

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



## Department of Agricultural Resources

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### **Massachusetts Road Map for Animal Disease Traceability April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2022**

Submitted to: Koren Custer, DVM  
USDA APHIS VS Dist. 1 AVIC  
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MA ADT Coordinator  
Date: May 10, 2017

#### **CURRENT STATUS (May 10, 2019)**

##### Staff-

MDAR has one full-time ADT coordinator whose primary role is to develop and manage the ADT program for the state. The ADT coordinator reports to the Director of Animal Health and works closely with both the Director and the State Veterinarian. Two additional FTEs provide in-office support for ADT as one part of their extensive duties. Eight MDAR field inspectors cover the state. These staff members work directly and indirectly with producers and owners; markets; dealers; MA animal welfare agencies; veterinarians; race tracks; local authorities; and fair and show inspectors, and VS.

##### Municipal Animal Inspectors and Annual Livestock Inventory-

MA law provides an annual inventory of livestock on all livestock premises, performed by municipal animal inspectors (MAIs) nominated by local authorities and appointed by MDAR. This inventory, known as the "Barn Books" creates a unique and particularly useful tool for ADT and other animal disease management and emergency planning and response plans and activities. Data from the hard-copy only Barn Books is entered into SCS/Core One by a temporary employee funded through the Avian portion of the Umbrella Agreement.

Municipal Animal Inspectors are trained annually on the basics of animal ID and movement documentation requirements. They have a liaison role in ADT activities, referring producers, local authorities, and other stakeholders to MDAR for tags and technical assistance as needed, and assist MDAR in compliance and enforcement actions.

##### ADT Data Management-

MDAR utilizes the following methods for communicating and managing ADT information:

- Paper records: ICVIs, test charts, and tag distribution records
- Email/digital storage:
  - ICVIs scanned and sent as .pdfs from other states
  - Receiving and reviewing eCVIs, including small animal and all livestock species
  - Communication with other agencies
  - Receiving tag distribution reports as Excel files

- SCS/CoreOne (MA incidence) and State Vet.com:
  - Storing premises information from the Barn Books (see below)
  - Recording animal movement and test data that is submitted electronically and can be matched up with premises in the database
  - Creating PINs; Premises mapping; Herd and premises reporting
  - Recoding tags assigned to MA premises and veterinarians

Note: To date, records received as hard copies or scans of hard copies are not entered into SCS/CoreOne.
- VSPS/ Global Vet Link: Websites used for eCVI records
- AIMS: Records of tags distributed to MA PINs by USDA or manufacturers

#### Official Identification and Distribution-

MDAR records the distribution of official ID by the state both in CoreOne and in notebooks. This applies to cattle NUES tags, swine NUES tags, scrapie tags, and cattle backtags.

Tag recipients must have a premises ID number and must provide to MDAR the following information regarding tag application:

- Tag number
- Date applied
- Name of the owner
- Name, address, and premises where the animal was tagged
- Breed, age, and sex of the animal

These records can be submitted via email or in hard copy to the office on an Excel form provided by the department, with a copy maintained by the producer or veterinarian. No additional tags will be issued until the prior report is received. These reports serve as initial individual animal records.

#### Reading Electronic IDs

Very few wands are currently available for use within MA. MDAR has one for its use in traces and animal health investigations. The APHIS office in Sutton, MA has two readers that can be used to support tagging efforts and as part of animal disease investigations and response. The Big E, or Big East Exhibition, the largest show and fair in New England, owns one LF reader. No other wands are known to MDAR, although it is likely that at least one or two are already in use by level II veterinarians or at Tuft's Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine. MDAR has seen very few export eCVIs created using wands to read RFID tags and record them on the document.

#### Agency Interaction-

MDAR enjoys a strong working relationship with APHIS VS Dist. 1 and is active with other regional SAHOs in the New England State Animal Agricultural Security Alliance (NESAASA). The state veterinarian is also participates in USAHA. The ADT Coordinator is part of the National ADT Support Group, consisting of state traceability officials. The ADT Coordinator attends NIAA conferences as possible, and represents New England on the VS Training and Exercise working group.

#### Limitations-

- Staff

MDAR's Division of Animal Health covers all animal disease-related regulatory activities for both livestock and small animals. It is a small staff with an increasing range and number of responsibilities. The number of positions was reduced in 2015, and currently Executive Branch policy profoundly limits hiring and position creation.

