



# Tattooing Goats

**Registered goats must be permanently identified with a tattoo in the ears.**

In order to be registered, purebred and percentage Boer goats must be permanently identified with a tattoo in the ears. Your herd's registered tattoo letters will be tattooed in each goat's right ear, and the number of the goat and the year-of-birth letter in each goat's left ear.

It is advisable to tattoo kids within a few days of their birth – ideally before the doe and kids are released from the claiming pen into the general herd. This ensures that the kids are attributed to the correct mother!

## You will Need:

- Tattoo pliers can be purchased from farm co-ops or supply companies. Tattoo digits come in different sizes; 5/16 inch is the standard size for goats. The digits can be purchased separately or in sets. The tattoo pliers hold the letters and numbers which are outlined by needle-like projections. These projections puncture the ear and the tattoo ink enters the puncture holes, resulting in permanent markings that are visible for identification.



- Green and white ink are the best colours to use on dark ears. Ink comes in paste and liquid forms; the liquid sometimes comes in a roll-on dispenser.
- Rubbing alcohol and gauze pads.
- Toothbrush or nail-brush.

## How to Tattoo:

- Place the correct number and letters in the pliers. Always check to see if they are in the correct order by first testing on a piece of paper. You can only tattoo once - No touch-ups allowed!
- Restrain the animal securely. Tattooing is usually a two-person job, and proper restraint ensures the best possible tattoo.
- Choose a flat area about halfway down the inside of the ear, avoiding the ridges of cartilage and the large blood vessels.
- Clean the dirt and wax from the inside surface of the ear with an alcohol-soaked gauze pad.
- Some breeders apply ink to the ear and to the pliers before tattooing; others just to the pliers. You may want to try it both ways before settling on the method that works best for you.
- Clamp the pliers down hard and fast to make sure the skin is punctured. The animal will struggle and cry out (it hurts – but only for a second), but persist and press hard to ensure a deep, lasting tattoo. This is where your assistant pays off in holding the animal as still as possible.
- Remove the pliers and rub tattoo ink generously into the puncture holes using a toothbrush or nail brush.

## Year Letters

Each calendar year is assigned a year letter, and animals born in that year receive that letter as part of their individual tattoo, in their left

ear. For example, if your herd letters are XYZ, these will be tattooed in the goat's right ear (and in the right ear of all goats born on your farm). In the left ear, the goat will receive the year letter and a number unique to that animal for that year. If the animal were born in 2005 (year letter R), you might number that year's kids 1R, 2R, 3R, etc. An animal's full tattoo actually consists of the combination of the two ears: XYZ 1R.

The year letter is assigned by the Association, following the alphabet and starting with the letter A in 1991, but excluding I, O, Q, and Y which may be confused with other letters:

Year	Tattoo Letter
2003	N
2004	P
2005	R
2006	S
2007	T
2008	U

### Re-Tattooing

Although tattooing is considered a permanent form of identification, tattoos can become illegible for a variety of reasons. To sell or show registered stock, the complete tattoo must be legible. Therefore, when a tattoo becomes no longer readable, the animal should be re-tattooed. However, you must obtain permission from the Registry in order to ensure that the new tattoo conforms to the Association's by-laws and is correctly recorded on the animal's Certificate of Registration.

### When to re-tattoo:

- Over the time, tattoos can fade and become illegible. A flashlight held behind the ear can help to make the tattoo readable.
- An injury to the ear (such as a tag tearing out) may destroy the original tattoo;
- An error is made during the original tattooing, resulting in a non-conforming tattoo or a duplication of tattoos within your herd.

### How to re-tattoo:

- A Re-Tattoo Request is available on the CMGA web site or from the CMGA Office. Complete the form, specifying the reason for the re-tattoo request, and fax or mail the completed form to the CMGA office. The Registrar or Assistant Registrar will review the request and fax or mail back the approved form.
- You will be asked to re-tattoo above, below, or beside the original tattoo – not on top of it, i.e., do not try to fix the old tattoo by matching the new one on top of it.
- Once the animal is re-tattooed, you must return the Certificate of Registration to the CMGA office so that it may be updated to reflect the change to the tattoo. There is a small fee for the re-issue of the Certificate. If the Certificate of Registration is not updated, you may encounter problems showing or selling the animal in the future, as the Certificate no longer matches the animal's ears.



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