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**From:** lissa [lissa@lissa.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 15, 2005 10:30 AM  
**To:** 'MAGDRL Extended List'  
**Subject:** [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #8: The Microchip Controversy

Hi All,

You may recall that last weekend my sister's dog Squish was reunited with her after 4 days of being lost. According to the HSUS, only 15 - 30% of lost dogs are united with their owners. I'm having my sister buy all my lotto tickets from now on! LoL!!!

This fortunate outcome occurred because this little pup was microchipped. The information included in the rice-sized capsule imbedded between her shoulders led this dog back home. As a result, I've been researching microchip technologies to determine which chip to use for my dogs. What I've found is that the brand of chip one chooses can be a life/death decision. I'm sharing this information with everyone as Dog Owner Education Topic #8.

The challenge is that there are four major chip manufacturers:

- Destron-Fearing Company makes the HomeAgain chip system which is marketed by Schering-Plough Animal Health. AGAIN™ (Schering Corporation, Union, New Jersey 07083, USA) The registration and recovery service is provided by the American Kennel Club. Destron-Fearing also has been known to collaborate with another microchip company AVID. <http://www.homeagainid.com/>
- AVID (American Veterinary Identification Devices), and also AVID Canada make PETtrac. AVID was originally marketed by Identichip Services Recovery System, (AVID Identification Systems, Inc., Norco, California 91760, USA), although now they are almost always partnered with Destron-Fearing. <http://www.avidid.com/>
- Trovan markets the InfoPET System. They have switched to working with Biomark Inc to track wildlife and fish. microchip transponders (InfoPET/TROVAN Electronic Animal Identification System, manufactured by AEG/Daimler-Benz, Germany). <http://www.trovan.com/>
- Crystal Tag which is encased in clear, bio-degradable plastic that contains a 15 digit unique numeric code in accordance with ISO Standard 11784. (Crystal Import Corporation, 140 Oxmoor Blvd, Birmingham, AL 35209) CrystalTag is the only widely available ISO standard tag and was formerly offered by PetSmart/Banfield. <http://www.crystaltag.com/>

The scanners used by most U.S. humane societies, animal control agencies, and veterinary hospitals are designed to detect only the 125 kHz AVID and HomeAgain chips. Even more troublesome, AVID holds the patent rights to the 125 kHz microchip and scanner technology making it impossible for competing companies to enter the market and leaving them in a position to block development of compatible readers. The new Crystal Tag uses a universal standard frequency, but this is so new to the market that most facilities don't have readers, plus their scanners cannot read any other chips.

Case in point: Squish's rescuers had to travel to two vets to find a reader that could translate the imbedded information that brought her home. If she'd ended up in a shelter with an incompatible reader, there might have been a very different end to this story. Here's a Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA) story about a dog that wasn't as fortunate as Squish and the resulting controversy: <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/jul04/040701a.asp> and a follow-on article about what is being done in an attempt to resolve this problem: <http://www.avma.org/onlnews/javma/oct04/041015e.asp>

Finally, if Squish's story has you considering microchipping your pets, best to be an educated consumer. There's a web page entitled, "What You Should Know Before Microchipping Your Pet" here <http://home.att.net/~randall.j.jackson/pet-chip.htm> that covers the issues with microchipping.

I've personally decided to continue doing what I do until this controversy is resolved -- keep a collar and ID tags on mine at all times, even when they're at home. You just never know....

As always, thanks for educating yourselves to benefit all dog owners!

Lissa Scott  
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"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings