

What tags am I required to use for tagging my bison this fall?

The only tags available for bison producers are white RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) tags with the specific numbers allocated for bison (300,000,000 to 304,999,999. If you still have the approved dangle tags, that are part of this number series, you may still use those tags.

How much do tags cost?

The Canadian Bison Association charges \$4.69 per tag to members with a fifty-cent per tag administrative fee being charged to non-members. In addition, RFID tags can be purchased with companion white dangle tags (MAXI) that have the same numbers. The cost of these tag sets are \$6.69 for members and \$7.19 for non-members.

Do I have to retag all my bison with RFID tags?

No, the dangle tags are still legal tags. At this time there is no set date when RFID tags will be mandatory for all previously tagged bison.

What is the proper tagging applicator for RFID tags?

You have two choices for applicators. You can use the Universal Total Tagger Applicator (\$39.99) which has the red handle pliers. When using this applicator you must remove the white or black clip for the RFID tag to fit properly in the jaws. In addition, the red blunt pin must be installed.

Why can't I purchase RFID tags locally?

In the cattle industry where there are millions of tags sold annually, it is economical for tag vendors to carry an inventory of identification tags. In the bison industry with only about 50,000 tags sold annually, it is difficult to make bison specific tags available through distributors. There is only one place to get the white RFID tags and that is through the CBA office. When tags are ordered they are immediately shipped from Kane Vet Supplies in Edmonton.

How can I read the numbers on these "button" RFID tags?

The RFID tags are not meant for physical reading the numbers but they do have numbers that can be read if necessary. The tag is simply the first of four elements needed for a complete electronic data collection system. The data collection system consists of the tag, reader, software and a computer.

Do I need to buy a reader, computer and the appropriate software now?

You do not have to buy all the above. Using the complete data collection system is an easy and accurate way of recording herd information, however, there is the cost of purchasing the reader and software. Using the complete data collection system is ideal for slaughter facilities, auction marts, feedlots and those bison producers who have mechanized their bison handling processes.

Last year I used the CCIA dangle tags to keep track of the herd by writing numbers on the tags. With the RFID “button” tags, is there an option for herd management other than buying the complete data collection system?

The CBA also sells sets of tags, which include the RFID tag with a white matching dangle tag, which has the same number on it. Other herd management tags can also be used.

Why are we moving towards RFID technology?

RFID tags allow for optimal tag retention. It also eliminates the need for “line of site” reading necessary with a bar code system and the RFID technology can penetrate through body tissue, wood, plastic, mud and manure. RFID technology also provides accurate and efficient trace back information and provides the necessary basis for full animal movement tracking. It also contributes to an accurate and comprehensive age verification system required by certain trading partners.

If I take an animal to a slaughterhouse, do I have to notify anyone that the tag has been retired?

No, the slaughterhouse must notify the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency that the tag has been retired. You are required to report the retirement of a tag from an animal that should happen to die on your farm.

Do I need to tag bison that are being shipped or can I send the tags with the trucker?

You must tag the bison. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has announced a regulatory amendment that requires bison be tagged prior to leaving their farm of origin, including those going to community pasture, exhibition site, test station or veterinary clinic (unless going to an approved tagging site). A recent CFIA bulletin announced that, “Producers will now be required to ensure all animals are tagged before they are moved to community pastures, fairs, or veterinary clinics. The national animal identification program is a critical component of the suite of measures that Canada has in place to protect human and animal health. This program assists the CFIA in monitoring the national herd and investigating diseases, such as the trace-out investigations of the North American cases of bovine (BSE) diagnosed since 2003.”

If you have any other questions about tags or the current requirements or want to place an order for tags, call the CBA office at 306-522-4766