

## Foreign Animal Disease and Secure Pork Supply: The Importance of a Premises Identification Number (PIN)

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### Key Points

- In the event of a Foreign Animal Disease outbreak it is required for all swine premises to have a Premises Identification Number
- Having correct location data associated with PINs is imperative for responding to an FAD at a farm or large scale level
- Validating and correcting information associated with PINs is an important step in FAD preparedness

A federal swine Premises Identification Number (PIN) is a unique, seven character ID, allocated to a premises where swine are produced, kept or moved through. The PIN is a key component in identifying and tracking swine as they move through the United States. The USDA APHIS PIN allocator generates a PIN once a premise has been registered through a state's animal health official. While PINs are used for many purposes, they are essential for continuity of business (COB) during a Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) event. Any premises wishing to move pigs during an FAD event must have a PIN. How these PINs are assigned, validated and managed by a producer can greatly affect a producer's COB and the effectiveness of an FAD response.

Here we comment on two problems that create poor PIN information, and some simple ways to correct them. The first problem is an incorrect address or coordinates linked to a site. A registered PIN is linked to a 911 address and a set of geo-location coordinates (longitude and latitude) that represent the actual site where the animals are located. There have been instances where a site is allocated a PIN, but the address or coordinates provided point to a company office or producer's home instead of the site containing pigs. The USDA "Premises Data Transfer to EMRS" information sheet clearly states that "it is critical to have the exact physical location of animals for response activities. Only having mailing addresses or personal residence addresses is extremely problematic. First, it may be difficult to locate the animals. Second, the address may or may not be in the same zone or area as the animals on the premises. During an outbreak, time spent tracking down physical animal locations is valuable time lost."

The second common problem is geographically distinct sites sharing the same PIN. During an FAD emergency, all barns or sites identified with a PIN will be treated as a single unit. For example, if there are 4 farms spread out over a mile that share the same PIN, and one is identified as infected, all 4 farms will be designated as infected premises since there is no clear way to differentiate infected from naïve farms under the same PIN. Additionally, all 4 barns will be associated with the same address and coordinates which does not actually correspond with most of them, leading to the same problems as an incorrect location. It is important that the potential implications of having independent farms under the same PIN in the event of a FAD are well understood by producers.

It is important to find and correct these or other issues that are identified for an existing PIN. An easy way to identify issues is to validate the locations associated with a PIN using a mapping site such as Google Maps or Bing maps to check the accuracy of the address and coordinates. To correct these errors it will be necessary to apply for a new PIN via the state's animal health official. Old PIN allocations cannot be corrected because the information is stored in different databases that are not connected, and each instance needs to be changed separately. Therefore, a new PIN is necessary.



**Picture 1:** A farm with yellow markers showing where a correct PIN address would designate, (driveway entrance) where correct PIN coordinates would designate (on the farm), and a red marker showing where an incorrect address would

Having a validated, correctly assigned PIN is important during an FAD because pig movement will be halted until a premise can be proven not to have had any epidemiological links or contact with infected sites. All infected sites will have demarcated geographic areas, infected zones, buffer zones, and Control Areas. All premises located within the Control Area will be affected by the FAD response.

Correctly managed PINs that have been validated, and if necessary corrected, are imperative for an effective FAD response, as well as for the COB of a specific farm.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

- [https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal\\_health/emergency\\_management/downloads/emrs\\_premisesdatatransfer.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/emergency_management/downloads/emrs_premisesdatatransfer.pdf)
- <https://www.pork.org/tag/prem-id/>

MSHMP Science Pages can be found here

<https://www.vetmed.umn.edu/centers-programs/swine-program/research-sdec/science-pages-swine-health-monitoring-project>