



BC Premises Identification Regulation

Policy Intentions Paper

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Introduction

The B.C. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF) is introducing a new Premises Identification (ID) Regulation (the “Regulation”) under the B.C. *Animal Health Act*. This document provides a plain-language summary of the ministry’s intended policy direction for the new regulation.

Background

MAFF has offered voluntary premises identification (ID) registration at no cost since 2011. In 2016, MAFF introduced a new user-friendly online registration system - [BCPID Online](#) - to improve the premises ID registration process. Although support is growing for premises ID among B.C.’s livestock and poultry industries, particularly those that have been affected by disease outbreaks and wildfires in recent years, only an estimated 65% of livestock and poultry premises have been registered to date. The persistent gaps in information about where farm animals are located on the land base continues to limit the ability of government agencies and industry to respond quickly to disease and natural disaster emergencies, reduces the chances that livestock and poultry operations can continue operating during emergencies and puts Canada’s traceability system at risk.

The new regulation will introduce mandatory premises ID registration with the goal of closing information gaps in B.C.’s premises ID system in order to enable the Province and industry to more effectively respond to animal health and environmental emergencies affecting livestock and poultry.

For more background information, please refer to the following documents posted on the premises ID website:

- [Frequently Asked Questions – Premises ID](#) (2019)
- [Premises ID Discussion Paper](#) (2019)
- What We Heard Report (2021)

Proposed Policy Scope

Species

The regulation will require registration of premises where the following animals may be present, temporarily or permanently, within 30 days of assuming care and/or ownership of the animal(s). The term “animal” will be defined in the Regulation and will include:

- ◆ Alpacas
- ◆ Bees
- ◆ Bison
- ◆ Cervid (farmed deer, reindeer or caribou)
- ◆ Cattle
- ◆ Donkeys
- ◆ Doves
- ◆ Ducks
- ◆ Fowl (quail, peafowl, pheasants, guinea fowl and pigeons)

- ◆ Fur-bearing animals (chinchilla, mink, fox)
- ◆ Geese
- ◆ Goats
- ◆ Horses
- ◆ Llamas
- ◆ Mules
- ◆ Poultry (broilers, pullets, layers, turkeys, exhibition breeds)
- ◆ Rabbits
- ◆ Ratites (Emu/Ostrich)
- ◆ Sheep
- ◆ Swine (pigs, hogs, miniature pigs)
- ◆ Vicuna
- ◆ Water Buffalo
- ◆ Wild boars
- ◆ Yaks

Public input included suggestions to require registration of exotic species and dogs. These and other species are not proposed for inclusion under the premises ID regulation.

Commingling Sites

The regulation will require an owner or operator of premises where animals owned by different owners are raised, kept or assembled, either temporarily or permanently (i.e., a “commingling site”) to register and obtain a premises ID number for the commingling site.

Commingling sites being considered for inclusion in the proposed regulation are listed below and have been refined to reflect the results of public consultation and a review of other provincial jurisdictions’ regulations.

- ◆ Animal embryo transfer stations
- ◆ Assembly yards
- ◆ Auctions/livestock sale facilities
- ◆ Boarding stables
- ◆ Carcass disposal sites
- ◆ Community pastures
- ◆ Crown range tenures
- ◆ Fair or Exhibition grounds
- ◆ Federally licensed slaughter facilities
- ◆ Feedlots
- ◆ Hatcheries
- ◆ Insemination centres
- ◆ Pastures
- ◆ Race tracks/competition facilities
- ◆ Rendering plants
- ◆ Research facilities
- ◆ Provincial slaughter facilities (Class A, B, D and E) licensed under the B.C. *Meat Inspection Regulation*
- ◆ Veterinary clinics
- ◆ Veterinary hospitals/labs
- ◆ Zoos/petting zoos

Operation Type and Size

The regulation will apply to all premises where animals are kept, assembled, raised or disposed of, regardless of the number of animals on a given premises (i.e., size of operation, herd or flock size), and irrespective of the reason the animals are kept (type of operation). For example, requirements would apply equally to a small acreage with one horse kept as a pet, a farm with a small flock of 10 chickens, a commercial beef cattle operation, or a feedlot.

