

# Ear tags from Premier—a history...

Over 9 years Premier has introduced 5 different tag series for sheep. Why so many?

A reasonable question. Below we will walk you through the history and provide photos of each.

Prior to 2001 we offered Rototags and SuperTags. SuperTags were not easy to install but once in an ear had high retention rates. They were also expensive. Rototags were short-term nylon tags (primarily for lambs), but they were low in cost.



Rototag

SuperTag

Regrettably, the quality of Rototags declined. So, in 2001 we switched to tags from another source. Their version of the Rototag we called Swivel tags. Both are 100% nylon, both 2-piece, both long and narrow, both short-term tags.



Swivel Tag

In October 2001 the US govt launched their scrapie eradication program. Premier was selected to supply custom-imprinted tags for this effort. The Premier tag chosen by the govt for the “free” tags was the Swivel tag—probably because it was the lowest-cost plastic tag then available.

It soon became clear that Swivel tags were not the best choice. So we sourced a polyurethane option that offered a longer probable life, a larger printing area and less installation hassle. That was the X series—which we launched the summer of 2002.



X Tags—2X, 5X, 7X

For most users the original 2X/5X/7X series was a tag series that offered good retention. Equally important, it was half the cost of other polyurethane tags and included rapid custom-printing by Premier.

So why didn't we stay with the 2X series? Because the govt concluded that all official tags needed to be tamper-evident. The 2X and 5X were not.

To enable Premier to continue to supply official tags we needed a new series—which had to be custom-made because it needed to be installed by the existing applicators.

The result was the 2Xte. The “te” stood for “tamper-evident.” However, this tag was still not the ideal tag design in our view. Why?



2Xte

- It needed considerable hand strength to apply in very cold temperatures.
- It was too stiff (the flat portion).
- It was expensive to offer in a wide range of colors and sizes.

That being so, we continued to search for a solution. The answer was the EasyTag “I” —so named because it was much easier to install in all temperatures than the 2Xte.



EasyTags

When we tested them in 2008, they appeared to be the tag version we had been searching for since 2000. These tags:

- Used Premier's proven, low-cost, easy-on-the-hand applicator for all 3 tag sizes.
- Would last the animal's lifetime.
- Would react well to laser printing (some plastics are better).
- Were easy to snap into thick adult ear tissue—even in extremely hot or cold temperatures.
- Had high retention—even in “problem” species (e.g. sheep).
- Were supplied in male-female pairs—to reduce risk of error.
- Could be written on by hand.
- Were tamper-evident and thus suitable for official use.

But, regrettably, they had an important flaw that was not revealed in our live-animal tests in 2008. What was that flaw?

If EasyTag “I” tags are inserted in the ears of lambs or kids less than 2 weeks old, the skin (which is very thin in newborns) is not fully cut by the male point as it is pushed through the ear and into the female portion of the tag.

Why didn't we spot this flaw in our trials? Because all lambs and goats used in the test were 2 weeks old or older (including adults).

When we discovered this problem, we redesigned both the male point and the female aperture of EasyTags to ensure that skin entrapment of even day-old lambs or kids does not occur. The side-by-side photos below show these changes. The redesigned tag works well—but it's no longer as easy to install. To prevent confusion, we've named it EasyTag II.

## Comparison of Easy Tags I & II

One extra benefits came with the redesign—there is now a small “click” when the male point snaps into the female portion.



So, what if *you had a problem with* EasyTag I tags and would like the upgraded “II” design instead?

Call or e-mail us with the purchase details (invoice number, date). *We will replace them free of charge.* If they were also official tags, then the replacements will need to have different numbers.

*Note: Our replacement offer does not apply to any “free” official white tags whose cost was paid by the US government.*