

Discussion Paper: Proposed BC Premises Identification Regulation

Purpose

The Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) is considering the introduction of a new premises identification (ID) regulation under the *B.C. Animal Health Act*. The potential regulation would require all sites where farm animals are raised, kept, assembled or disposed of to be registered at no cost with AGRI's [Premises ID Program](#). The new requirement would directly benefit operators across British Columbia (B.C.) by closing persistent gaps in the premises ID system and improving the ability of industry and the Province to collaboratively respond to animal health and environmental emergencies.

Over the summer and early fall 2019, AGRI will be conducting outreach and consultation with industry to gather input on a range of issues related to the potential new regulation including:

- the role and value of premises identification for emergency response and traceability in BC;
- what animal species and operation types to include in the regulation;
- premises ID information management and administration; and
- how to engage industry in implementation.

BC residents can provide input via phone, mail, email or via our [online survey](#).

Background

Having a premises ID is a simple but important step that all responsible farm animal owners and site operators can take to protect the health and safety of their own animals and other animals in B.C. From small-scale farmers with one animal to larger commercial livestock operators, everyone has an important role to play in protecting animal health.

A “premises” is a parcel of land or otherwise geographically defined land location where animals are raised, kept, assembled, or disposed of. Premises ID connects farm animals to defined geographic locations and is an important part of a full traceability system that also includes animal identification and animal movement reporting. Premises may be a small-scale farm, apiary, stable, feedlot, veterinary clinic, livestock market, abattoir, fairground, or other type of operation where farm animals are present.

Since 2011, the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture has offered voluntary premises ID registration, yet despite the introduction of an online registration system in 2016 ([BCPID Online](#)) and growing recognition of the value of premises ID among producers and industry groups, only an estimated 57% of premises have been registered to date. These persistent gaps in premises ID registration continue to hinder government and industry's ability to respond quickly and continue to operate during emergencies, and put Canada's animal traceability system at risk.

About the Premises ID Program

Premises ID is a way of connecting farm animals to specific geographic locations. Premises are areas of land defined by a legal land description or by georeferenced coordinates (i.e., latitude / longitude). Having specific and accurate information about where livestock are geographically located enhances the

Province's ability to work with industry to plan for and respond to animal health issues and emergencies, and to protect animals and agriculture infrastructure during environmental emergencies like floods, wildfires and oil spills.

Premises ID information is used to:

- ◆ NOTIFY farmers and operators of disease threats or control measures;
- ◆ ASSIST with animal tracking to quickly and effectively manage an animal disease outbreak;
- ◆ FACILITATE rapid evacuation of animals in a natural disaster emergency like a flood or fire;
- ◆ STRENGTHEN disease control measures for animal health issues affecting multiple species; and
- ◆ REDUCE the impact of market restrictions by enabling quicker resolution of emergencies.

Premises ID information is stored in a secure database with strictly limited access. Information in the database includes the specific geographical location of animals, what species and how many animals are present at a given premises, and contact information for the premises. The BC *Animal Health Act* already includes strong protections regarding the collection, use and disclosure of premises ID information. The potential new regulation would continue that protection while ensuring that information is readily accessible for the planning and response to animal health or environmental emergency events.

Anticipated Benefits of a New Premises ID Regulation

Foreign animal disease, animal health and environmental emergencies are unpredictable and can be devastating for producers. While they can't always be prevented, the negative impacts of such emergencies on animals and agriculture infrastructure can be greatly reduced with an efficient response. Premises ID information is a powerful tool used to ensure that the most effective and efficient response is possible, and all animal owners – regardless of size – play an important role in ensuring that the best information is available.

Premises ID information has played a critical role in several recent emergency response efforts in B.C. During the 2017 and 2018 wildfires, premises ID information was used to locate farm animals, notify and communicate with operators, estimate animal numbers for evacuation planning, and facilitate the re-entry process for operators in affected areas; efforts that significantly reduced animal deaths. Interestingly, premises ID registration rates in affected areas of the province jumped following these disasters, reflecting a growing awareness and recognition among producers of the value of premises ID. Premises ID also played a key role in facilitating the bovine tuberculosis response efforts in early 2019.

