Michigan Exhibition Swine Official Identification County Fair - Frequently Asked Questions

Is official identification required for swine at county fairs?
Yes, all swine being shown at exhibitions, including county fairs, are required to have official identification.

What is official identification?
Official identification is imprinted with a nationally unique official animal identification number and bears the official US shield. Official identification guidelines are established by the USDA. NUES tags and 840 tags are both official identification for exhibition swine.

What is an 840 tag?
840 tags have a unique 15-digit number beginning with 840 and bear the U.S. shield. 840 tags may be obtained from USDA approved manufacturers' distributors by individuals (see http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/exhibition_swine for list). These tags typically cost between $1.25 and $1.50/per tag. A Standardized National Premises Identification Number (PIN) is required to purchase '840' tags. (Typically required to order in bulk, 25 or more per order.)

840 Tags

Who is responsible for verifying that official identification is in place?
Because it is a legal requirement that all exhibition swine have official identification it is the responsibility of the exhibition to verify that all swine have official identification in place.

How can a county fair meet the official identification requirement?
All county fairs are allowed to set specific guidelines to meet the swine official identification requirements, this includes either requiring NUES tags or 840 tags for all of the swine at the fair. Fair and swine department leadership can decide how best to meet this requirement for their event.

What are some examples of how a fair can require 840 tags for all exhibitors?
County fairs can require all swine to have 840 tags in place prior to the start exhibition, this will meet the official identification guidelines and does not have an reporting requirement for the fair.
Fairs can then also require a separate fair tag for each of the animals.

Plastic tags are preferred for swine due to the need to minimize animal stress and handling.

What is a NUES Tag?
Both metal and plastic National Uniform Eartagging System (NUES) tags are approved as official identification for exhibition swine. Fairs may order metal or plastic NUES tags for use in exhibition swine from Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDARD). Only fairs may order official plastic NUES tags for use in exhibition swine, which are provided at no cost from MDARD. The metal tags are available at no cost and can be ordered by individuals, veterinarians or fairs. When using NUES tags, fairs will be required to provide MDARD with specific information.

NUES Tags

What are some examples of how a fair can distribute NUES tags to exhibitors?

NUES tags can be used to meet both official identification and individual fair tags requirements:

- The fair can distribute tags to exhibitors using either a pick up system or a check-in/tagging day, that aligns with the fairs ownership requirements.
- Fairs could also elect to apply the plastic NUES tags at entry/weigh-in at the start of the county fair.
- Fairs can also require two forms of identification, a fair tag and a form of official identification.

If a fair is using NUES tags as their fair tags and a pig already has an 840 tag, the fair may apply a second form of official identification, resulting in the pig having two tags.
However, IT IS ILLEGAL TO REMOVE OFFICIAL IDENTIFICATION.
Both numbers are required to be recorded when reporting the official identification number of the pig.

What is required by MDARD when county fairs use the plastic NUES tags?

When a county fair is issued a group of plastic NUES tags they must meet certain reporting requirements. An electronic spreadsheet will be issued at the same time as the tags, explaining what information the fair should collect from the exhibitors. This information will then be compiled and sent back to MDARD.

When should the information be returned to MDARD?

The electronic spreadsheet is required to be returned to MDARD within 14 days of the tags being applied.

Can the fair keep unused tags for the following year?

If a tag or group of tags is not applied to an animal it must be noted on the spreadsheet by writing "Not Applied." The fair may keep unused tags for the following year, however they will need to change the indication on the spreadsheet once the tag is applied or distributed. All tags must be accounted for when spreadsheets are returned.

Where can I find more information on official identification for Swine?

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/exhibition_swine

Can the fair give out plastic NUES tags to exhibitors for other shows?

This is not a preferred method of distribution for the the plastic NUES tags. However, if a fair does give out a plastic NUES tag they are then required to report the information to MDARD.

How can fairs use animal check-ins to apply official identification?

County Fairs may opt to use an animal check-in to distribute/apply official identification tags. When utilizing this option fairs are encouraged to have strict biosecurity measures in place to help prevent the spread of disease. Commingling of animals in a certain location or area (scales) is strongly discouraged. Instead it is suggested that specific person(s) enter the trailer used to bring animals to a central location, wearing disposable gloves and boots. These items should be changed between each trailer, along with disinfecting of any equipment used. More information can be found with suggestions for animal weigh-ins/check-ins by visiting http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/exhibition_swine.

What happens if an exhibitor's pig loses it's official identification?

If an official identification tag is lost it can be replaced with another official identification tag. Records will need to be maintained to show what the lost tag number was and what number it was replaced with.