

KANSAS FARM BUREAU'S AG LEARNING ZONE

YOUTH ACTIVITY: EAR TAG KEY CHAINS

OBJECTIVE: YOUTH WILL UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF TAGGING LIVESTOCK.

Vocabulary Words

- Livestock – animals such as cows, horses or pigs that are kept or raised on a farm.
- Radio Frequency Identification Device (RFID) technology – a type of tracking system that uses radio waves to send data from the tag to the reader and then to a computer program.

Lesson

Ask youth if they can know, or can guess, what ear tags are used for.

- Ear tags are used for identification of **livestock** such as beef cattle and other animals. They can be made of steel, aluminum, nylon or plastic and are easy to attach.
- Ear tags are necessary to help farmers and ranchers keep records on individual cows. These records can be used to make decisions on breeding, culling (selling or removing animals from the herd), feeding or medical treatments. Numbers on this tag are like the cow's first name.
- The mark on the side of the cow is called a brand. This brand tells us who the animal belongs to. A brand is like a last name.

Fun Facts About Ear Tags

- Plastic and nylon tags tend to remain in the ear longer than metals ones.
- Electronic tags use **RFID technology**.
- Today, ear tags are used throughout the world on many species of animal to ensure traceability, to help prevent theft and to control disease outbreaks.

Assessments

- True or False? Most livestock are tagged in their nose. False, most are tagged in their ear.
- True or False? Ear tags are like the animal's first name.
- True or False? Electronic ear tags might contain information such as which shade tree the animal prefers to spend time under. False, that information might include who owns the animal, how many babies the animal has had and how much those babies weighed.

Hands-on Activity

- Advise youth they are going to make ear tag key chains for themselves. Since the tag is like their first name, it would be appropriate – but not required – to use a letter representing their own first name.
- Assist youth as they personalize their key chains with adhesive letters or markers.

Suggested Resources

- Mini-ear tags with key chains
- Picture of livestock (cattle, sheep, etc.) with ear tags
- Adhesive vinyl letters and/or markers



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