



NAIT position statement on the use of animal identifiers and the role of NAIT in considering new and emerging animal identifier technologies

Background

To achieve the desired outcomes of the NAIT partner organisations, NAIT must make use of the most suitable enabling technologies for animal identification devices and associated readers (animal ID technologies). The NAIT approach to these issues and decision making on the most appropriate solutions follows a set of guiding principles, as outlined below:

Principle 1: NAIT will utilise proven technologies that are fit for purpose in New Zealand

NAIT will set defined standards for enabling animal ID technologies that ensure the needs of New Zealand's industries are met. Animal ID technology manufacturers must be able to demonstrate that technology solutions are capable of meeting NAIT standards. These standards will include provisions that ensure:

- Device operability across the end-to-end NAIT system
- Device performance under New Zealand conditions
- Commercial availability and economy.

In this sense, NAIT is an adopter of technology rather than playing a direct role in innovation.

Principle 2: NAIT will utilise proven technologies that are aligned with international standards

Animal identification and traceability is becoming more important in the context of global trade. Accordingly, animal ID technology manufacturers must be able to demonstrate that technology solutions are sufficiently aligned with international guidelines in this area, for example those provided by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Principle 3: Animal ID technologies for NAIT will be animal species-specific where required

The animal ID technologies and system requirements that are adopted by NAIT will be specific to an animal species and defined according to the necessary level of tracing required to manage risk for each species. This is compatible with OIE guidelines that describe the need to meet desired outcomes, determined through consultation with parties including industry.

The current status with respect to different animal species and NAIT is set out below:

Cattle

Following extensive research and consultation, NAIT has prepared and issued the *Approved Permanent Radio Frequency Identification Device Standard (Cattle Only)* that sets the standards required for NAIT approved Low Frequency (LF) RFID (FDX and HDX) ear tags for cattle. This standard is available on the NAIT website: http://www.nait.org.nz/nait_Resources.cfm

Deer

Owing to the differing functional requirements associated with deer farming and because of a lack of experience with the RFID tagging of deer under New Zealand conditions, work is still in progress to develop an analogous standard for the deer industry.

Other Species

Other domesticated animal species will be considered on a case by case basis, if required by NAIT partners and the industries concerned. Requirements for other species may differ from those currently proposed for cattle or deer, potentially involving data recording regimes such as:

- the recording of the location and number of animals present on properties on an annual register or census.
- the development of systems designed to capture and record movements of batches or 'mobs' of animals, rather than individuals.
- the use of other animal ID technologies for individually identifying animals, for example boluses, UHF RFID ear tags, microchips, etc.

This outcomes-based approach is in keeping with the OIE guidelines noted above, which outline that, where group identification is adequate, an animal identification system can be managed without a physical identifier.

Principle 4: Transitional arrangements from one technology to another must fully identify end-to-end costs

It is the nature of progress that in future new animal ID technologies will be developed that may offer the opportunity of significant benefits over existing solutions. Any decision to shift to a new animal ID technology from that in operation under NAIT must be endorsed by the relevant industry sectors prior to adoption. Decisions will be based on comparative cost-benefit analysis and a transition plan, including the total end-to-end costs for replacement technology across the whole system, including but not limited to the replacement cost for new identifiers.

A formal process for the consideration of developments in animal ID enabling technology, including a transparent mechanism for providing NAIT accreditation, will be established based on the guiding principles set out above.