



April 2009 Registration Statistics	
Registered Premises	61,323
Renewed Premises	45,556
Animals with RFID	384,853

SPECIES	COUNT
Cattle	36,715
Deer & Elk	863
Equine	20,524
Fish	3,050
Goats	5,424
Llamas & Alpacas	1,597
Poultry	15,610
Sheep	4,355
Swine	7,219



## Buying the Correct RFID Reader

### Second in a Series of Incorporating RFID into your business

Last quarter's newsletter focused on **Integrating RFID Requires A Plan**, and continuing with our series of incorporating Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) into your farm business, this article will highlight the various aspects to consider when purchasing an RFID reader.

Whether you are contemplating purchasing a stand alone RFID stick or a wand reader the price will vary from \$500 to \$1300 depending on the level of features you decide to buy.

Below are some items to consider.

#### 1. Visual Display

RFID readers today can be purchased with or without an LED screen. The LED screen will display the RFID number for each animal ID tag. Therefore, one decision to make is whether an LED screen will work for your operation. Generally, an LED screen with display will increase the cost of your RFID equipment.

#### 2. Tag Storage Capability

Readers are available which simply read an animal ID tag number and transmit the number wirelessly via cable (i.e. Bluetooth®) or via cable to your PC. Due to the type of reader, it may have capabilities whereby animal ID tag numbers are stored directly to the reader and can be downloaded to your PC at a later date. If one opts for a reader with storage capabilities, your

herd size and the reader's storage capacity must be considered in your purchase.

#### 3. Size and Shape

The size and shape of RFID readers vary widely. Generally, a wand reader is short and shaped like a cricket bat, while others, such as the stick reader, are longer and rounder. A stick reader reads the animal ID tag number optimally from the tip of the reader (it will also read from the side of the reader). The wand reader detects the animal ID tag number optimally from the side of the wand. Therefore, a preference for the correct reader will be determined based on your position relative to where you will be reading the animals ID tag numbers. Also, companies have different models and offer short or long versions of stick and wand readers to make reaching the animal ID tag easier.

#### 4. Communications

Readers provide wired and/or wireless communication to a PC or handheld PC using a cable or Bluetooth® connection. What should you buy?

Readers with a cable connection require you to connect to another device, for example a scale head, in order to transmit the RFID number. Some readers provide both wireless and wired communications, while some readers only provide wireless Bluetooth® communications. Therefore, considering your communication needs between your RFID reader and other devices first before buying a reader.





## Buying the Correct RFID Reader (continued from page 1)

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#### 5. **Battery**

Depending on the size of your operation and the number of reads made in one day, the size of your battery will be fundamental for successful implementation of RFID in your business. It would be detrimental to be faced with no battery power half way through a vet check! Some readers have the batteries built in which can be recharged and there are readers available which allow for replacing the battery while working the herd (assuming you are carrying a spare). If the battery is not replaceable, consider the number of reads on a full battery charge and the time it will take to re-charge.

indicator (i.e. blinking light), some have a sound notification, and others have vibrating handles. Many readers have a combination of indicators. However, in a noisy barn, a vibrating handle may prove to be a valuable asset!

These are the main items to research before purchasing your equipment. The majority of readers require a PC or handheld PC integrated for data entry, storage, and to data retrieval. However, there are readers available which can store data on a specific animal and then be used as a sorting tool which will display information on that animal as you work on reading your animal ID tags.

#### 6. **RFID Read Notification**

Depending on your operation, the method by which the user is notified that an animal ID tag has been read is very important. Some RFID readers have a visual

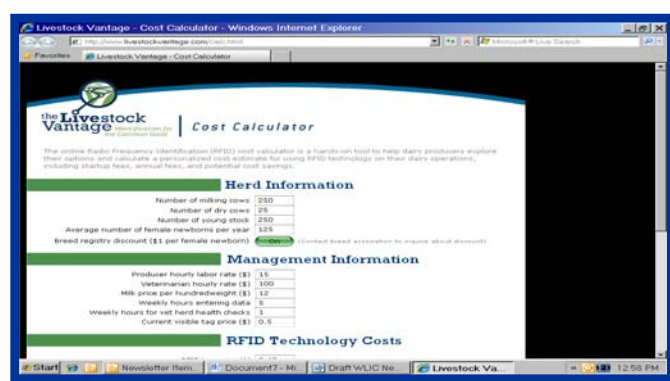
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### New: Online RFID Cost Benefit Calculator

Dairy producers interested in using RFID for automating paper based data collection can now determine the approximate cost and return using a simple cost benefit calculator from the Livestock Vantage Website.

Enter the information specific to your dairy operation and determine the investment



needed to implement RFID into your business. Explore your starting costs, on-going costs, and receive an estimate of the potential savings from using RFID technology.

The online calculator was based on feedback received from the Dairy Case Studies WLIC conducted in 2008.



### County Fair Update



WLIC continues with the county fair projects. For the summer of 2009, twenty-one county fairs, including the Wisconsin State fair, are using the electronic data collection system. Most fairs are including the three species (steers, swine and sheep) for the meat animal sale.

To date, the beef cattle have been tagged and the first swine weigh ins have taken place. Eleven thousand tags have been distributed to participating fairs.

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