



# Permanent Identification for Goats in the United States of America

BY PEGGY BOONE, IGSCR-IDGR

Whether you legally must have permanent identification on your goats, or if it's just a good idea, here are guidelines to tagging your herd.

## When Your Goats Legally Need Permanent Identification

- Crossing states lines;
- When sold at markets/auctions;
- When changing owners.

## Why Else is Permanent Identification Important?

- To find your animals after natural disasters like wildfire, hurricanes, or tornados;
- To prove you own an animal that was stolen then found;
- To accompany a bill of sale and prove that you legally purchased or sold that animal;
- Identification of animals in accordance of show rules;
- Registration of animals for breeding, documentation, or adding value;
- To track disease back to the herd of origin;
- To track lineage and help prove lineages in an official registration or pedigree.

## Types of Permanent Identification:

- USDA-issued scrapie tag, attached to the ear;
- USDA-issued scrapie tag, attached to a non-detachable collar **ONLY** if the tag will cover up a tattoo or if there are no ears or gopher/elf ears such as with La-Mancha goats. (Not all states will accept collar ID.);
- Herd tattoo;
- Microchip with accompanying "E" tattoo if the microchip is in the ear or "ET" if in the tail web. Goat microchips must be 840. If you are placing microchips in the animal yourself instead of having a veterinarian place it, you must obtain a USDA Premise ID, a Flock ID, and a National PIN;

\* Tattoos and microchips must be accompanied by an official registration certificate, application of registration not more than six months old, or an application for transfer not more than 60 days old. All forms must be stamped by an official USDA-approved registry.

## Did You Know?

All official ID must be physically on the goat or sheep to be legal.

A Flock ID and number, under the USDA Scrapie Eradication Program, is like a Social Security Number for your goats. By calling 1-800-USDA-TAG and setting up your herd, you receive free ear tags if this is your first time obtaining scrapie tags, which are universally legal identification for registration, crossing state lines, veterinarian certificates, and for market/auction sales. Goats do not have to be purebred or registered to obtain scrapie tags.

If you put an ear tag **OVER** an existing ear tattoo, the ear tag then nullifies the tattoo. If the animal is registered, the new ID must be given promptly to the registry or they may revoke the registration. To retain both tattoo and scrapie tag on your goats, place the tag on a non-removable collar.

All goats moving **OFF** your property must have legal permanent identification along with a record of origin for that goat. This can include a registration certificate that matches the identification or a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection. You are required to keep a record of purchases and sales for up to five years, usually via a bill of sale or transfer from the seller to the buyer.

Once a USDA scrapie tag has been attached, it is **ILLEGAL** to remove it for any reason, except in special circumstances in which an animal must have it removed. Removal must be legally done through an approved professional who must keep special records on this removal and new identification. If the if a goat rips tag off or it falls off on its own, you can assign a new tag and update registration paperwork with the new number.

*For more information on Flock IDs and scrapie tags, visit [igscr-idgr.com/registration/scrapie/](http://igscr-idgr.com/registration/scrapie/).*

