whereabouts of individual animals.
- Traceability enables the promotion of product based on raising claims or provenance.

## Why traceability is important

Livestock identification and traceability is extremely important for:

- disease control,
- meat safety,
- product integrity and
- the collection of data for management decisions

Traceability requires three key elements:

- an animal identifier (a visual or electronic ear tag known as a device)
- identification of a physical location
- a method to record and track animal movements and associated details

In addition to tracing animals in the event of a health or meat safety issue, electronic devices can be used as a management tool in breeding and feeding operations.

When paired with reading equipment facility entry dates, performance, weight gains, treatment and withholding periods can be easily recorded to maximise efficiency in the system and provide full traceability of the product. Livestock can also be managed in groups so issues associated with mixing mobs can be avoided.

# Conformance and quality management programs underpinned by traceability

Traceability is an important pillar in conformance and quality management programs. The following conditions apply to animals exported live from Australia:

Cattle must be identified to:

- enable identification of individual cattle,
- allow for the reconciliation of cattle at each point of the supply chain, and
- be capable of giving reports on individual cattle and consignments.

For sheep and goats:

- exporters must implement a system of animal traceability based on counting and reconciliation of animals at all points along the supply chain.

## Benefits of good practice

Traceability provides the ability to manage livestock for disease control, meat safety and product integrity reasons as well as enabling the collection of data for management decisions.

## Further reading

- National Livestock Identification System website: [www.nlis.com.au](http://www.nlis.com.au)