- Funding
  - MDAR remains unable to fund additional staffing for ADT, or to decrease the current level of reliance on cooperative agreement funding to support the ADT Coordinator.
  - MDAR does not have line item funding available for the purchase of tags, readers, or additional software or other information system updates or upgrades

- Regulatory/ Legislative
  - Applicable Animal Health regulations/ statutes have not been updated in several years, and such review and any necessary changes cannot be made solely upon MDAR request. The review process is lengthy and complicated.
  - MDAR partners with USDA APHIS in compliance of Traceability Regulations.
  - A legislative change is required for MDAR to collect money for tags, hard copy CVIs, or other ADT-related supplies or equipment.

## **GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) will work through its Division of Animal Health to implement an Animal Disease Traceability (ADT) program that works in concert with other states, Tribes, and territories and the USDA to advance ADT with the following goals:

1. Advance the electronic sharing of data among federal and state animal health officials, veterinarians and industry; including sharing basic ADT data with the federal animal health events repository (AHER);
2. Use electronic ID tags for animals requiring individual identification in order to make the transmission of data more efficient;
3. Enhance the ability to track animals from birth to slaughter through a system that allows tracking data points to be connected; and
4. Elevate the discussion with States and industry to work toward a system where animal health certificates are electronically transmitted from private veterinarians to state animal health officials.

## **ACTIVITIES/ PLAN YEARS**

### **Traceability Performance Measures (TPMs)**

*Years 1-3*

MDAR will participate in TPM test traces and National Priority Trace exercises in association with as assigned by VS District 1 and national teams. These events will be treated as if they were actual traceability requests and will be reported in EMRS as they are worked and completed so that the results may be used to determine both state and national traceability values. In addition, MDAR will record real-world traces of animals of all livestock species as they are completed. Performance will be reported quarterly.

Should MDAR's performance on trace exercises fall below acceptable ratings for either elapsed time or successful completion, MDAR will identify actions or activities to be implemented to improve in the necessary areas. These plans will be shared and progress reported with VS through quarterly reports.

MDAR will report any potential compliance issues identified in the course of administering TPMs or regular operational activities to the AVIC for inclusion in the ADT Enforcement Action Summary Report. In addition, MDAR will partner with VS, particularly Dist. 1, to address compliance issues identified that potentially affect MA animals. These may result in actions taken by MDAR or by EIS. This will apply to all livestock species.

### **Administration of Official Identification Devices**

**Official ID will be made available to MA producers, markets, and veterinarians as described below:**

NUES tags for bovines

(Per the guidance on sunsetting the use of metal NUES tags as official identification for cattle announced by APHIS on the ADT Sharing Conference Call on May 8, 2019)

- A. Free NUES tags for cattle will continue to be made available for free upon request to producers and accredited veterinarians through December 2020 or until the MDAR supply is depleted following the 12/31/2019 end to free distribution by APHIS.  
*Years 1-2*
  - i. Recipients must have an associated PIN.
  - ii. Recipients must return completed Tag Distribution Reports to MDAR for any previously issued tags before being approved for any additional official ID by MDAR.
- B. All cattle NUES tags must be applied, returned to MDAR, or destroyed by 12/13/2020. *Year 2*
- C. MDAR will not approve the purchase of additional NUES tags for cattle after 12/31/2019.  
*Year 1*
- D. After 12/31/2019, MDAR will instruct producers and veterinarians that RFID tag must be used to officially identify any cattle reasonable expected to be alive after 12/31/2023.  
*Years 1-3*
- E. MDAR will track the number of tag requests that are converted from NUES to RFID tags for inclusion in quarterly reports.  
*Years 1-3*

#### RFID for Bovines

(per the guidance on sunseting the use of metal NUES tags as official identification for cattle and the APHIS cost-share program for RFID tags announced by APHIS on the ADT Sharing Conference Call on May 8, 2019)

- a. MDAR will advise requestors of the transition to RFID and encourage the use of RFID tags for all cattle.  
*Years 1-2*
- b. After 12/31/2019, MDAR will instruct producers and veterinarians that RFID tag must be used to officially identify any cattle reasonable expected to be alive after 12/31/2023.  
*Years 1-2*
- c. Once the APHIS cost-share program for RFID tags is available, requestors will be strongly encouraged to take advantage of the program.  
*Years 1-3, as offered through APHIS*
  - i. Pending the passage of additional legislation allowing it, MDAR cannot collect money nor charge recipients for official ID tags. MDAR has no departmental budget for purchasing official ID tags, and has determined based on evaluation of other states' experiences that it is neither economically feasible nor desirable in the long-term to offer RFID tags for free to producers and veterinarians.
- d. MDAR will also explore the creation of an industry organization/ NGO/ State partnership for the purchase and distribution of RFID tags to MA producers and veterinarians. Under such a program, the partnering NGO would support the sales and collection of money for RFID tags while the administration of tags would be the responsibility of MDAR. This possibility is under review by MDAR leadership and legal as of Q1 of this agreement year.  
*Year 1 or early Year 2, implementation, then ongoing*

