



discussing  
*traceability*

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Growing Forward 2   
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

 **ABVMA**  
Alberta Veterinary Medical Association

*Alberta*  
Government

**Canada** 

## what is traceability?

Alberta's traceability program is a system of tracking the movement of individual or groups of livestock and poultry to allow for a swift and accurate response to any health or safety threats that may arise from fires, floods as well as infected/diseased livestock in the chain of food production. Traceability in Alberta relies on the three fundamental pillars of premises identification, animal identification and animal movement.

Alberta's livestock and poultry industries, in collaboration with the Government of Alberta, have established themselves as leaders in adopting traceability. Traceability is a crucial component of an effective animal health and food safety system that enables precise and rapid emergency response to protect livestock, producers and consumers.

### PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

Premises refers to a land location where animals are bred, kept, raised, displayed, assembled or disposed of. A PID (premises identification) Account is a summary of the information related to an animal owner or commingling site operator, including contact information and the location of the animals. A PID Account relates to the applicant and can contain several PID numbers for different locations where animals are located. A PID Number is a nine character unique identifier (consisting of a combination of numbers and letters) that is associated with a specific land location. Alberta PID numbers start with the letter 'A'. PID links livestock and poultry to land locations or premises for emergency response.

### ANIMAL IDENTIFICATION

Animal identification is the ability to identify individual or groups of animals, depending on the species. Animal identification works with the other pillars of traceability, premises identification and animal movement, to track where animals have been transported and when. Animal identification helps industry and government locate animals to confine a disease outbreak more quickly and accurately.

### ANIMAL MOVEMENT

Animal Movement is the act of tracing livestock and poultry backwards or forwards through the production supply chain based on animal movement records. This is vital to traceability because knowing where livestock has been in a timely manner will more effectively protect animal and human health. Regulations regarding animal movement vary between species of livestock and poultry. Animal movement records are an important tool in emergency response activities.

## why it matters

During an emergency response, which could include disease outbreaks, floods, or fires, access to up-to-date information is critical. Determining where animals are, where they have been, and what other animals they have come into contact with allows for efficient emergency planning and response. Traceability is an investment that helps mitigate risks and protects Alberta producers as well as their livestock and poultry operations by reducing the overall impact of the event in size and scale.

ABVMA supports the traceability program because veterinarians and veterinary technologists are dedicated to the health and welfare of all animals through diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. Veterinarians are concerned about disease transmission and animal welfare during environmental emergencies. Veterinary teams see the importance of the traceability program in investigating disease outbreaks and responding to emergencies. Veterinarians, veterinary technologists, and veterinary practice staff are well positioned to educate and encourage clients to be compliant with the *Animal Health Act* and the requirement to have a PID number.

### How are veterinarians involved with Alberta's livestock traceability program?

Veterinary practices where livestock congregate are considered commingling sites in the Alberta traceability program, and are required to apply for a premises identification number. The *ABVMA Practice Inspection and Practice Standards Bylaw*, Section US-3: Professional Image and Responsibility, #5 states "A Premises Identification Number must be issued by the Government of Alberta if food producing animals are presented to the location".

Veterinary practices are required to provide their PID number to clients who bring animals to their premises.

### VETERINARY PRACTICE ENTITIES (VPES)

The Alberta *Animal Health Act* requires that all VPEs where livestock animals congregate (commingling sites) must have a PID Number. Veterinarians must be registered with the ABVMA and be working in conjunction with an ABVMA certified and inspected veterinary practice entity.

Veterinarians play a principal role in ensuring a safe food supply for Canadians by promoting the responsible use of pharmaceuticals, including antimicrobials and biologicals by animal owners. They have the credentials and education to appropriately oversee the use of these drugs.

Veterinary practice entities are regulated by the ABVMA under the Authority of the *Veterinary Profession Act*, General Regulations, Bylaws, Guidelines, and policies. The professional obligation of veterinarians and veterinary practices engaged in the prescribing and dispensing of pharmaceuticals is more extensive than the collection of their clients' PID Numbers. Veterinarians must establish the medical need for the drug in addition to establishing a proper Veterinary Client Patient Relationship.

### VETERINARY CLIENT PATIENT RELATIONSHIP (VCPR)

The Veterinary Profession General Regulation requires that veterinarians establish a Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) with the client prior to providing veterinary services including the prescribing, dispensing, and selling of pharmaceuticals. The establishment of a VCPR requires examination of the animals or attendance (site visit) at the production facility.

### VETERINARIAN-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

**21.2** A veterinarian-client relationship is deemed to exist if:

(a) the registered veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of a person's animals and the need for medical treatment, and the person has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian,

(b) the registered veterinarian has sufficient knowledge of a person's animals so that the registered veterinarian may initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animals by virtue of an examination of the animals, by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animals are kept or by both examination and visits, and

(c) the registered veterinarian is readily available for follow-up care in case of adverse reactions to or failure of the regimen of therapy provided by the veterinarian for a person's animals.

### ESTABLISHING THE MEDICAL NEED

The veterinarian must establish the medical needs of the patient, either on an individual or herd basis, in order to prescribe a medication. The establishment of need is based on the prescribing veterinarian having collected or received significant and relevant information with respect to the health of the animal or animals.

This information to establish medical need in order to issue a prescription may be gathered by the examination of the animal or animals, by undertaking appropriate diagnostic procedures, by gathering a medically appropriate history with respect to the animal or animals or other medically appropriate means.

A proper prescription must be specific in regards to:

- the identification of the animals to be treated
- the drug to be used
- the dosage
- time duration
- the quantity required
- the number of refills allowed

All information regarding the establishment of medical need and a record of dispensing must be maintained at the certified and inspected veterinary practice entity and be available for inspection by the ABVMA. Notwithstanding that Veterinary Practice Entities are not required to collect PID Numbers from producers wishing to purchase pharmaceuticals, ABVMA best practice for VPEs is that the medical record documents the producer information including applicable Premise Identification Number(s).

