

New KHSI Flock ID Policy

Effective May 1, 2020

Note that this policy is intended to replace the existing KSHI Flock Prefix policy/convention.

1. Katahdin breeders shall reserve a unique Flock ID for their operation, either upon joining KHSI, or upon registering their first lamb crop. This Flock ID will be used in combination with a numeric ID for each animal registered by that breeder.
 - a) Breeders who have an existing Flock Prefix (two- or three-character prefix) may continue to use that Flock Prefix as their new Flock ID. If a breeder does not request to change, update or add to their existing Flock Prefix, it will automatically be considered the breeder's new unique Flock ID.
 - b) Breeders who have an existing Flock Prefix may request to modify their new Flock ID to be something different from their historical Flock Prefix.
 - c) Flock IDs shall be character-wise unique (and not case-sensitive). Thus, "Smith Farm", and "Smith Farms" shall be considered two different unique Flock IDs.
2. It is recommended that Flock IDs be less than 25 characters in length. This leaves room on the registration form to fit the animal's Flock Tag number, which is typically <=10 characters long. If you typically use longer Flock Tag numbers, you should choose a shorter Flock ID.
3. Only alphabetic and alphanumeric characters are allowed to be used in a Flock ID.
4. Once a Flock ID is used on one or more animals, it may not be used or re-used by another breeder (in perpetuity).
 - a) Note that there are some historical cases where old Flock Prefixes were used for more than one farm, or "recycled" in some way. This practice will be eliminated going forward for Flock IDs.
5. "3-year Use it or Lose It Rule"- After a breeder initially reserves a Flock ID:
 - a) If the breeder hasn't renewed KHSI membership for more than three consecutive years and also has never used the Flock ID for registering animals, then the Flock ID reservation will be surrendered and available for reservation by another breeder.
 - b) This portion of the policy shall take effect January 1, 2021; giving existing breeders time to learn about the policy and either register sheep or update their membership status to maintain existing Flock Prefix reservations that have yet to be used/converted to Flock IDs.
6. When you reserve a farm name and "people name" to a Flock ID, it sticks. It is not allowed to have variations in the farm name spelling or Flock ID spelling (e.g. Smith Farm vs Smith Farms).
 - a) Generally, we don't want you to have variations on "people names" on the same Flock ID, excluding the case where youth need to be called out separately sometimes under the same Flock ID (to honor show/fair rules in different states and regions).
 - b) If you need to change your name record for some reason (e.g. marriage or divorce) then we will officially change the reserved "people name" that goes with that Flock ID, and all pedigrees printed *going forward* will show that changed name.
 - c) Policy on changing farm or individual names that go with the Flock ID: Send the registry documentation of why you need to make the change. Standard things like sharing a copy of marriage/divorce documentation, the registry can just accept and make the change. For more unusual circumstances, the registry may ask the board to review and vote to approve.
 - d) If kids need to be on registration certs for shows and fairs, include them in the defined list of owners for that prefix. Remember that you must pay a transfer fee to change ownership between family members.
7. Registered Katahdins must have an ID on the animal (ear tag and/or tattoo) which matches the numeric portion of the animal's registration certificate. For example, if the animal is registered as "Smith Farm AAA 12-999" then the animal must have, at a minimum, "12-999" on its ear tag or tattoo. It is recommended, but not required, to also include the Flock ID on the animal's physical ID.

