



FACT SHEET

DO I HAVE TO TATTOO OR TAG MY PIGS?

In all states, pigs over a specified weight or age must be tattoo branded before being moved off your property. This includes movements to another property (but only where a change of ownership takes place), to the saleyards and to the abattoirs.

What are the pig identification requirements in my state?

NSW	All pigs 25 kg and over must be tattooed with your registered swine brand number issued by your local Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA) (LHPA Head Office (02) 63 913 242). The pig should be branded on one or both shoulders. In NSW the crown brand may be applied by the LHPA by arrangement for people who don't regularly trade pigs and do not have their own swine brand number.
VIC	All pigs 25 kg and over must be tattooed with your registered swine brand number issued by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) (Phone: 136 186). Pigs should be branded on the left shoulder. Pigs less than 25 kg must be identified with an ear tag showing your registered swine brand number.
QLD	All pigs 30 kg and over must be tattooed with your registered swine brand number issued by Biosecurity QLD (DEEDI) (phone: 13 25 23). Both shoulders of the pig should be branded. Pigs less than 30 kg must be identified with either an ear tag showing your Property Identification Code (PIC) or tattooed with your registered swine brand. Owners of 2 or less pigs (including the pigs in the consignment) are exempt from branding requirements in Queensland however producers may still need to identify their pigs to meet abattoirs' requirements.
SA	All pigs 20 kg and over must be tattooed with your registered swine brand issued by the Department of Primary Industries and Resources South Australia (PIRSA) (Phone: 1800 654 688). The person who bred the pig should brand the left shoulder and any subsequent owners should brand the right shoulder of the pig.

TAS	All pigs 10 weeks of age and older must be tattooed with your registered swine brand issued by the Department of Primary Industries Parks Water and Environment (Phone: 1300 368 550). The brand may be applied on either shoulder.
WA	All pigs 10 weeks of age and older must be tattooed with your registered swine brand issued by the Department of Agriculture and Food (Phone: 1300 725 572). The person who bred the pig should brand the left shoulder and any subsequent owners should brand the right shoulder.

Do I need to identify weaners?

Identification of weaner pigs (pigs under the minimum branding weight) is not required at present by law, in NSW, SA, WA and TAS. However, it is recommended that weaners are identified before movement to maintain traceability and your buyer or abattoirs may require this. Currently the recommended means of identifying weaners is an ear tag displaying the Property Identification Code (PIC) of the property of origin unless state regulations specify otherwise. If you are unsure of your requirements, check with your abattoir or buyer before moving your pigs.

Ear tags are available through most rural suppliers. Producers should always consider the welfare of the pig when choosing an appropriate ear tag. The tag you use should be permanent and the number printed on it should be permanent and visually readable. Apply the tag just before you want to move the pigs to minimise time in which tags can be lost.

How do I apply the tattoo?

The swine brand is applied as a body tattoo to one or both shoulders depending on the regulations in your state. It is an offence to use somebody else's swine brand number on your pigs. Tattoos must be legible before and after slaughter. If the tattoo is not legible the pig is not considered to be properly identified. You don't have to be a tattoo artist to tattoo a pig, but good technique is important. The difference between a good and bad tattoo often comes down to good application technique, well maintained tattoo equipment and the use of proper carbon based tattoo ink.



Tips for tattooing pigs:

What you need

- A tattoo slap marker with your registered swine brand number on it – your department of primary industries may be able to recommend a manufacturer or you may be able to order one from a local rural supplier.
- Carbon based tattoo ink/paste – available from most rural suppliers.
- An ink pad – you can make one from a shallow dish and a piece of foam. It should be large enough to cover the whole tattoo marker.

Preparation

- Ensure tattoo equipment is in good condition i.e. all needles are intact, none bent, broken, or blunt.
- Clean the tattoo equipment with a wire brush to remove build up of ink/paste, dirt and hair.
- Soak your ink pad with carbon based tattoo ink. Do not dilute the ink or the tattoo will be too faint.
- Hose off dirty animals before tattooing so that the tattoo is applied to a clean piece of skin.

Application

- Ensure you are holding the tattoo marker the right way up.
- Press the tattoo marker into the ink pad ensuring all needles get covered in ink.
- Slap the tattoo marker onto the correct shoulder of the pig (as per regulations in your state) just hard enough so all the needles penetrate the skin.
- This should not cause bruising or injury. Applying the marker harder will not improve the quality of the tattoo.
- Reapply ink to the tattoo marker for every pig.
- Check the tattoo marker regularly and clean and maintain it as necessary.

Further information:

Contact the PigPass Helpdesk on 1800 001 458 or contact your local Department of Primary Industries (DPI) or Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA).

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