

Guidelines for Tattoo Requirements

Tattoos Required

American Aberdeen Association rules require that all registered animals carry a tattoo in one or both ears. That tattoo must consist of the owner's herd letters, an individual animal identification number and a year letter.

Herd Letters

Herd letters are assigned to each member when application for membership is submitted, and to non-members when they first register a Aberdeen with AAA. Herd letters must be a minimum of two, and not more than three letters.

When registering a calf born to its natural mother, the herd letters of the owner of the dam at the time of birth must be used, and that individual must register the calf before it can be transferred.

An embryo transfer calf must be tattooed with, and registered with the herd letters of the owner of the calf at the time of registration.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to register a calf with herd letters that have not been approved and assigned to you by the Registry Office or the herd letters of another member or breeder. Example: **ALR**

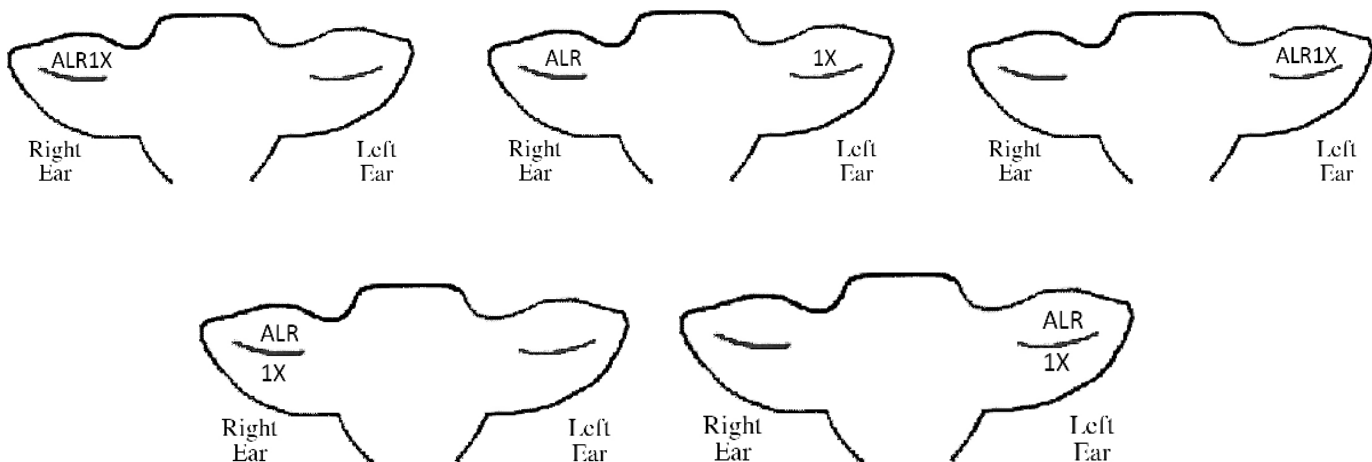
Individual I.D. Number

No two animals can carry the same tattoo, so the individual I.D. numbering system is important. The individual I.D. number can be a minimum of two, and not more than three digits. Example: **1X**

Year Letter

Part of the required Aberdeen tattoo must be a year letter. Usually it is the last digit in the tattoo. Below are the year letter codes from 2010 through 2019. (the letters I, O, Q and V are not used.)

2012 – Z	2014 – B	2016 – D	2018 – F	2020 – H	2020 - K
2013 – A	2015 – C	2017 – E	2019 – G	2021 – J	2023 - L



Examples of Acceptable Tattoos

The tattoo should be arranged so that the year letter follows the individual I.D. number. It should not follow the herd letters or be in front of the I.D. number. It is strongly recommended that you use the animal's individual I.D. number and the year letter portions of its tattoo as its animal herd I.D. number and possible tag number.

For example: **ALR1X** in this case **1X** would be the tag number

Steps to Making a Legible Tattoo

1. Review the tattoo requirements – Herd Letters, ID number and Year Letter.
2. Make sure you have your equipment on hand. Adequate equipment to restrain the animal. A towel or sponge to clean the ear, tattoo equipment with tattoo digits including herd letters, number(s) and year letter and green tattoo ink or paste. Green tattoo paste works much better on black Aberdeen cattle.
3. Sterilize your tattoo set with alcohol or an equivalent disinfectant. Dirty tattoo equipment can transmit wart viruses and other diseases from one animal to another and usually makes an illegible tattoo.
4. Check your records to be sure of the exact tattoo you will be using. You may want to incorporate the tattoo into the animal's tag and the animal's registered name so it will have more meaning to you later on and will simplify record keeping.
5. Check each tattoo by testing it on a piece of cardboard before you apply it to the animal's ear. It is easy to put the tattoo digits backward in the tattoo gun. Double checking at this point will save problems later.
6. Remove wax and dirt build up from the ear with a damp towel. A dirty ear will prevent the tattoo paste from penetrating the skin and making a permanent mark. Keep in mind, the middle lobe of the right ear is where the Brucellosis (bangs) tattoo will be placed in heifers so make sure to leave this space open for your vet.
7. Rub the green paste in the lobe before applying the tattoo. This step should allow the tattoo paste to better penetrate the ear as the digits are pressed into the skin. Place the tattoo pliers parallel with the ear ribs and press firmly. Then thoroughly rub the tattoo paste into the holes with your finger to make sure you have good coverage. This also helps slow the bleeding. Make sure you don't tattoo over one of the veins in the ear.
8. You should always check tattoos carefully before you exhibit or offer your animals for sale.