



2014-2015 Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program

Objective:

Texas is privileged to have the largest junior breeding heifer program in the nation. However, the sheer size of Texas, diversity in counties and beef breed associations has created some challenges for effectively and fairly managing the program. Because of numerous breed divisions offered, there are inconsistencies in how breed associations record purchase and transfer information. Heifer Validation is being initiated to ensure a level playing field for all junior breeding beef heifer exhibitors and to present a unified approach to verifying breeding beef heifer registration papers, ownership and physical possession. Further, history has proven collecting DNA hair samples during validation has added integrity to market animal divisions. Therefore, we are implementing a statewide electronic verification process in addition to requiring the physical validation of breeding beef heifers. An electronic verification process will ensure that ownership has been transferred by the respective ownership deadlines. The verification process along with the added physical validation component will allow for certifying exhibitor ownership, possession, heifer identification (tattoo/brand) far in advance of each respective major livestock show. Full and part-time personnel will be required to effectively review and validate all submitted heifer registration papers and to enforce rules during the participating major livestock shows.

Purpose

An electronic verification for heifer registration papers would serve four primary purposes:

- 1) Ensure ownership has been transferred by the respective ownership deadline
- 2) Eliminate backdating of junior heifer ownership
- 3) Allow heifer verification chair and co-chair to communicate any disqualifications prior to arrival to shows
- 4) Allow for a more efficient check-in process

Physical Validation would serve four primary objectives:

- 1) Ensure ownership and physical possession of heifer in designated county on validation day(s).
- 2) Physical viewing of tattoos/brands allows for verification tattoos/brands match the registration paper reducing disqualifications at major livestock shows.
- 3) DNA collection provides a robust system to authenticate that the heifer presented at physical validation is the same heifer exhibiting at major livestock shows.
- 4) Allows County Extension Agents and Ag Science Teachers to continue building positive relationships with breeding heifer exhibitors.



2015 Spring Show Timeline

- October 1, 2014* Heifer Verification Database is open to ASTs/CEAs
- November 1, 2014* Ownership deadline for all spring shows
- November 15, 2014* Registration Paper upload deadline and physical validation paperwork and DNA must be postmarked and sent to Texas 4-H Headquarters
- December 19, 2014* Projected deadline for all papers to be reviewed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- January 7, 2015* Projected deadline for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to notify all ineligible exhibitors and major livestock show officials for spring shows

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will provide heifer validation personnel for all participating major livestock shows.*

2015 Fall Show Timeline

- June 1, 2015* Heifer Verification Database is open to ASTs/CEAs
- July 1, 2015* Ownership deadline, registration paper upload deadline and physical validation paperwork and DNA must be postmarked and sent to Texas 4-H Headquarters
- August 20, 2015* Projected deadline for all papers to be reviewed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
- August 25, 2015* Fall show entry deadline
- September 15, 2015* Projected deadline for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to notify all ineligible exhibitors and major livestock show officials for fall shows

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will provide heifer validation personnel for all participating major livestock shows.*



Logistics

The conditions outlined will become requirements for all major Texas livestock shows including: Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo, San Angelo Stock Show & Rodeo, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, Star of Texas Fair & Rodeo, Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo, and the State Fair of Texas.

Registration Paper Upload

Agriculture Science Teachers and County Extension Agents will be required to upload electronic copies of original registration papers for all junior breeding beef heifers to be exhibited or substituted at any of the aforementioned shows. ASTs and CEAs must adhere to the aforementioned deadlines and requirements. **Substitute entries will not be accepted at any of the Texas major livestock shows unless they are validated through the Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program.**

Agriculture Science Teachers and County Extension Agents will be provided user names and passwords to access the database in order to upload registration papers for submission. Prior to uploading each file, teachers and agents will be required to input the following data points with each respective image:

- Breed
- Animal Registration Number
- Animal Date of Birth
- Animal ID (brand or tattoo)

Only .pdf and .jpg images will be accepted and files must not exceed 4,000 KB or 4 MB.

Registration papers will be verified on the following conditions:

- The image is READABLE
- The image is a digital copy of the ORIGINAL registration paper (acceptable registration papers for each breed may be found within the online heifer verification database).
- The image proves ownership by the designated exhibitor on or before the respective ownership deadline
- The correct image is linked to the designated entry
- Does not indicate partnerships or ranch name. Only the junior exhibitors name should be listed under ownership.

Once all papers have been uploaded and submitted, designated AgriLife Extension personnel will verify the above conditions are met for each paper. If any paper fails to meet the required criteria and is deemed ineligible for the show season, the Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program Coordinator will notify the supervising Agriculture Science Teachers and County Extension Agents and the exhibitor in writing on or before December 19, 2014 (2015 spring shows) September 15, 2015 (2015 fall shows) prior to the start of each participating junior heifer show.



The database will not allow duplicate registration numbers to be submitted. Should ownership transfer on a heifer, the exhibitor must contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to remove the existing paper prior to uploading the newly transferred paper.

Following entry deadlines and verification paper review by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the database for heifer verification will be provided to all stock shows.

Physical Validation

October 1-November 15, 2014

Participating major livestock shows are requiring all junior breeding heifers to be tattooed, brands recorded and hair samples collected for the DNA Assay between 10/1/2014 and 11/15/2014 for 2015 spring shows. All heifers must be validated at a time, place, and date determined by the County Validation Committee.

June 1-30, 2015

Participating major livestock shows are requiring all junior breeding heifers to be tattooed, brands recorded and hair samples collected for the DNA Assay between 6/1/2015 and 6/30/2015 for 2015 fall shows. All heifers must be validated at a time, place, and date determined by the County Validation Committee.

*State issued ear tags and nose print animal identification will **not** be required by the Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program.

On-site Registration Paper Confirmation and DNA Collection

Exhibitors for all of the aforementioned shows are required to bring the original registration paper to the show ring and to keep the original paper in their possession while exhibiting the heifer. The Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program representative will be present to verify that the identification on placing heifers matches that of the original papers. DNA hair samples will be collected on breed and reserve breed champions. The Texas 4-H/FFA Heifer Validation Program representative will also have access to the database and may reference any paper electronically at the request of each individual participating show. Further, major livestock shows may request additional DNA comparisons on any validated heifer shown at their respective livestock show.

Fee Structure

A \$10 fee will be required for each heifer validated for 2015 spring and fall shows.