SWINE IDENTIFICATION BILL – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Will I have to pay for official tags?

No, official "brite" tags used during TB and Brucellosis eradication will be supplied by NCDA&CS, Veterinary Division free of charge. If you choose to use other forms of official tags or identification , approved by the State Veterinarian (SV), but different than those provided free of charge by NCDA&CS, you will have to cover whatever those costs will be.

2. What is included in "official identification approved by the State Veterinarian?"

The SV is working with producers to determine methods of identification that will satisfy the needs and requirements of the law and place as little inconvenience, hassle and cost on producers. An example of suggestions that have been made would be the ear notch numbering system.

3. How can I get official tags?

Call the State Veterinarian's office (919-707-3250) and speak to someone in the livestock section. They will ask for your name, address, farm name (if available). If you do not already have a FarmID number or a State ID, one will be assigned to you. We will notify the Vet Division field staff located nearest to you and they will provide you with a minimum of 25 tags; these will be assigned to your name, address and FarmID/State ID. Again, there will be no charge for the tags and no charge for delivering them to you.

4. If I don't have tags, can I borrow some from my neighbor who does have some?

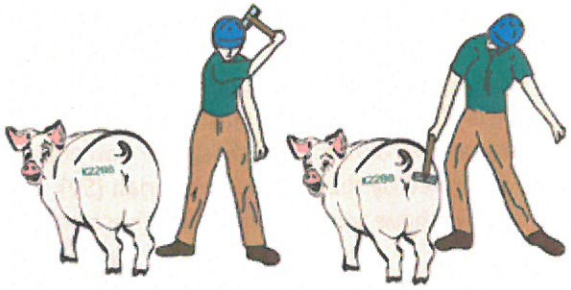
NO. Official tags should only be used on animals from the owner and farm they were assigned to; using someone else's tags or providing tags assigned to you to someone else will make you in violation of the statute and subject to a fine. **Do not borrow tags or let someone else use yours!!** Tags will be assigned and specific to you and your farm as a way to help stop illegal transporters of feral hogs from getting these official tags and placing them in feral pigs.

5. If my hogs never leave my farm, do I still need to identify them?

No. Only hogs leaving the farm will need official identification. If you only raise a couple of hogs and they are for your own consumption, and you process them on your farm, you will not need any method of identification or be subject to this new law.

6. Will I need identification on hogs going directly from my farm to slaughter?

Yes. All hogs traveling on public roadways must have official identification. The State Veterinarian (SV) is developing plans for using temporary, official identification, such as slap tattoos, especially for animals moving directly from farm to slaughter. Slap tattoos are cheap, safe and easy to apply, add little-to-no stress to the animals, and do not require any special handling facilities. The SV could assign a specific slap tattoo to each farm for this form of official identification that should satisfy the law and cause the least inconvenience and cost to the producer.



Slap Tattoo Kits and their Use

7. <u>Will slap tattoos work for hogs going to market or being used (boars/sows) by another farmer?</u>

Yes. The purpose of this bill is to be able to tell the difference between domestic pigs (identified) and feral hogs (not identified) during movement. It is not meant to be a form tracing animals. If there is an official, approved form of identification, whether it be official ear tags, slap tattoos with officially assigned numbers and/or letters, or any other method of "official identification approved by the state veterinarian" on the hog during transport, your animal will be covered and you will have met the requirements of the new law.

8. <u>Will there be any different form of ID required for fairs that I take my hogs to show?</u>

Attending fairs and shows involves two separate issues. During movement, identification is necessary to tell feral pigs from domestic pigs; this is covered in the new law. Animals at fairs are exposed to other animals from all over the state and even from other states. If there is a disease issue, we have to be able to know where animals came from and where they go after leaving. Animal identification at fairs is definitely a traceability issue. Outbreaks of H1N1 at the Ohio, Minnesota and South Dakota State Fairs and Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF) at the Washington State Fair have demonstrated this fact all too well. But identification that meets traceability requirements will meet the movement requirements, and that is the bottom line "take home message" with regards to identification at fairs and the new law.

9. <u>What is "official identification approved by the State Veterinarian" going to include?</u>

Any form of ID currently listed as "official" in Vol. 9, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 71.19 ("Identification of swine in interstate commerce") will be approved by the SV. Additionally, the SV is working with producers to determine other methods that will meet the requirements of the new Swine Identification Bill (HB 432) and place as little inconvenience and cost on producers. The SV's office will provide the metal "brite" tags (used in TB and Brucellosis eradication for years – see picture below #1) free of charge to be used as permanent, official ID. Slap tattoos and ear notches can also meet official, ID requirements under certain conditions – call 919-707-3250 and ask someone in the livestock section to help you.

10. <u>Will small and medium sized farms have different ID requirements than the large, commercial hog farms?</u>

No. Any method of identification that is available to one production size and style will be equally available and approved for all. The 9 CFR Part 71.19 is the standard used by the swine industry

and if the requirements for any form of official identification listed is met, it does not matter what size or production style the hogs come from, they can use that form of ID. All hogs, regardless of where they are coming from or where they are going, moving in the state will be required to have some form of official identification.

