

# FAQs regarding the 2015 Official PIN Tag Requirement

A background image of a farm with several large barns and silos under a clear sky, rendered in a warm, orange-toned silhouette style.

## What is the packer requirement?

The majority of packers and processors that harvest breeding stock are requiring official premises identification tags (official PIN tag) by Jan. 1, 2015, as a condition of sale.

The requirement DOES NOT apply to feeder pigs, market hogs or show pigs being sold as market hogs.

## What is the history of this requirement? Where did it come from?

The Swine ID program standards stipulate that breeding swine entering harvest channels must have an official ear tag bearing the PIN of the breeding farm. In 2008, USDA worked with the Swine ID Implementation Task Force to develop the official premises identification number tag (PIN tag).

The swine health committees and boards of directors of the National Pork Board and the National Pork Producers Council, along with the board of directors of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians have supported producer adoption of the official premises ID number tags for use in breeding swine entering harvest channels. In 2013, the National Pork Board's Pork Act delegates unanimously passed an advisement asking packers to require the official PIN tags as a condition of sale by Jan. 1, 2015. A similar resolution was passed by the National Pork Producers Council delegate body.

## Why is it important to the swine industry and producers?

Using official PIN tags greatly improves the speed and accuracy of traceback for diseases and to protect producers against being wrongly identified as delivering animals to market with a violative animal health product residue. The tags also:

- Reduce business disruption during a disease or residue traceback by providing for accurate identification of sows and boars in commingled market channels.
- Provide a mechanism to associate breeding stock to movement, health, and treatment records for PQA Plus®.
- Improve national swine disease surveillance programs by the use of standardized animal identification which can ensure early disease detection and demonstrate freedom from swine diseases that limit commerce and trade.
- Support U.S. producers' competitiveness in international markets by demonstrating a valid preharvest traceability system to trading partners. In 2014, export markets provided \$69 per head additional value to pork producers.

## Why is Jan. 1, 2015, significant?

January 1 is the date that the pork industry requested that packers harvesting breeding stock require official PIN tags as a condition of sale.

To ensure "full value" for breeding stock, starting Jan. 1, 2015, all breeding stock should be identified with an official PIN tag BEFORE moving into harvest channels.

## What does PIN stand for?

Premises identification number. The PIN is a unique 7-character, alpha-numeric national site identifier that is required to order official PIN tags. Producers can register their site(s) free of charge with their state animal health official to get a PIN. For more information call (800) 456-7675 or go to [pork.org/PIN](http://pork.org/PIN).

## Which packers and processors are requiring USDA official PIN tags as a condition of sale?

Johnsonville, Hillshire Brands, Calihan Pork Processors, Bob Evans Farms, Wampler's Farm Sausage, Pine Ridge Farms, Pioneer Packing Co., Pork King Packing and Abbyland Pork Pack.

## Who manufactures approved official PIN tags?

To find an approved manufacturer go to [pork.org/PINtag](http://pork.org/PINtag) and follow the link. When contacting manufacturers, make sure to ask about a distributor near you.

## What information is required to order official PIN tags?

You will need a valid premises identification number (PIN). If you don't have a PIN, call (800) 456-7675 or go to [pork.org/PINtag](http://pork.org/PINtag).

## What is the cost of official PIN tags?

Costs vary. To find an approved manufacturer go to [pork.org/PINtag](http://pork.org/PINtag) and follow the link. When contacting manufacturers make sure to ask about a distributor near you.

## When do breeding stock have to be identified with the USDA official PIN tag?

Breeding stock must be identified with the official PIN tag BEFORE moving into harvest channels. In some cases, the official PIN tag acts as a production or management tag and is applied when the gilt or boar is selected for breeding. In other cases, the official PIN tag is applied right before the breeding gilt, sow or boar is shipped into harvest channels.

### **Can official PIN tags be used as a production or management tag?**

Yes. The official PIN tag can be customized with a production number.

### **Can I get official PIN tags that are blank (no management number)?**

Yes. Go to [pork.org/PINtag](http://pork.org/PINtag) to locate an approved manufacturer.

### **Do I need more than one official PIN tag when I market my sows or boars?**

Only one official premises ID number tag is required to meet the requirement for the identification of breeding stock in harvest channels.

### **What records do I need to keep?**

According to the Swine ID program standards, regardless of the destination of any movement of breeding stock, producers need to record the following information and hold it for three years:

- Date the gilt, sow or boar was tagged
- Number of the PIN tag applied (both PIN and management number if present)
- Number of any other identification present on the gilt, sow or boar when entering the premises
- Date the animal moved onto the premises and premises identification number (PIN) of the source location
- Date the animal moved off of the premises and premises identification number (PIN) of the destination
- If replacing a lost official PIN tag, the number of the new official PIN tag and the one lost (if known)

### **Do I need to tag breeding stock in both ears?**

No. Only one official premises ID number tag is required to meet the requirement for the identification of breeding stock in harvest channels. However, duplicate tags with the same PIN can be applied to both ears if you choose to do so.

### **What happens when an official PIN tag is lost?**

A new official premises ID number tag bearing the PIN of the breeding farm can be applied and recorded in the production record.

### **Can I remove official PIN tags?**

Producers are prohibited from removing official PIN tags without authorization by the state, federal or tribal animal health authority.

### **Are boars also required to have official PIN tags?**

Yes, all breeding swine entering harvest channels should have an official PIN tag to ensure full value.

### **Do I have to use official PIN tags for identifying feeder pigs/weaner pigs for movement and/or show pigs?**

No, they are intended to be used in breeding stock entering harvest channels. Approved form of identification for feeder/weaner pigs can be found in code of federal regulations at 9 CFR 71.19. Work with your veterinarian to make sure you comply with the federal requirements.

### **When are producers applying official PIN tags?**

In some cases, the official PIN tag acts as a production or management tag and is applied when the gilt or boar is selected for breeding. In other cases, the official PIN tag is applied right before the breeding gilt, sow or boar is shipped into harvest channels.

### **If a gilt, sow or boar has an official PIN tag and it is moved to another production site in the production system does it have to be retagged with another official PIN tag?**

No, as long as the following is recorded and held for three years:

- Date the gilt, sow or boar was tagged
- Number of the PIN tag applied (both PIN and management number if present)
- Number of any other identification present on the gilt, sow or boar when entering the premises
- Date the animal moved onto the premises and the premises identification number (PIN) of the source location
- Date the animal moved off of the premises and the premises identification number (PIN) of the destination
- If replacing a lost official PIN tag, the number of the new official PIN tag and the one lost (if known)

### **What happens to sows and boars that are not identified with official PIN tags when marketed?**

Talk to your market on specifics. Sows and boars without an official PIN tag can still be identified with a USDA official backtag at markets. However, this could affect the value of the sow or boar.

### **What about gilts and young boars that are not selected for breeding?**

Talk to your buyer on how they handle heavy gilts or young boars not selected for breeding. In general, if the gilt or young boar has the potential to be sold to one of the packers requiring official PIN tags as a condition of sale, identifying them with an official PIN tag will help ensure full value when sold.