

Digital Animal

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A sheep wearing an electronic identification (EID) tag used to monitor individuals as they move through different agricultural spaces. Digital technologies are increasingly used to collect data on farms and throughout the agri-food supply chain. EID numbers don't just make it easier to automatically identify individual animals in a flock: They also raise the possibility of linking vast amounts of data back to those animals, data collected across and even beyond their lifetime, including from the tracking and

testing of animal-derived products. Social scientists, ethics researchers and journalists have drawn attention to the effects and risks of having our personal data collected and used by others. But what might it mean for a non-human animal to have a digital self? Our research explores how the 'digital animal' is emerging in farming, what form it takes, and what implications it has for animals' wellbeing, human-animal relationships and agricultural systems.