

INFOGRAPHIC

— A GUIDE TO THE —  
**USDA**  
RFID MANDATE



## USDA MANDATES RFID

The USDA and the Animal Disease Traceability program mandated the use of RFID-enabled ear tags to track livestock. Currently, metal and plastic tags with visual identification is the primary way to track cattle in the United States; however, other countries have implemented RFID successfully and created chains of historical data for each animal.



**12/31/2019**

The USDA discontinues providing free metal tags to farmers/producers.



**1/1/2021**

The USDA no longer considers metal tags usable for official Animal Identification.



**1/1/2023**

RFID ear tags are now required as the official form of identification for cattle and bison when moving interstate.

### PROS

- Plenty of time to implement RFID before 2023 - no rushed mandates.
- USDA and state governments will assist farmers with tag and equipment cost.
- Improved traceability to catch disease before it becomes widespread.
- Stop movement orders or quarantines will cease to be as widespread and impactful.

### CONS

- No specific RFID standard chosen for the industry (LF, HF, UHF).
- Initial fixed infrastructure and recurring ear tag costs.
- No specific equipment needs have been identified.
- Potential system complexity depending on requirements.

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### DECEMBER 31, 2019

USDA will discontinue providing free metal tags. However, approved vendors will still be permitted to produce official metal tags for one additional year. Approved vendor tags will be available for purchase on a State-by-State basis as authorized by each State animal health official through December 31, 2020.

### JANUARY 1, 2021

USDA will no longer approve vendor production of metal ear tags with the official USDA shield. Accredited veterinarians and/or producers can no longer apply metal ear tags for official identification and must start using only Official RFID tags.

### JANUARY 1, 2023

RFID ear tags will be required for beef and dairy cattle and bison moving interstate that meet the above requirements. Animals previously tagged with metal ear tags will have to be retagged with RFID ear tags in order to move interstate. Feeder cattle and animals moving directly to slaughter are not subject to RFID requirements.

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