



EAR TAGGING

Ear tagging is a method of animal identification that can be used to measure performance, track treatments and withdrawal records, increase the accuracy of record keeping, track stock inventory and identify individual animals. All animals in the breeding herd should be tagged with a unique number to enable easy identification. Gilts should be tagged upon entry to the breeding herd. All boars should be tagged in compliance with the IFA DNA Certification Program.

WHY EAR TAG?

- Clear identification of breeding animals is necessary to ensure accurate recording particularly at breeding time and in the farrowing house.
- Unique identification numbers may also be used to compile individual performance records for breeding animals.
- Coloured ear tags allow you to easily differentiate between different groups of breeding animals. For example, the pure-bred females in a herd can be tagged with different coloured ear tags to allow for easy identification at breeding time.
- Gilts upon entry are usually tagged using consecutive numbers. The prefix digits or tag colour can be changed based on intakes to match the parity number of breeding animals which allows for clear identification of animals at different stages.



PREPARATION

Preparation is vital to ensure tagging causes minimal stress to staff and the animal.

- The tag should be of suitable size and type for the animal and clearly labelled with the unique identification number in advance.
- Tag suppliers usually provide taggers/pliers for use with their brand of tags. As there are slight differences between tags, it is important to use the correct tagger compatible with the type and model of tag being used.
- The tagger should be clean and in good working order. It is best practice to disinfect the tagger after each use and store it in a clean dry place.

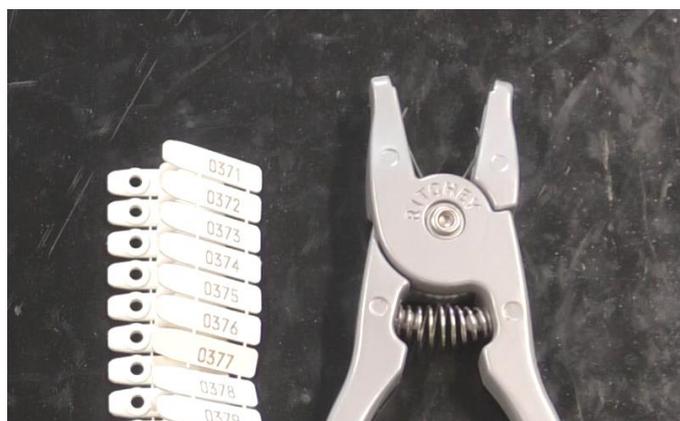
YOU WILL NEED:

- Tags & tagger
- Disinfectant
- Marker if tags are not pre-stamped
- Restraining equipment if necessary



HOW TO EAR TAG

- The animal should be restrained securely to allow tagging to take place as quickly and easily as possible.
- Ensure the area is well lit with a non-slip floor.
- Tagging in both ears means that if a tag is lost, the animal will still be easily identifiable by the remaining ear tag. As it is necessary to tag the animal twice, it is important to ensure the animal is restrained when tagging.
- If the ear is visibly contaminated, clean the area using a disinfectant solution or antiseptic wipe as infections can be caused by unhygienic practices.
- Position the ear tag in the centre of the flat part of the ear making sure to avoid visible veins and ridges of cartilage.
- It is important not to place the tag too close to the edge of the ear as there is a greater risk of the tag being lost.
- In the case of retagging an animal, to reduce stress the tag can usually be secured through the original hole unless the lost tag has damaged the ear. If tags are frequently lost, reassess tag placement and type of tag used.
- Breeding animals may also be tattooed to ensure easy identification in the event of lost tags.



REMEMBER TO RECORD:

- Tag number
- Pig weight
- Pig sex
- Birth sow ID