8. Once an animal is registered with a Flock Tag number, this number cannot be changed. If the animal loses an ear tag, it is required that the tag be replaced with the same Flock Tag number that is on the animal's registration certificate.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. I have an existing Flock Prefix and would like to keep using that as my new Flock ID. What do I need to do?
A: you need take no action, this will happen automatically.
2. I have an existing Flock Prefix but I would like to add my farm name or surname to it. How can I make that change?
A: send the registry office an email or postal service mail formally requesting to make the change to your Flock ID. They will confirm no other breeder has reserved this Flock ID and confirm your reservation.
3. I have an existing Flock Prefix, but I'd like to stop using that and instead use my farm name, surname, or some other ID. Can I do that?
A: yes. As above, submit, in writing, your formal request for a new Flock ID to the registry to confirm your reservation of that Flock ID.
4. I reserved a Flock Prefix two years ago, but have not yet registered any sheep using it. How long do I have to use it as my new Flock ID before my reservation expires and someone else can take that ID?
A: you have until Jan 1, 2021 to use that Flock ID on at least one animal to keep it reserved. Alternately, keep your KHSI membership current and you may keep that Flock ID reservation indefinitely.
5. I have retired from breeding sheep and haven't used my old Flock Prefix in many years. Can someone new start using it?
A: no. If one or more sheep has been registered using a Flock Prefix, that Prefix will now be considered a reserved Flock ID and may not be used by another breeder.
6. My daughter registered sheep using our family's Flock Prefix when she was a youth member. Now she's an adult but would still like to keep using that same Prefix as her new Flock ID, along with our household (her parents). Can she do that?
A: yes, notify the registry that you are a partnership sharing the same Flock ID.
7. My neighbor and I co-breed in a partnership and would like to share the same Flock ID. Can we do that?
A: yes, notify the registry that you are a partnership sharing the same Flock ID.
8. I am a brand new Katahdin breeder and had never applied for a Flock Prefix. Do I need one now?
A: no. When you are ready to register sheep, and/or when you join KHSI as a member, apply for a new Flock ID at that time.
9. What are examples of Flock IDs that people typically use?
A: historically people used three-letter "prefixes" such as "AAA". You may still choose a short prefix like this if it is your preference. Others may use their surname, such as "Jones" or their farm name "Jones Farm." It's completely up to you what Flock ID you want to use, as long as it is unique, such that it hasn't already been reserved by someone else.
10. If I name (christen) a sheep, how will that name appear in the pedigree when that animal is a parent, grandparent etc.?
A: keep in mind that there is room for about 35 characters total in a pedigree line to the right of the registration number. This is inclusive of the Flock ID, Animal ID, Birth Type (printed automatically), and christened name (if any). If the length of this total string exceeds about 35 characters, the string will be truncated at a word boundary. So, if you have a fairly long Flock ID and Animal ID, the christened name may be truncated in the pedigree display. Thus, it is important to choose a Flock ID that is 25 or fewer characters and/or limit the length of the Animal ID and christened name, in order for all of it to fit in the pedigree format.

Rationale for the policy change:

Historically, KHSI had made the decision to have each breeder choose a two- or three-letter flock prefix in order to better differentiate animals in the registry database. At that time, the registry “database” was managed in a spreadsheet, and it was found that too many animals were getting registered with duplicate flock IDs which were just ear tag numbers; e.g. “902”, which made it hard to search for and find individual animals in the spreadsheet without traversing a lot of duplicates. In a spreadsheet, there isn’t an easy way to search for two fields at once, i.e. “give me a sheep numbered 902 that was bred by Smith”. Also, historically, there were some artificial limitations to the length of certain fields in the KHSI registry database(s), as the data got migrated from one registry service to another. Thirdly, KHSI decided that assigned flock prefixes would make pedigrees more “human readable” if each flock prefix could be recognized, it would be easy to see what breeders had contributed to a particular sheep’s pedigree.

Fast forward thirty years and over 100,000 sheep registered, things have changed! We now have more sophisticated database designs, where field lengths aren’t limited (other than what will fit on a printed pedigree certificate). We can now search on multiple criteria at one time to find a specific sheep we are looking for, and we have an online search database which facilitates anyone researching a sheep, breeder, owner or line. The constraints we used to work around in our registry spreadsheet are no longer constraints. And we’d accumulated some problems along the way! 3,691 unique flock prefixes had been reserved over time (out of a possible 17,576 possible combinations of alphabetic 3-letter prefixes: 26^3). Over time, over a thousand duplicate uses of reserved prefixes had occurred, either accidentally or intentionally. (Some were just due to multiple records of the same farm/breeder with different spelling variants. Others were prefixes which had never been used by the original owner, so were “recycled”). Nearly a thousand reserved prefixes had never been used. About half of the reserved prefixes hadn’t been used in five or more years. Many prefixes had only been used on a handful of sheep, and then never again, indicating a one-time breeder or buyer who didn’t continue breed registered Katahdins. Our reserved prefix list was getting long and unmaintainable. And new breeders were having a harder and harder time finding an unreserved prefix to use. Associated Registry reports that in many instances, it would take a new breeder more than ten tries to find a prefix that wasn’t already taken. This was frustrating for all involved, especially in a time-sensitive situation where someone wanted to register sheep for a show or sale

The board discussed at length different modifications to the prefix policy to resolve some of these issues. One was to start “recycling” prefixes more frequently if they weren’t used in a long time, on very many sheep, or not at all. Another idea was to allow four-character prefixes, opening up more options. It was also discussed whether to just assign new breeders a random three-letter prefix rather than letting them choose one. In the end, it was concluded that we were artificially constraining ourselves to this three-letter prefix idea. Instead it was decided to just move to a reserved “ID”, up to 25 characters in length (which generally makes sure that any combo of Flock ID and ear tag # will fit on a pedigree certificate). This gives breeders the flexibility to use the legacy convention of a three-letter prefix if they choose, or they can opt for a longer farm or breeder name instead.