Background
The official identification and traceback of swine in commerce is a regulated process. Since the late 1980s the U.S. swine industry has had a mandatory system for traceback of swine that have entered into harvest channels to the last farm of ownership. This includes very specific means of identification for market swine and market sows and boars, as laid out in the Federal Code of Regulations.

The Swine ID Plan
The Swine ID Plan is an industry initiative to implement a set of program standards for the identification of swine developed in 2004 by the industry to enhance the current federal regulations. There are three key components to implementing the Swine ID Plan - premises identification, animal identification and animal tracing.

Premises Registration
Premises Registration is the identification of a location where livestock are raised, housed, or pass through during commerce. The standardized Premises Identification Number (PIN), is a seven character alphanumeric code, with the right-most character being a check digit based on ISO7064:1983 algorithm and nationally, over 95 percent of the estimated swine premises have registered to receive one. The standardized PIN is obtained through USDA APHIS PIN allocator after the site is registered through the state. The Premises Identification Number (PIN) is different than the Location Identification Number (LID) which is administered through a State or Tribes internal system.

Animal Identification
Animal Identification is the process by which pigs are officially identified either as part of a group, or lot, or individually. Pork producers will be responsible for officially identifying their swine in compliance with the Swine ID Plan's program standards which includes the parameters for officially identifying groups and individual animals.

Animal Tracing
The program standards in the Swine ID Plan include parameters for an animal movement record to be generated each time one of a set of events occurs, such as movement to a new premises or harvest facility. A movement record would include the animal's or group's identification number, the premise identification number of the sending and receiving premises, the date of movement, number of head moved and the reason for movement. Records will be maintained for three years after the swine leave the premises and will be available to animal health officials for inspection.

Summary
The Swine ID Plan enhances the ability to determine origin of swine that enter harvest channels through the use of producer, packer, state and federally required records. Over the last seven years the National Pork Board has been conducting an educational campaign that focus on implementing the key components to the Swine ID Plan. More detailed information on plan specifics can be found at pork.org.

Official USDA PIN tags.