#### NUES tags for swine

(Plan based on the guidance as of 5/8/2019 that metal NUES tags for swine will continue to be available for free from APHIS for state distribution)

- a. NUES tags for swine will continue to be made available for free upon request to producers and accredited veterinarians through MDAR until they are no longer provided for free to the state by VS.  
*Years 1-2 or until phased out by VS*
  - ii. Recipients must have an associated PIN.
  - iii. Recipients must return completed Tag Distribution Reports to MDAR for any previously issued tags before being approved for any additional official ID by MDAR.

- b. MA markets will implement the use of custom plastic NUES tags for swine as “market tags”  
*Year 1 implementation, then ongoing*
  - i. An exception allowing this use and allowing MA markets to purchase these IDs directly from a partnering manufacturer was granted early in *year 1*. This will greatly increase the use of official ID in MA swine while meeting the markets’ need to have a readily readable market tag.
  - ii. MA markets will be designated as official tagging sites for these swine and will be required to sign agreements outlining rules and responsibilities as such. Agreements will be signed and compliance will be required before (additional) swine NUES tags may be purchased. No market may sell unidentified swine.
  - iii. *Implementation expected second quarter of Year 1.*
  - iv. An ultimate transition to the use of RFID tags for swine is expected pending the discontinuation of the recognition of metal and NUES tags as official ID by USDA.
- c. Producers will be encouraged to and provided with education and technical assistance for transitioning to the use of RFID tags for swine as the infrastructure for reading and recording these tags becomes available to veterinarians and MA livestock markets.  
*Year 3*

Sheep and Goats (in concert with Scrapie program activities under the Umbrella Agreement)

- a. Sheep and goats will continue to be identified per the Scrapie Prevention Program. In addition, per MA Animal Health Emergency Order of 1996, all sheep and goats in MA must be officially identified to their original premises before either being removed from that premises or reaching 18 months of age, whichever comes first. Animals under 18 months of age moving as “slaughter only” animals may be tagged at a market.
- b. Free metal NUES tags and plastic non-flock tags will be provided to accredited veterinarians and producers for free from MDAR as supplies last and/ or additional free tags continue to be available from USDA.
- c. Outreach, education, and technical assistance will be provided to producers through direct contact with producers and veterinarians, and presentations to breeding and showing groups, markets, and dealers, supporting flock-specific ID and record-keeping.  
*Years 1-3*
- d. Preparation for and support for the use of RFID tags for sheep and goats per April 19, 2019 program guidelines. MDAR will provide PINs for premises for which these will be purchased.  
*Years 2-3*

Equines

MDAR will encourage the use of registered microchips for animal identification, particularly in partnership with USTA for horses associated with MA’s Standardbred racetrack, USHJA, The Jockey Club, and other breed and exhibition organizations.

*Years 1-3*

**Plan to support the reading of RFID tags**

Concurrent to this agreement, MDAR will apply for the one-time additional cooperative agreement funding offered by APHIS for the purchase of RFID equipment, particularly readers. This approximately \$6000 is preliminarily expected to purchase 2-3 durable LF wands and one reader/ software for UHF tags (the vast majority of RFID tags used in MA are predicted to be LF technology). Any remaining funds may be used to assist level II veterinarians and/ or with the purchase of readers. However, needs and opportunities will continue to be evaluated and the equipment purchased will reflect the results of this analysis. Purchases will begin in the quarter in which funding becomes available.

*Year 1*

MDAR's goal will be to support the reading of RFID tags in animal disease situations, markets, fairs and exhibitions, and in the creation of CVIs and test charts. Key stakeholder needs (industry representatives, producers, accredited veterinarians, and APHIS) will be evaluated and MDAR will develop a plan to most effectively distribute the purchased equipment for use. This plan will likely include the loan of equipment to users with MDAR retaining ownership. Users will be strongly encouraged to purchase their own readers and related equipment best suited to their situation. Ensuring that markets have the equipment to and training needed to safely and accurately read and record tag numbers will be highest priority, followed by high volume livestock veterinarians and dealers. MDAR will also lend readers and provide training to fair inspectors checking in exhibition animals at MA fairs and shows.

