



Association of Avian Veterinarians Australasian Committee

Advancing and Promoting Avian Medicine and Stewardship

AAVAC Microchip Policy

Important Note

This policy is representative of the geographic region it serves (Australia and New Zealand) and is not global in nature.

Preamble

The AAVAC encourages radio frequency identification (RFID) microchipping as a reliable method of identifying birds.

The AAVAC believes that the integration of microchip technology, reader network and data base management are essential for the consumer acceptance and reliable operation of a microchip based identification and recovery system.

Policy

The AAVAC requires that when birds are scanned, they should be scanned for all microchips currently marketed in Australia, and recognises that a multi-reader network capable of doing so already exists.

The AAVAC believes that, prior to the introduction of new microchip technology, a reader network capable of reading the new technology in addition to the existing technologies must be established. In the event of existing microchip technology being superseded, the AAVAC believes that a multi-reader network, capable of accurately identifying the birds already implanted, must be maintained for the lifetime of those birds. Any new technology should offer benefits or advantages over existing technologies.

The Operator

The AAVAC believes that microchips should be only implanted in birds by registered veterinarians or fully trained lay persons familiar with the procedure and avian behavior, anatomy and physiology.

- a. For companion and aviary bird implantation, the operator should be a veterinarian due to the knowledge of sterility, anatomy and pain relief required. The accountability of registered veterinarians fosters accuracy, confidentiality and expertise in record keeping.
- b. Where State legislation permits implantation by lay persons, this should only be permitted after a suitable training course and under the supervision of a registered veterinary surgeon.
- c. All required owner/animal information on implanted birds should be forwarded by the operator, preferably within 24 hours and no longer than four days from the time of implantation, to ensure data can be incorporated on the nationally integrated data base.
- d. The implanting centre should be identifiable from the Registry/database. (This enables corrective measures to be taken should an operator have faulty technique/high failure rates/poor sterility etc.).
- e. Where implantation needs accompanying certificate of identification, this must be performed by a registered veterinary surgeon but may be generated via the Registry/database.

The Implant

Microchips must:

- a. be sufficiently robust to withstand the anticipated traumas at their implantation sites;
- b. have a life span compatible with expected maximum life span of the implanted bird;
- c. be biologically non-reactive, sterile and packaged ready for implantation;
- d. be designed and manufactured to minimise migration once implanted;
- e. have a unique read only identification number. This number should incorporate a code which enables the reader to identify the manufacturer of the chip as well as a number unique to the bird implanted; and
- f. be implanted by an instrument designed in such a way that the sterility of the implant or implantation process is not compromised.

All adverse reactions should be reported to the [Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority Adverse Experience Reporting Program](#) by the implanting veterinarian. If appropriate, the veterinarian should also report the adverse reaction to the microchip distributor and the Australian Veterinary Association.

The Implantation

- a. Prior to implantation with a microchip the bird to be implanted should be thoroughly scanned to ensure a microchip is not already in place. The microchip should also be scanned to ensure it is functioning and that the number corresponds to its accompanying documentation. A scan should follow up the procedure to ensure successful implantation.
- b. If using conventional-sized microchips (11mm x 2mm), small birds (less than 1 kg) should be anaesthetised for the implantation. If using smaller chips such as 8mm x 1.4mm, this threshold weight for the requirement of anaesthesia could be significantly lower even reduced to 200-300grams. Most flighted birds including parrots should be implanted in the left pectoral muscle. In very small birds less than 30 grams it may be preferable to implant the microchip subcutaneously on the dorsum. Ostriches and other ratites should be implanted shortly after hatch in the pipping muscle at the back of the head or subcutaneously in the left thigh at the feather line if they are older than 2-3 days of age.
- c. Implanting should be performed in such a manner as to minimise the risk of the transponder inadvertently falling out. If implanting into the left pectoral muscle, the chip should be inserted in a cranial to caudal direction, and some veterinarians may prefer to seal the insertion point with either a suture or tissue adhesive.

The Reader

- a. Correct scanning technique is critical but the Reader should be fast enough to detect and decode a micro chip during a scan involving whole body (two slow steady sweeps along the long axis and two slow steady sweeps from wingtip to wingtip. Concentrate on the head and neck in ratite birds and then other sites such as left thigh, wing tips and dorsal tail base if no chip found in head and neck.
- b. Suppliers of readers should have readily available replacement equipment and an efficient repair service.
- c. New reader technology must be able to read existing microchips currently available in Australia.
- d. Purchasers of readers should ensure that the equipment is of proven reliability and consider whether it is capable of being upgraded.

The Registry/Database

- a. All data related to microchips implanted into companion and aviary birds should be registered on and accessible on one of the nationally integrated animal microchip registries. This does not preclude suppliers from also maintaining records of “Sold To” data. Once the owner and bird details have been listed on a national registry, only the owner can alter or authorize alteration of that data and, unless for the purposes of reuniting a lost or stolen bird with its owner, that data cannot be given to any other non-authorized person without the consent of the owner.
- b. The nationally integrated register must have 24 hour access to enable registered users to access data in the event of a microchip being read in a bird presented to them for the purposes of reuniting that bird with its owner.
- c. Data stored should include owner’s name, address, contact telephone number, bird’s description, including species, sex and colour, provision for recording of other information, eg. alternative identification such as leg band, recovery history, implanter’s name, address and telephone, and a log of users of the database suitable for audit.
- d. Privacy of stored data must be preserved. All legal and ethical requirements for the protection of individual data must be observed. The data should be supplied only to authorized users, from the following groups, for the sole purposes of identification and recovery of the bird:

State or Federal government authorities;
Animal welfare organisations;
Scanning and implantation centres eg veterinarians; or
Police in the conduct of investigations

Registration documentation should give the owner the opportunity to refuse the release of data to others.

- e. Implanted bird’s data should be recorded onto the database, preferably within 24 hours but within a maximum of five working days of the receipt of information.
- f. Provision for updating the database should be facilitated for the owners of implanted birds, eg. preferably through the provision of authorized owner log-in access.

General

- a. All unidentified birds should be scanned for all technologies before sale or euthanasia and all deceased birds before disposal.
- b. It is recommended that internal identification be supplemented by external identification, such as a closed leg band provided there is little risk of harm or injury to the bird as a result.
- c. Implantation should include lifetime registration on the nationally integrated Registry/database.