 University of British Columbia Centre for Dairy Education and Research	Document Number	SOP-CALF-004
	Revision Number	000
	Effective Date	June 24, 2020
EAR TAGGING		

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) instructs students and farm staff on the humane and correct methods of ear tagging calves at the UBC Dairy Education & Research Centre.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This SOP will describe the method used for ear tagging calves born at the UBC Dairy. This document will provide step by step information on how to properly ear tag a calf.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

3.1. The Operations Manager is responsible for reviewing and updating this procedure as required.

3.2. The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff are trained in this procedure.

3.3. Personnel who perform calf ear tagging are responsible for reading, understanding, and following the procedures outlined in this SOP.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. *RFID button*- Refers to the radio frequency identification tag that comes in a circular shape (RFID buttons), or attached to “house shaped” tags.


4.2.

4.2.1. RFID buttons allow for animals to be quickly and accurately identified with minimal handling with animal welfare in mind.

4.2.2. Automatic and computerized systems throughout the UBC Dairy utilize RFID tags.

5. TRAINING

5.1. Training will include animal and equipment handling

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6. SAFETY PRECAUTIONS


- 6.1. Personnel ear tagging calves will follow routine health and safety procedures to protect against contamination or transfer of zoonotic disease.
 - 6.1.1. Disposable latex gloves are recommended for wear when working with calves.
- 6.2. All personnel entering the calf barn will need to rinse boots off with hot water. Coveralls and dedicated facility footwear are to be worn when working with calves.
- 6.3. Care will be taken when handling sharps; needles and syringes will be disposed in appropriate sharps containers.

7. GENERAL

- 7.1. There are two types of ear tags received by the calves: those equipped with an RFID button, and those without. Heifers will receive both types of ear tags, 4 days apart. Bull calves only receive an RFID button (but no ear tag).
- 7.2. All calves will receive either an RFID button (bulls) or one ear tag without RFID button (heifers) shortly after birth and colostrum feeding. This is required by Holstein Canada bylaw 11.4.3. which states that animals that are to be registered in the herd book must be properly identified at birth with two ear tags.
 - 7.2.1. Heifer calves will receive an additional RFID buttoned ear tag during disbudding at 4 days of age (see SOP-CALF-002 Calf Disbudding). In total, heifers receive two large white tags (XL panel) matching their ID number. One tag will have an RFID button and the other will not.
 - 7.2.2. Bull calves only receive the RFID button.
 - 7.2.3. Heifer calves born to a twin bull are not kept, and therefore do not receive heifer ear tags. They only receive bull RFID buttons.

8. MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

- 8.1. Ear tag applicator
- 8.2. RFID ear tags and buttons

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9. PROCEDURE

9.1. Animal preparation

9.1.1. Identify the calf's ID number

9.1.2. Heifer numbers are determined by sequential order of birth (i.e. if 9110 was the last heifer born and tagged, 9111 would be the next heifer numbered). The first digits identify the year of birth, while the other three digits identify the calf # - ex. the eleventh calf in 2019 would be 9011.

9.1.3. Bull calf numbers are also determined by sequential order of birth.

9.1.4. Tag applicator and ear tags can be located in the calf barn vet room.

10. FOR BULLS: EAR TAG (NEWBORN)

10.1. Unless noted, bulls only receive one yellow RFID button while on the farm. See **Figures 1 & 3**.

10.2. The tag is applied shortly after colostrum feeding.

10.3. Using the tag applicator, tag calf in the proper location (middle of the right ear, see **Figure 1 & 3**).




Fig 1. Bull calf with yellow RFID button in right ear.

11. FOR HEIFERS: FIRST EAR TAG (NEWBORN)

11.1. Newborn heifer calves are tagged in the right ear with the white ear tag without the RFID button. (**Figures 2 & 5**).

11.2. The first tag is applied using the tag applicator shortly after colostrum feeding.

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12. FOR HEIFERS: SECOND EAR TAG (4 DAYS OLD)

- 12.1. Heifers will receive their second ear tag at the time of disbudding. It is a large white tag with an RFID “button”. See **Figures 2 & 4**
- 12.2. Following the procedures of disbudding, under sedation and pain management, heifers will have the RFID tag applied to their left ear with the ear tag applicator. See **Figure 5** for locating area in ear to tag.



