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Will an Electronic Identification (EID) System Benefit my Sheep Production Enterprise?

The sheep and goat industries, with the support of the State and Federal Governments, agreed in mid 2005 to introduce the use of electronic tags as part of the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS) Sheep and Goats commencing on 1 January 2006.

The use of electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags is voluntary.

Benefits of an electronic identification system

There are significant benefits for sheep producers from utilising electronic identification on farm. The following tables will steps you though what equipment you may need, will help you determine the costs and financial benefits of setting up such a system on your property.

Table 1. Equipment Required

This table lists the range of equipment that may be required when setting up an electronic identification system on your property.

Equipment	What NLIS compatible equipment etc do I have already? Yes/ No	What new NLIS equipment etc will I need? Yes/ No	What is benefit of this equipment etc?	What do I need to consider?
Access to a computer			A computer is required to operate software, enable downloads from equipment.	Do you have a computer? Ensure your computer has sufficient capacity to run the software and equipment you are interested in.
Access to the internet			Required to order electronic (Sheep & Goats) NLIS tags and access the DPI Electronic NLIS (Sheep & Goats) database.	Is the current service adequate? Do you need to up grade to satellite Broad band? Consider the increased cost.

Electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags			Enables individual electronic animal recording	How many tags do I need? Do you have an applicator to apply the tags? Consider requesting the serial number of the NLIS tag to your current flock management system.
Electronic tag reader <ul style="list-style-type: none">Wand reader orPanel reader			Reads the Electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags	Is portability important? Does it link in with my other equipment? Can I hire equipment or use a third party provider?
NLIS (Sheep & Goats) database			This is the data base where the electronic NLIS (Sheep) tags are registered. Also facilitates carcass feed back.	Do I need to apply for a Property Identification Code (PIC)?
Suitable yards and race			To enable handling of sheep for scanning, weighing, drenching etc	Are my facilities adequate to weigh and handle animals? Consider OH&S of your current yards
Weighing system			To weigh sheep. Can measure average daily weight gains, predict carcass weights etc	Is my existing hardware compatible/upgradeable? What equipment is most suitable for in my situation?
Software Package			Can provide a structured system to enter and store data collected. Can assist in data analysis and generate reports.	Is my existing software compatible with the equipment I am considering purchasing? Does it do what I need it to? What features do I require in a software package to enable more efficient flock management?
Automatic drafting system			Can draft sheep by weight or groups identified with the use of an electronic tag	Do I run large enough numbers to make automated drafting beneficial to my enterprise? Will it save enough time and effort to warrant the expenditure?
Labour cost				Is the cost or availability of labour stopping production recording etc?

Table 2. Potential Costs

This table enables you to list the costs associated with the range of equipment that may be required when setting up an electronic identification system on your property.

Equipment	Costs (\$)
Computer	\$
Internet access	\$
Wand / panel reader	\$
Additional equipment (weighing / drafting system etc)	\$
Production recording software	\$
RFID Tags	\$
Upgrade yards etc	\$
Additional Labour yards/office	\$
Total	\$

Table 3. Potential Savings

This table gets you to think about the potential savings that can be made to your business as a result of utilising electronic technologies.

Potential Saving	\$
Time saved	\$
Hours saved weighing	\$
Hours saved working animals	\$

Hours saved in office	\$
Total	\$
Input costs savings	
Feeding costs savings	\$
Animal Health costs savings	\$
Total	\$

Table 4. Marketing Benefits

This table gets you to list the potential marketing benefits for you business

Marketing Benefit	\$
Lifetime traceability premium	\$
Premium for meeting specifications	\$
Total	\$

Table 5. Other Benefits

This table gets you to list other potential benefits of utilising an electronic management and recording system on your sheep production enterprise

Benefit	\$
Increased production	\$
Improved selection for breeding	\$

Increased objective culling	\$
Increased value of product produced	\$
Increased ability to meet market specifications	\$
Total	\$

Where can I find more information?

Department of Primary Industries NLIS Extension Team

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DPI Website:

www.dpi.vic.gov.au/nlis

Sheep CRC Website

www.sheepcrc.org.au

Ordering NLIS Devices Online

You can order NLIS devices on-line using a credit card by going to the DPI web site www.dpi.vic.gov.au/nlis and following the prompts to Livestock Tags Online.

Acknowledgements

This Agnote was developed by Gary McLarty, November 2007.

It was reviewed by:

Gary McLarty, Farm Services Victoria. February 2009.

General Information:

The following are useful contacts for further information:

NLIS Queries in Victoria

For the NLIS in Victoria call DPI's toll-free NLIS Helpline on 1800678 779 during business hours.

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