*Years 1-3*

Training will also be provided to ensure that market staff can use the readers and associated equipment safely and accurately. This will initially be a challenge, as few RFID -tagged animals will be moving through the MA markets. Opportunities to identify market-bound cattle to which RFID tags can be applied, or to have RFID tags applied at the market for training purposes in association with MDAR and/or APHIS, will be sought in order to provide the necessary experience for market staff, particularly in year 1. Other training methods and hands-on opportunities will also be explored.

*Years 1-3*

MDAR will also provide outreach and technical assistance to markets and veterinarians who must update current infrastructure, including computer software and hardware, to handle 840 numbers as animal IDs. This includes assistance in establishing level 2 eAuth accounts for those who will be reporting RFID tag distribution and animal events in APHIS VS systems.

*Years 1-3*

### **Records of Distributed/ Applied Electronic IDs and Devices/ Information Sharing**

MDAR records the distribution of official ID by the state both in CoreOne and in notebooks. This applies to cattle NUES tags, swine NUES tags, scrapie tags, and cattle backtags.

Tag recipients must have a premises ID number and must provide to MDAR the following information regarding tag application:

- Tag number
- Date applied
- Name of the owner
- Name, address, and premises where the animal was tagged
- Breed, age, and sex of the animal

These records can be submitted via email or in hard copy to the office on an Excel form provided by the department, with a copy maintained by the producer or veterinarian. No additional tags will be issued until the prior report is received. These reports serve as initial individual animal records.

Currently, all of these returned tag distribution reports are maintained in hard copy format in the MDAR office. Ideally, they would be input into CoreOne; however, budget constraints preclude hiring the FTE that would be needed to input this and other traceability data that is received in hard copy or scanned format, such as CVIs and test charts.

*Years 1-3, with declining impact due to increased usage of eCVIs and other relevant documentation and improved integration of ADT data management systems*

MDAR has not distributed any RFID tags for any species to date. Records for RFID and Scrapie tags sent to MA premises are taken from AIMS and do not allow provide records directly to MDAR. However, the tag application records required to be input by recipients into AIMS can be retrieved for the purposes of traces, and will automatically be available via AHER.

RFID tags distributed through the cost-share program described on the ADT Sharing Call on 5/7/2019 will further allow MDAR to receive initial animal identification records. MDAR will not approve the release of additional tags to a recipient until a tag distribution record/ AIMS data entry is complete for the original set. This is an improvement in data collection compared to tags sold directly by a manufacturer for a specific premises.

*Years 1-3 according to program availability*

As of May 2019, MA has no designated tagging locations. This will change as markets move to the use of a custom plastic NUES tag as a market tag for swine and the related implementation of agreements citing the rules and requirements for doing so. MDAR will develop these agreements and present them to the four affected MA markets *second quarter of Year 1*, APHIS having issued an exception that will allow these markets to purchase the custom NUES tags from a manufacturer early in 2019. Updates on this process and any resulting compliance issues will be reported quarterly.

*Year 1 Implementation*

*Year 2 Year-end evaluation*

*Year 3 Prepare for transition to RFID*

### **Use of Electronic Records/ Information Sharing**

Any additional ADT funding received via future cooperative agreement or provided by the state would be used to hire someone to input this data and to manage that which is received in a format compatible with State Vet/ CoreOne/AHER. Until that time, only those electronic records that are automatically uploaded into CoreOne will reside there. Thus, these records will not immediately be available via AHER. Methods and systems that can be used to eliminate this gap will be explored and developed during the agreement year, and as real information about how AHER, reporting requirements, and system interoperability and become available. Progress will be reported quarterly, while an implantation date is dependent on the availability of information and the viability and affordability of possible solutions.

*Years 1-3, with declining impact due to increased usage of eCVIs and other relevant documentation and improved integration of ADT data management systems*

MDAR will focus on moving to electronic records that can be automatically uploaded into CoreOne and thus provided to AHER. Veterinarians will be strongly encouraged utilize AgView, eCVI, Global Vet Link, or similar CVI and test reporting services. The development of electronic records in a format that can be automatically uploaded into CoreOne, USAHerds, AHER, EMRS, and related traceability and response software is greatly anticipated. The move to the use of electronic data in agile, searchable databases can only improve quality of date and the speed and effectiveness of traces and reporting while also circumventing some of the challenges presented by low staff numbers.

