

The Following information was published in the Michigan Farm News, from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Livestock farmers asked to use only one type of RFID tag(1)

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Livestock farmers are being asked to use their supplies of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags with a 900 prefix before March 11, 2015, according to Dr. Rick Smith, Bovine TB Eradication Program Coordinator with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

"In the 2013 Animal Disease Traceability rules, there was one detail buried in the regulation," Smith said. "As of March 11, 2015, only tags that begin with the prefix 840 will be official for interstate movement." The 840 prefix is code for the United States, Smith said, and since Michigan's requirement to tag all cattle with RFID tags began in 2007, farmers have been free to buy tags from local merchants, through catalogs and online.

Unfortunately, any tag with a 900 prefix will not be acceptable for interstate movement of cattle unless the animal was tagged before March 11, 2015.

"If you have a calf born March 10, 2015, and you tag it with the 900 series tag that day, it will be valid for the rest of that animal's life," Smith said. "But if you tag it with a 900-series tag after March 11, the health certificate (for interstate movement) will be rejected. All animals must have the 840 tag from that day forward."

Smith said he recommends that cattle farmers use any remaining 900 -series tags on older animals that have lost their tags "so they don't go to waste."

Smith also cautioned against keeping the 900-series tags in place and simply adding an 840 tag.

"We don't want people putting in two RFID tags," he said. "It short-circuits the system when animals walk by readers. Sometimes the wrong one is read, and sometimes neither is read."

Livestock sales yards have been notified of the rule, and Smith said they have been cooperative in agreeing to tag animals with the proper tags if that aren't already properly tagged. Various animal ag groups have also agreed to send their members notice of the change.

IF YOU HAVE TAGGED YOUR STEER FOR THE UPPER PENINSULA STATE FAIR WITH A 900 SERIES RFID TAG, PRIOR TO MARCH 11, 2015, YOU ARE WITHIN THE MDARD GUIDELINES. HOWEVER, IN THE EVENT YOUR STEER LOSES AN RFID AFTER MARCH 11, 2015, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO REPLACE IT WITH A "840" SERIES RFID TAG.

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE EXHIBITOR'S MANAGER AT 906-212-5419.