

ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION, RECORDING AND TRACEABILITY (AIRT)

Introduction and background

The Animal Identification Act, 2002 (Act 6 of 2002) ('AIDA') currently makes provision for a one to three character mark that identifies the legal owner of an animal. These marks are allocated by a central registry and are linked to the residential address and identify details of the owner which provides a limited degree of traceability to an owner/farm of origin regarding the group of animals owned by him/her. In the communal grazing areas many livestock owners use either owner or group identification as opposed to individual identification (DAFF draft discussion document), the procedure which is compulsory in the stud breeding industry.

The Stock theft Act, 1959 (Act 57 of 1959 as amended) requires that a Document of Identification is furnished when an animal is "bartered, sold or disposed of" and retained in the new owners possession for a period of twelve months. This, however is not unique individual identification of animals, but indicates group identification once again.

There are in the vicinity of 725 000 registered national brand marks on the DAFF database as at the end of November 2016. These group marks are registered in the owner's name with address and farm location details. The AIDA, however, excludes the registration of registered stud breeding animals which appear on their own register, but are individually identified as per the Animal Improvement Act, 1998 (Act 62 of 1998).

Shortcomings are the following:

- the AIDA database continuously generates new marks while the prediction is that the database includes thousands of dormant marks which could be re-allocated;
- no procedure exist to remove or cancel dormant marks; and
- the AIDA and Stock theft Acts are not sufficiently enforced and feedback is that not more than 30% of animals are marked and very few Documents of Identification accompany animal transactions.

"South Africa had a movement permit system that provided a degree of traceability for disease monitoring. This also served as additional proof of purchase and ownership of animals. The system was gradually abandoned as it required extensive administrative and human resource inputs." (DAFF draft discussion document)

The AIDA is an extremely powerful, unique, owner identification system which if adapted slightly and enforced could provide traceability back to owner/farm with movement control as an initial phase to accustom industry to recording and movement control, before venturing into a more sophisticated expensive individual animal traceability system.

It would not be possible to consider any individual identification system, without firstly instituting active enforcement of the AIDA.

1. Ultimate Objectives:

- To be able to trace meat and livestock back to farm of origin;
- To be able to trace disease outbreaks back to source;
- To expand market access; and
- To assist in the control of stock theft.

2. Proposed Actions:

Acts and Bills that need immediate attention:

- *National Pounds Bill (DAFF);*
- *Agricultural Produce Agents Act (DAFF); and*
- *Movement of Animals and Animal Produce Act (SAPS).*

It is proposed that the Department considers the DAFF Phakisa report when determining the proposed actions.

- To streamline the present group animal identification database for all species;
- To FICA livestock farms and properties in conjunction with renewals and new applications;
- To record livestock owners, animal ID documents and livestock movement recording within present system;
- To eventually identify livestock individually;
- To eventually record livestock movements (including deaths, theft, sales and purchases); and
- To implement meat traceability to source.

3. Proposed Phases:

PHASE I

Timeline: 2017-2019

- a. Streamline Animal Identification data and use to record farms and owners
 - Renew brand marks with records updated every 5 years (see proposed renewal application document attached);
 - Include proof of SA land ownership, a lease contract or communal ownership;
 - Include the compulsory stock register system for communal farmers;
 - Integrate stud book system into one National Animal Identification System (Publish a Regulation requiring an application for mark renewal and the integration of the Stud Registry into one National Animal Identification System); and
 - Link to compulsory livestock removal documentation as required under the Stock theft Act, 1959.
- b. Establish Public-Private Partnership (PPP)/Enterprise of interested service providers to administer and implement systems for the actions and phases

- c. Enforce Vendor Declaration compliance at all points of sale
- d. Appoint under the PPP an assignee or allocate to an existing service provider to enforce compliance to marking, documentation and movement requirements at all points of departure and arrival with change of ownership
- e. Extend the identification of FMD protection zone cattle and implement a comprehensive database for livestock identification, treatment and movement of livestock in the FMD protection zones
- f. Compile business plans and budget for each of the phases

PHASE II

Timeline: 2019-2024

(Evaluate implementation of this phase only after the success of PHASE I has been determined)

- a. Establish a Newco with central database to administer the ID, recording and movement control system and specify the minimum requirements for identification and information recording equipment
 - b. Appoint identification system distributors
 - c. Begin with the compulsory identification of Brucellosis vaccinated heifers
 - d. Proceed with initially the identification of each new born calf and its mother in the new system from date specified (beginning 2020)
 - e. Institute electronic tagging and movement recording
 - f. Link the DAFF red permit system to the traceability system
- At a specified date (i.e. 2025) all cattle identified and traced to farm of origin

PHASE III

Timeline 2025 and beyond

- a. Systems for meat traceability to farm of origin (including laboratory results)
- b. Incorporate this information in existing feedlot and abattoir systems
- c. Expand to other species

4. Concluding Remarks:

No national traceability project will succeed without the necessary legislation, financial support from Government and most importantly, the buy-in of the producers and secondary livestock industry.

It is vital that the group identification of livestock under the AIDA, is firstly successfully implemented and applied by all livestock owners in such a way that it can be meaningfully audited, before any attempt to implement a national traceability scheme with all animals uniquely individually identified.