The risk of a disease outbreak occurring varies depending on how the disease spreads (mode of transmission), the location of a premises (proximity to other premises, density of operations), the species affected (single or multiple species) and various other factors. Similarly, the impact of a natural

disaster can vary from minimal to extreme. Any animal or premises can be the source or be affected by an animal disease outbreak, and any animal or premises is vulnerable to the impacts of an unforeseen natural disaster. To ensure that emergency events can be managed quickly and efficiently and protect the health and well-being of animals, all premises where regulated animals are present, either permanently or temporarily, will be required to register with the premises ID program.

Primary and Linked Premises

The regulation will require registrants to identify at least one “primary premises”¹, sometimes referred to as the “home site” or “home ranch”. A primary premises is the location where animals in the registrant’s care are permanently or most often located.

Many registrants keep animals in their care at multiple locations (locations other than their primary premises) either temporarily or permanently. The premises ID program will continue to encourage registrants to identify these other locations as “linked premises”. Registration of linked premises will not be required under the regulation but will be strongly encouraged. The more information there is available in the premises ID database about where animals are on the land base, the more efficient and effective emergency management efforts can be.

Examples of linked premises

A common example of a linked premises is a Crown land tenure or private pasture where cattle are moved to graze for part of the year. A linked premises could also be a second land parcel adjacent to a registrant’s primary premises where they keep a second or distinctly separate herd. Another example of a linked premises is a field where beehives are moved temporarily for pollination purposes. Given the many possible scenarios in how individual farming operations are structured, premises ID staff are available to assist registrants in identifying their primary premises and any possible linked premises.

Leased or Rented Premises

If a person is leasing or renting the property on which their animals are kept, they would be responsible for registering with the premises ID program, not the property owner. In the case an emergency, emergency responders are interested in contacting the person that is responsible for the care of animals on a given premises.

Premises ID Number Stays with the Location

Upon registration, a premises ID number is assigned to the geographical location where animals are located. This location is identified based on a legal land description, most often by a 9-digit land parcel identification number. Once created, a premises ID number remains permanently with the geographic location and is not transferrable to another geographic location.

For example, if a farmer registered with the premises ID program moves their animals to a new ranch (i.e., a different parcel of land), they will need to update their premises ID account with their new ranch

¹ It is possible for a registrant to identify multiple primary premises. For example, an owner/operator of multiple commingling sites (e.g. auction yards) could register multiple primary premises.

location. They will then receive a new premises ID number for the new ranch location. Their old premises ID number will remain with the original ranch on the original parcel of land. A registrant can update their premises ID account information online at any time or contact program staff for assistance with updating their account.

A person moving animals to a new location does not need to know the premises ID number for the new location, or even if one exists – they will receive a new premises ID number when they update their information online or with the assistance of program staff.

Premises ID Account versus Premises ID Number

When a person or business registers with the premises ID program, either online or via the paper registration form, a premises ID account is created. This account contains all the information that might be required in an emergency affecting the animals in the registrant's care (see below).

As discussed above, one premises ID number is assigned to each specific and legally defined parcel of land where animals are located. If a registrant keeps animals at more than one location, their premises ID account may have several premises ID numbers associated with it (i.e., one primary premises and one or more linked premises). Similarly, when animals under the care of two or more individuals may be located on the same premises (for example, multiple herds grazing on the same range tenure or an abattoir operating on the same property where poultry barns are located), several premises ID accounts could reference the same premises ID number.

Premises ID Information

Upon registration, all of the following information will be requested from the registrant:

- Registrant's name (individual or business);
- Business name (where appropriate);
- Registrant's contact information;
- Name and contact information for the individual who will be the primary contact for the premises during business hours and after business hours for emergency and other purposes (may or may not be the same as the registrant information);
- The relationship of the applicant to the ownership of the premises on the register of titles under the Land Titles Act (e.g., tenant, lease holder, family member);
- The location of the premises either by legal land description, georeferenced coordinates or street address;
- The type of operation or operations on the premises;
- The species of animals that will be present on the premises; and
- For each species of animal, the maximum capacity estimated for the operation on the premises.