Fig. 2. Heifer calf with both ear tags showing ID number. The left ear tag has the RFID button.

13. FIGURES AND DIAGRAMS

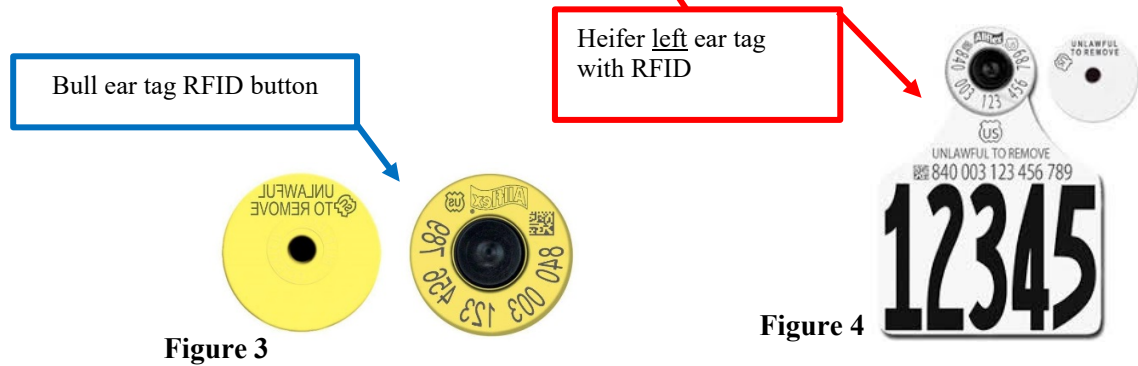
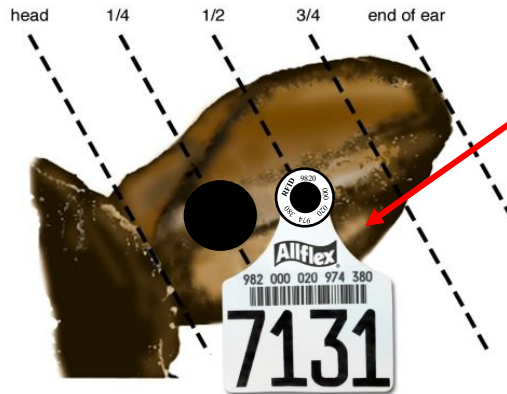


Figure 3

Figure 4

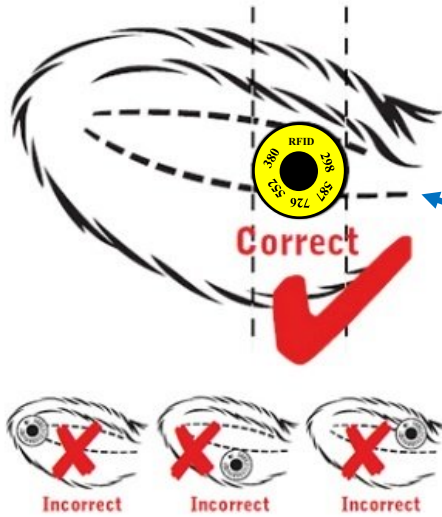


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Heifer left ear tag
with RFID

Figure 5



Bull ear tag RFID button
Example of location in ear;
normally in right ear. Picture is of
the front of the ear.


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14. REFERENCES

- 14.1. Bylaws of the Holstein Association of Canada. 2018. Holstein Association of Canada.
- 14.2. CCAC Guide to the Care and Use of Experimental Animals. Volume 1, Second Edition
- 14.3. CCAC guidelines on: the care and use of farm animals in research, teaching, and testing, 2009.
- 14.4. Cattle Max. Website. Electronic ID Reader/RFID Reader Integration. Accessed Oct. 8, 2019.
- 14.5. Code of Practice for the Care and Handling of Dairy Cattle. 2009. National Farm Animal Council.

15. FORMS

- 15.1. Referenced SOP's
 - 15.1.1. SOP-Calf-002 Disbudding

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16. APPROVAL AND REVISION HISTORY

17. AUTHOR/APPROVER	Date	Signature
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