

CANADIAN CATTLE IDENTIFICATION AGENCY ANNOUNCES TAG RETENTION PROJECT PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Calgary, Alberta, August 29, 2014 – [Canadian Cattle Identification Agency](#) (CCIA) is pleased to announce key preliminary findings resulting from the national Tag Retention Project, which is intended to collect baseline data on cattle tag retention and tag readability, recommend solutions to enhance tag retention and readability as well as provide the foundation for further study. The broad-based approach and survey of the existing situations will provide the foundation for identifying specific tag retention challenges that may require further data collection.

This project involves animals from various geographical areas across Canada to ensure appropriate representation of farming styles and environments. The study has tagged more than 5,000 animals with equal distribution of approved CCIA radio frequency identification (RFID) tag types/brands at each test site. Each farm test site was selected based on appropriate handling facilities to optimize tagger safety, tag application and tag retention. In this study, each tag type is applied according to manufacturer's directions (i.e., in terms of tag location, using the corresponding manufacturer's tag applicators, etc.).

"This project involved the tagging of calves at 17 Canadian herds ranging from 76 to 535 head from British Columbia to Ontario," CCIA Vice Chair and Tag Retention Project Committee Chair Mark Elford states. "Individual calves were tagged according to the manufacturer's directions recommended tag location. Tags were applied with the corresponding manufacturer's tag applicators. This research followed the cooperating producers throughout their normal herd management activities, which determined the variation in timing of the data collected. Of the project tagged cattle, not all were retained until they were long-yearlings; however, the limited variation in the retention does not suggest a large over-wintering loss in calf tags."

"Across 15 herds, tag retention was 98.9 per cent to the point of sale," confirms CCIA Tag Retention Project Manager Ross MacDonald. "To identify the significance of lost tags, an analysis of variance test was conducted using the percentage of each of the seven brands of tags retained in each herd. Differences were analyzed for significance amongst herds and amongst tags. No statistical difference was noticed amongst herds. Tag loss was similar across the herds sampled. We were able to scan all applied tags with handheld readers during data collection. Essentially, retention differences by tag brand were insignificant."

"The Tag Retention Project will scan mature cows once in 2014 and once in 2015. Replacement heifers tagged as calves will be scanned and included as part of the mature cow data set in the fall during pregnancy checking. Though not enough scan data has been compiled for a robust comparison, tag retention in cows appears to be more variable than in calves," CCIA General Manager Brian Caney suggests.

As a not-for-profit, industry-initiated organization led by a board of directors made up of representatives from all sectors of the livestock industry, CCIA fully supports the national Tag Retention Project and its findings which will educate producers on cattle RFID tag retention and tag reading performance, and recommend solutions to enhance tag retention and reading performance. Details regarding tag retention and reading performance rates as well as recommendations to reduce tag loss and tag readability problems will be included in with the statistical analysis in the final report, which will be posted online within CCIA's home page at www.canadaid.ca.

For more information on the [Health of Animals Regulations](#), please visit http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/C.R.C.,_c._296/.

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