

Learning New Skills

EAR TAGGING YOUR GOAT~





- ▶ USDA Ear tags (known as “Scrapie Tags”) meet official Identification requirements in the State of Michigan – and are an easy way to permanently identify every goat in your herd. Unlike tattoos, you can read the tags without actually having to catch the goat.
- ▶ Before you put in an ear tag, be sure to record what ear tag number you are assigning to the goat. Do not remove or reassign the tag to another animal! The ID number should be recorded on your Goat Health Forms (or other farm records) for easy record keeping.





- ▶ Q: When should a goat be tagged...?
- ▶ **A: Tag the goat while it is still young! Many owners choose to tag a healthy kid, 3-4 weeks of age. They are still on their dams, easier to manage and hold, and can be monitored well to ensure healing.**
- ▶ Note that you can tag a 3 day old kid, or an 8 month old goat. Breeder/owner preference usually dictates the timing of the tagging.



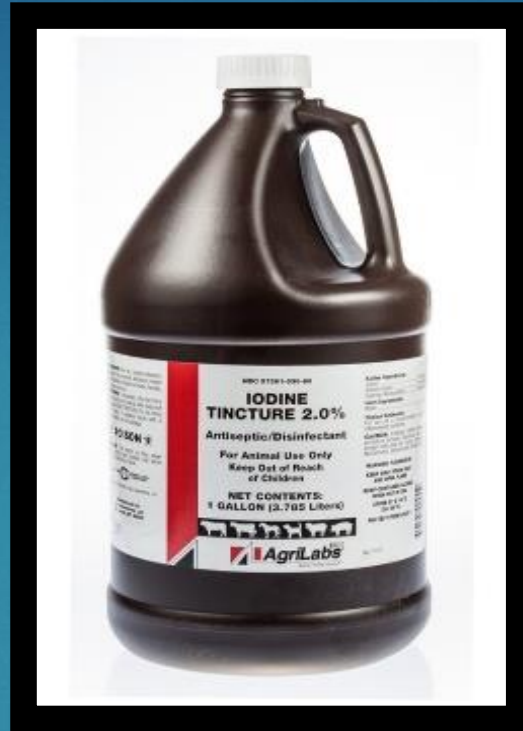


- ▶ Q: What if the goat that I bought *doesn't have a Scrapie tag*?
- ▶ **A: The seller is required by law to tag the animal.**
- ▶ If the seller did not tag the goat, and will not supply a tag for you, you will need to get your own scrapie tags with a unique herd number assigned to your premises from the State of Michigan. Record the seller's information (name, address, date of sale) on your records regardless!
- ▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Do not buy from a seller that will not tag your animal with official State of Michigan identification.**



Let's get started!





- ▶ Find a helper – especially if you’re tagging a larger or older animal.
- ▶ Lay out your tags, applicator and any record forms needed.
- ▶ You can sterilize the tags prior to tagging. Tags can be dipped in iodine or another disinfectant, or a topical disinfectant gel can be spread on the tag “pins”.
- ▶ **TIP: If disinfecting first, make sure you’re wearing gloves to keep the tags clean!**





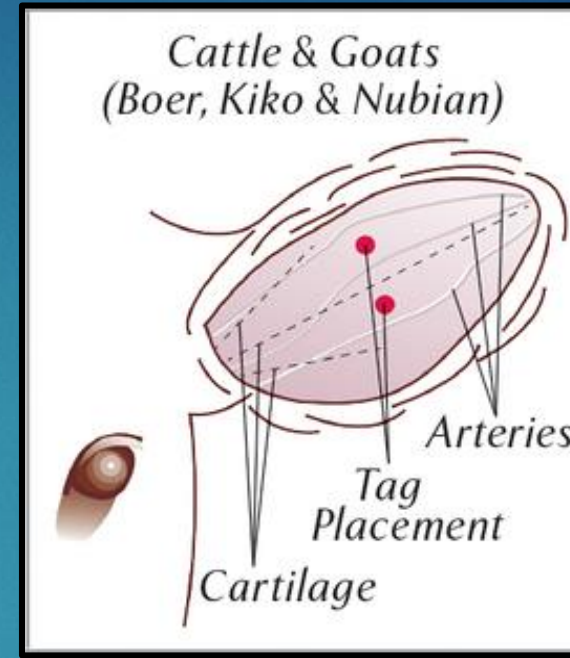
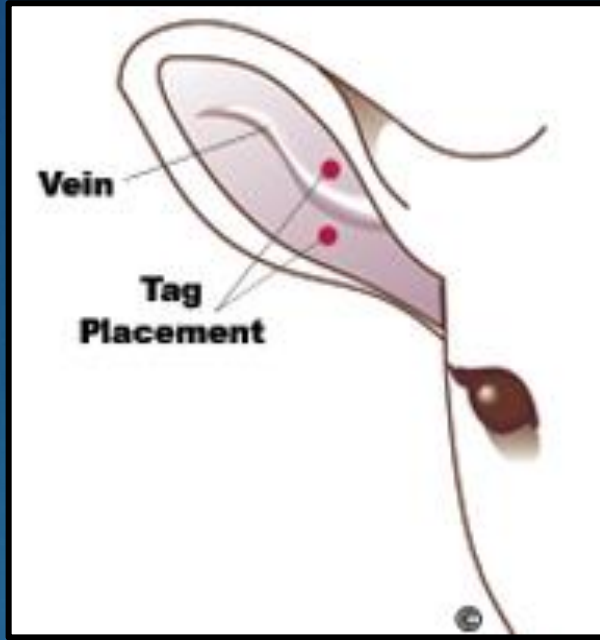
- ▶ Restrain your goat kid in a disbudding crate or by wrapping in a towel. If you have neither available, and the goat is small enough, you can hold it by bracing its head carefully and holding its body closely against you. Older/larger goats will need to be straddled and their head pressed against your attendant's thigh, or put in a milking station if necessary.





- ▶ Next, load the proper tags into the ear tag applicator.





- ▶ Locate the area you want to tag. Be sure to go between the arteries and large vein in your goat's ears. One large vein runs through the center of the ear. Try to place the tag *near the center of the ear* - without hitting the main vein - where it will be less likely to catch on things and get yanked out. Some breeds will have more space to work with than others.
- ▶ If tags are well placed within the ear, *less than 1% will be lost per year*.





- ▶ Position the applicator over the area you have selected, and give it a strong squeeze. If the ear tag has two parts be sure the top and bottom parts are on the correct sides of the ear *before* you squeeze.
- ▶ Ear tagging causes about as much pain as getting your own ears pierced. Goat kids will want the comfort of their dam or a bottle of milk after the ear tagging is finished.





- ▶ When you are all done, you will have an easy-to-read identification number on your goat that can be used for herd records, rabies and health certificates!
- ▶ Keep a supply of extra tags on hand - tags can pull out and a quick replacement is very easy to do when you keep your supplies well stocked.