For most agricultural operations, the number of animals on site at any given time will fluctuate. For this reason, only the maximum capacity or maximum possible number of animals on site is collected by the program as a starting point for emergency planning and response.

Premises ID Information Management

Registrants will be required to update their premises ID account information within 30 days if any of the above information changes to maximize its value for emergency response. Examples of when registrants should update their account information include (but are not limited to):

- The registrant no longer owns animals;
- New species of animals are present on the premises or species on the premises have changed;
- The type of operation associated with the premises changes;
- The maximum capacity of the site changes (e.g., a significant and permanent increase in herd size); or
- Contact information or business information changes.

Registrants will also receive a notification from the premises ID program every 2 years asking them to review and verify their account information to ensure the information is up to date.

Premises ID account holders can access their online account at any time, using their username and password. If a registrant has used the paper registration form, they can either contact program staff to assist in updating their account, or they can create a username and password to access their account information online at any time.

Confidentiality

The new premises ID regulation will be enacted under the B.C. *Animal Health Act*. The collection, use and disclosure of premises ID information will continue to be strictly managed per provisions in the B.C. *Animal Health Act*. Consistent with current policy, premises ID information can only be shared with agencies responsible for emergency management when necessary to protect animal and public health. Premises ID information will continue to be stored on servers located in Canada, behind government firewalls, in a strictly password-controlled database.

Premises ID information will not be shared with agencies responsible for taxation or for purposes unrelated to animal or public health.

Access to Evacuation Areas during Emergencies

Decisions about access to evacuation zones are made by emergency management personnel on a case by case basis, with a focus on ensuring public safety. Neither the premises ID program, nor MAFF has control over these decisions in any given emergency scenario.

However, premises ID information has been used during past natural disaster emergencies to inform and facilitate re-entry permitting decisions with considerable success in wildfire-affected areas. Ministry staff will continue to work with local governments to communicate the value of this approach and to incorporate guidelines for the use of premises ID information, where practical and appropriate, in emergency response scenarios affecting livestock and poultry.

Enforcement

Following the introduction of a new premises ID regulation, program staff will focus on education and outreach combined with cross-compliance measures to encourage premises ID registration in lieu of enforcement actions. Education and outreach will focus on dispelling misinformation and communicating the value of premises ID in protecting the lives of animals and livelihoods during emergency events.

Animal owners will be increasingly required to provide their premises ID number in order to access funding and (or) government services, or to obtain or renew certain licenses issued by MAFF or other provincial government agencies. For example, premises ID registration will be required to access all funding under the Canadian Agriculture Partnership (e.g., Environmental Farm Plan funding, traceability funding) or to obtain or renew a small-scale slaughter licence (e.g., a Class D or E slaughter licence under the B.C. *Meat Inspection Regulation*).

Diseases Transmitted between Domesticated and Wild Animal Populations

Some animal diseases can be transmitted between domestic and wild animal populations (e.g., chronic wasting disease in deer, rabbit haemorrhagic fever in rabbits). The use of premises ID information will be restricted to managing an outbreak or threat to a domesticated animal population.

Regulated Industries

Regulated dairy, poultry and pork operations are subject to considerable oversight by industry boards. Regulated industry operations are typically registered with the premises ID program via their respective board rather than directly with the program. The premises ID program has varying levels of access to regulated industry business and contact information.

If a memorandum of understanding is in place between the ministry (the premises ID program) and a regulated industry board that enables rapid access to members' premises ID information during an emergency, individual operations regulated by that industry board would not need to maintain separate accounts with the premises ID program.

Beekeeping (Apiculture) Operations

Beekeeping operations are unique in that hives are regularly moved between multiple premises for commercial pollination purposes. As well, apiculture operations in B.C. are subject to unique registration and reporting requirements under the B.C. *Bee Regulation*.

Beekeepers are now required to register their apiaries through the premises ID program.