*Year 1: Education, Outreach, and Technical Assistance to MA accredited veterinarians, veterinary organizations, rescue organizations, dealers, transporters, markets, and exhibitors.*

*Year 2: Evaluation of outreach programs, with focus on previously unaddressed or under-responsive stakeholder groups.*

*Year 3: Direct interaction with veterinarians that have not transitioned to electronic documentation*

MDAR will provide quarterly reports on the numbers of eCVIs issued for imports and exports to the state, and track the percent changes over the agreement year. In addition, the number and type of official IDs issued to MA veterinarians and producers will be reported quarterly.

*Years 1-3*

Traceability information can and will be provided to USDA, states, and Tribes upon request. MA will utilize its own internal processes for tracing in order to assist in achieving the fastest and most complete traces possible. Copies of relevant documents and other information will be shared by phone, email, hard copy, or EMRS data entry as appropriate when not automatically uploaded into AHER or the requesting state's ADT information systems.

*Years 1-3 and Ongoing*

## Outreach

The ADT Coordinator will oversee all outreach activities.  
*Annually, Years 1-3, Reported Quarterly*

- MA Municipal Animal Inspectors annual training
- Accredited veterinarians
  - MVMA CE Conferences - table
  - MVMA Newsletters – announcements and articles
    - Q1, as needed for cost-share tag announcements, etc.
  - Accreditation training- training lecture and materials
  - Tag and CVI distribution- Materials sent with tags, CVIs, and other materials provided by MDAR
  - Operational Contacts- Discussion, materials made available whenever the department has contact with accredited level II veterinarians through regular operational activities
- Producers/ exhibitors
  - Included with Fair and Show rules on mass.gov and available to be linked to fair/ show websites
  - Fair and Show inspector training
  - 4-H, breed, club, and industry groups
    - Materials available
    - Minimum of 4 outreach events per year (training, table at events, etc.)
  - Mass.gov, MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources bi-monthly Farm and Market Report
    - Updates , materials, and links provided
    - Kept up-to-date, updates included as new information and opportunities become available
  - NGO (Farm Bureau)/ State partnership for facilitating the purchase of RFID tags by producers
    - Concept being discussed and reviewed by MDAR leadership and legal dept.
  - Tag and PIN distribution- Materials sent with tags and other materials provided by MDAR
- Markets
  - ADT Coordinator will be on-site at MA markets quarterly (at minimum) and as needed
  - Swine NUES Tag Designated Tagging Site for swine market tags will necessitate an agreement laying out rules, requirements, and responsibilities
    - Direct engagement with each market
  - Technical assistance regarding electronic records standards and systems
    - Direct engagement with each market
  - Outreach and education regarding compliance issues
    - Direct engagement with each market
  - Signage and materials available for display and distribution at markets describing RFID and other ID requirements
- Dealers
  - Materials and instruction for livestock dealers will be sent via USPS as transition timelines are announced by APHIS
  - ADT Coordinator will review dealer records for compliance and to offer technical assistance for process improvements, including electronic records options
- General
  - Partnering with APHIS for training, exercises, and compliance activities
- Peers and stakeholders
  - The ADT Coordinator will participate in regional and national calls and conferences in order to share and provide outreach and technical assistance to other states and Tribes
    - NESAAASA calls/ meetings monthly
    - NIAA Traceability Forum, September 2019, Location TBD
    - USAHA Annual Meeting, October 2019



## **Compliance**

MDAR will work with APHIS AVIC to document processes to evaluate and report compliance with ADT requirements for official identification and interstate movement. These efforts will focus on official ID and CVIs. Compliance guidelines will be included in Designated Tagging Site agreements for markets.

*Year 1 Implementation and Technical Assistance*

*Year 2 Review and Evaluation*

*Year 3 Review, Evaluation, Updates as needed*

MDAR will work in partnership with APHIS ADT staff to monitor and ensure compliance at markets, with dealers, and in response to animal disease investigations of individual producers.

State compliance issues and activities for all livestock species will be summarized and reported quarterly.

*Years 1-3, Ongoing*

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<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/division-of-animal-health>

Submit CVIs and other electronic records to:

[cvi@mass.gov](mailto:cvi@mass.gov)