11. Will my hogs need to travel with any type of paperwork?

We are looking into developing an official form (from the SV's office) that will include your name, address, farm name (if available), and FarmID/State ID, that you can use to fill in the number and individual ID of hogs in your shipment for transporting hogs. In other words, if you have official paperwork with your own method of official identification – ear notches, or slap tattoos, for example – this would serve as satisfying the requirement of "official identification approved by the State Veterinarian." Also, as with the brite tags, these forms will be provided to all producers when they request tags or tattoos, be assigned to a specific owner and farm, and be free of charge.

12. Will I need a permit to move my hogs?

No. There will be no permitting requirement for any movement, just that the animals have official identification if they move out on public roads. A "permit" requires inspection and/or getting permission prior to movement. The official forms described directly above would NOT require any inspection or notification necessary for movements.

13. Will I need to have a veterinarian examine my hogs in order to move them?

No. There is no requirement for exams or health certificates to move hogs within the state. To move any animal across state lines (interstate), health certificates issued by accredited vets are typically required by the receiving state, but that is something entirely different, established years ago by state and federal officials, and not any part of this new law.

14. Will someone from the state have to come and examine my operation before I can get the free tags from the SV's office?

No. To get tags you will need to call the SV's office (see #3 above). Once we have your information, we will let our field staff located the nearest to you deliver the tags as a courtesy and convenience to you. This will not be for any type of inspection of your operation but we hope that you will get to know them as a resource for any assistance we can provide you.

15. Isn't this really just another way to try to sneak NAIS into small and medium sized farms that oppose the national identification system?

No. The national identification system, which is now called "Animal Disease Traceability," is a system that has as its end goal, being able to trace disease – a traceability system. The goal of this program is not traceability, but rather to identify bona fide hog producers in transport, regardless of size of style of production, in order to differentiate domestic hogs from feral hogs – it really is that simple. The law actually says that the lack of identification on a hog will be presumed to identify that pig as a feral hog.

16. Why doesn't the state go after the people who are illegally transporting feral swine instead of punishing legitimate hog farmers with these requirements?

By the very nature of engaging in illegal activity, people who are transporting feral hogs are doing everything they can to hide that fact and hide from being located. With current state resources, focusing activities solely on this illegal sector will be ineffective. Identification of legitimate, commercial hogs will assist us in telling the difference between legitimate producers and their hogs and illegal

transporters of feral hogs. The real punishment will be in a $5,000 fine for each feral hog they are moving, but the only way we will be able to distinguish between commercial and feral will be the official identification on the domestic pigs. Yes, there will be some inconvenience with any type of change, but we are working to minimize the inconvenience and cost to legitimate producers and maximize the penalties to the people who are engaged in illegal transport of feral hogs.

17. When will the $5,000 penalty become effective?

Although the law became effective October 1, 2011, the SV's office looks at the first year of this law as an opportunity to educate and do everything possible to assist producers in coming into compliance with the requirements of the new law. We do not intend to use this year for strict compliance, civil actions or penalties and fines. Unless we find someone who is obviously and blatantly conducting illegal activities that are endangering the livelihood of legitimate hog farmers in the state (and we intend to pursue full penalties in these cases), we will do everything we can to make people aware of the requirements in the law, find out how we can help you come into compliance, and get the word out to everyone that might be affected.

18. Who could stop me and inspect my hogs for identification?

Because H.B. 432 is a state law, any law enforcement/public safety officer in the state could stop a shipment of hogs to inspect them for identification. Because Department of Agriculture personnel are not sworn public safety officers, we would be assisting law enforcement officials in inspecting hogs for official ID. Again, especially during the first year, we will focus our efforts on making folks aware of the law, assisting with getting into compliance, and performing other methods of education and outreach with regards to this law.

19. Can I kill or trap feral hogs on my property?

Yes! There is no restriction on the season (open season, year-round), bag limit, or days you can kill feral hogs. You will need to talk to the NC Wildlife Resources Commission for exact details, but you will need to have a hunting license and wear hunter orange. Except for during deer and bear season, their upcoming rules propose to allow night hunting with lights. As far as trapping – again see the NC WRC for details, but be aware that it will be illegal to remove a feral hog from a trap alive, and doing so will be punished by a $5,000 civil penalty for removing them alive and $5,000 for illegal transportation per animal! Contact NC WRC at: http://www.ncwildlife.org/hunting/index.htm

20. Could the State Vet's office put me on some sort of email list to keep me informed in any developments and other information that would help me comply?

Yes. The SV's office would like to put together a distribution list in order to quickly and efficiently provide everyone involved and interested with all information and any changes, new items of interest, notices regarding feral swine, etc., to any and all producers regardless of size or style of operation. If you would like to be included in this distribution list, please send an email to the SV's information/inquiry email address, "Joe Webb" at Joe.Web@ncagr.gov and request to be added to the swine ID distribution list. Like other information you provide the SV, your personal informal information is protected by state confidentiality law, G.S. 106-24.1.

**Please feel free to provide feedback and know that we encourage your input in order for us to get information and answers to other questions that are sure to be out there. The "Joe Web" address of Joe.Web@ncagr.gov (same as in #20 above) would also be the best way to contact us with your input.