The history of Avian Influenza (AI) events in B.C. also highlights how a simple premises ID number can make an enormous difference to the success of animal health response. During the 2004 outbreak, although poultry boards maintained producer databases with civic address and contact information, responders discovered that the addresses were often at a different location than where the chickens were being raised. Efficiency was lost, the disease spread quickly, and the impact on farmers was widespread. In response, B.C.'s poultry industries have embraced premises ID, and all quota holding producers in B.C. are now registered with the Premises ID Program. Subsequently in 2014 and 2015, premises ID played a central role in the success of responses to AI outbreak, helping to drastically limit

the spread of the disease and minimize economic and operational impacts to poultry operators. Regulated poultry industries continue to collaborate with the Province to plan for and manage emergency events affecting poultry. As small backyard flocks are also at risk of contracting and spreading AI, all owners of poultry are strongly encouraged to register with the premises ID program.

The new regulation will further strengthen AGRI's ability to effectively collaborate with other provincial agencies and local authorities involved in environmental emergency response efforts. The new regulation would also better position B.C.'s farmers and operators to comply with anticipated new federal traceability regulations that will require premises ID reporting when certain species of animals are moved, including: cattle, sheep, swine, goats, sheep and farmed deer (cervid).

Proposed Scope of New Premises ID Regulation

The proposed scope of a new premises ID regulation includes a requirement for all owners of "animals" in captivity, or operators of sites where animals may be present, to obtain a premises ID account within 30 days of assuming care and/or ownership of the animal(s), and to register all premises where their animals are raised, kept or assembled.

"Animals" would be defined in the regulation by a list of species. "Animals" being considered for inclusion in the regulation include:

- ◆ Alpacas
- ◆ Asses
- ◆ Beef cattle
- ◆ Bees
- ◆ Bison
- ◆ Cervids (farmed deer, reindeer or caribou)
- ◆ Dairy Cattle
- ◆ Donkeys
- ◆ Doves
- ◆ Ducks
- ◆ Fowl (quail, peafowl, pheasants, guinea fowl and pigeons)
- ◆ Fur-bearing animals (chinchilla, mink, fox)
- ◆ Geese
- ◆ Goats
- ◆ Guinea Fowl
- ◆ Horses
- ◆ Llamas
- ◆ Mules
- ◆ Peafowl
- ◆ Pheasants
- ◆ Pigeons
- ◆ Poultry (broilers, pullets, layers, turkeys)
- ◆ Quail
- ◆ Rabbits
- ◆ Ratites
- ◆ Sheep
- ◆ Swine (pigs, hogs)
- ◆ Vicuna
- ◆ Water Buffalo
- ◆ Wild boars
- ◆ Yaks

Requirements would apply to all owners of listed animals, regardless of the number of animals on a given premises, and irrespective of the reason the animals are kept. For example, requirements would apply to the owner of a horse kept as a pet, the owner of a small flock of backyard chickens, a commercial beef cattle operation, or a facility raising mink for fur.

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"), would also need to register

and obtain a premises ID number for the commingling site. Commingling sites being considered for inclusion in the regulation include:

- ◆ Abattoirs
- ◆ Assembly yards
- ◆ Auctions/livestock sale facilities
- ◆ Community pastures
- ◆ Crown range tenures
- ◆ Exhibition/fair grounds
- ◆ Farms
- ◆ Feedlots
- ◆ Hatcheries
- ◆ Hobby Farms
- ◆ Insemination centres
- ◆ Private pastures
- ◆ Race tracks/competition facilities
- ◆ Rendering plants
- ◆ Research facilities
- ◆ Stables
- ◆ Veterinary hospitals/labs
- ◆ Zoos/petting zoos

The potential regulation would also require registrants to ensure that their premises ID account information is kept up to date, and to report any changes (e.g., new species, new contact information) within 30 days. Account holders may also be asked to re-verify their account information on a regular basis (e.g., every 1-2 years).

If AGRI decides to proceed with introducing a new regulation, consideration would be given to requiring a premises ID number to apply for or renew certain types of operating licenses, to apply for or receive funding through provincial programs, or to register for agriculture or livestock insurance programs administered by the Province.

We Want Your Input!

Throughout the late summer and early fall 2019, comments on the potential premises ID regulation are welcomed and may be provided through any of the following channels:

1. Online Survey

BC residents are invited to complete the online survey which can be accessed through the following [link](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZJCFRKS): <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZJCFRKS>

2. Email

If you are unable to complete the survey, you can provide feedback to the BC Premises ID Program's email: BCPID@gov.bc.ca

3. Phone or Mail

You can reach Premises ID Program staff by phone at 1-888-221-7141, fax at 250-334-1410 (To: Premises ID Program), or send in your comments by mail by October 11, 2019 to the following address:

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