



SD ANIMAL INDUSTRY BOARD

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Guidance for Veterinarians Distributing USDA Silver Metal Tags to Cattle Producers

USDA has authorized the distribution of National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags, also known as USDA silver metal tags, to producers for use as official identification in cattle and bison outside of program disease testing and interstate movement activities.

The State of South Dakota approves of the distribution of USDA metal tags to producers in South Dakota through SD accredited veterinarians.

SD accredited veterinarians may continue to order the USDA metal tags free of charge from the USDA APHIS VS office in Pierre at 605-224-6186.

A limited number of tag applicators are available free of charge at the USDA APHIS VS office in Pierre (605-224-6186) for veterinarians to distribute to producers. Please limit the applicators to one per producer.

In order to support adequate traceability in the event of a disease investigation, veterinarians are encouraged to submit tag distribution records either in paper form or electronically (aibmail@state.sd.us) to the SD Animal Industry Board (SDAIB) on a monthly basis. Veterinarians who wish to maintain tag distribution records in-house must keep the records for a minimum of 5 years and make those records available to animal health officials when needed for disease traceback. A [template](#) for tag distribution recordkeeping is available from the SDAIB. Please use this template if you choose to submit tag distribution records to SDAIB.

At a minimum, tag distribution records must include:

1. The name of the person the tags are issued to.
2. The street address, city, State, and ZIP code where the tags are distributed to.
3. The identification numbers issued.
4. The date the tags were issued.
5. The name and contact information of the person issuing the tags.

Producers must be informed of the tag application points listed below:

1. If an animal already has an official tag, do not double tag or remove the existing tag. State and Federal law prohibits the removal of official identification from livestock. Record the existing tag number in any charts or records.
2. Tags assigned to a producer are for his/her use only and are not to be redistributed, shared, or traded to other producers
3. Report any lost or stolen tags to the SDAIB – contact information above.
4. Federal regulations prohibit the removal of official ear tags. If there is a problem with a certain official tag on an animal, please notify the SDAIB.

A fact sheet about tag application for producers is available from SDAIB.