Using Electronic IDs For Livestock

As you record treatments, feedings, inputs, and tasks for your herds, you'll obviously want to ensure that you are associating the data with the correct animal record in Farmbrite. Of course you could type an ear tag ID or name into your phone to find the animal, but wouldn't' it be easier to scan a tag or barcode and have them automatically found? With Farmbrite's RFID and barcode scanning integration,you can more easily and accurately record data from your animals, plants, equipment, and inventory.

Getting Started with Electronic IDs for Livestock

You'll first need an RFID scanner and RFID tags (or barcode scanner and barcodes) for your animals. You might pick these up at a local supply store, an online farm and ranch site, or even on Amazon. While this step is outside of Farmbrite, we can tell you that we do not require any specific reader or tags. You can use any scanner that meets industry standard ISO 11784 and ISO 11785 regulations. You don't need an expensive one built specifically for livestock to integrate with a scale head; we've found that inexpensive ones for scanning pet microchips work just as well for this purpose.

As long as the reader can connect to your device via Bluetooth it should work with Farmbrite. You might buy the reader and tags together in a bundle, which generally would help you ensure the reader and the tags are compatible with each other. We advise that you follow the manufacturer's instructions to affix the tags and connect the scanner to your mobile device and test it.

Adding IDs to Animal Records

Once you have the reader connected and your animals tagged, you can then**input the electronic ID information into your animal records.** Farmbrite needs to know what ID number belongs to what animal, so you'll need to add the ID information to the software for reference. You could add these individually, or maybe upload a spreadsheet to add them all at once. *Note that electronic IDs must be at least 8 digits to be recognized.*

If you add them individually, simply navigate to the animal's record, edit their details, and supply the ID number in the electronic ID field. You may even be able to scan the tag with the reader to have it added to that field; just be sure that field is selected on your device, then scan the tag and the number should be add to it. Be sure to save after that.

To upload them in bulk, you might follow the steps in this article to update your animal's via import. When updating, it may be easiest to download your existing records, add the electronic ID to the spreadsheet, and then reupload the file to update the existing animal records.


Scanning Tags and Barcodes

Now that Farmbrite knows what animal record is associated with which electronic tag number, you can start scanning you animals to find them in the software. When you're ready to scan your animals, you'll choose **start a scanning session**. This tells Farmbrite to look for inputs from the reader via Bluetooth. You can scan the tag from any page in Farmbrite, you do not need to be on the scanning session page. Once you scan a tag, you'll see the animal's record brought up on your device.
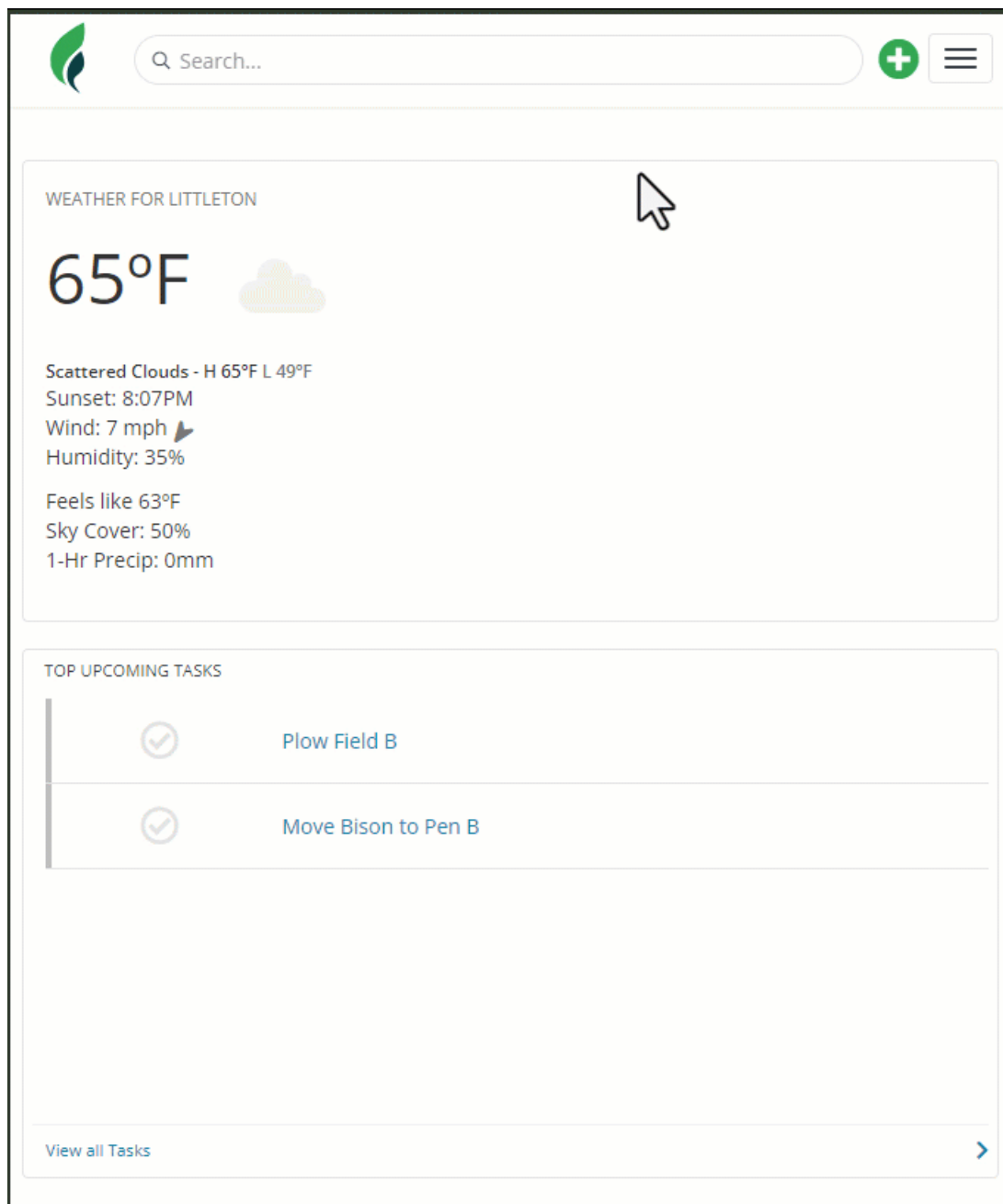
Once you have the record loaded on your device, you can then access any of the history or record new actions. Maybe you're scanning them as you weigh them; you can easy record a measurement right from your device. Or perhaps you're administering vaccines or other medications; you could scan the animal and the easily record a treatment right on their record. Add inputs, record feedings, set a task for something that needs to be done later...you'll have full access to the animal record to record what you need.

Adding Animals with a Scan

If the animal tag you scan is not found in Farmbrite, you'll also have the opportunity to add a new animal at this point. You can supply basic information about it and then save. Notice that the electronic ID was prepopulated into the field in our example below.   This could be very helpful if you are scanning recently purchased animals if they are delivered onto your farm with existing electronic ID tags.
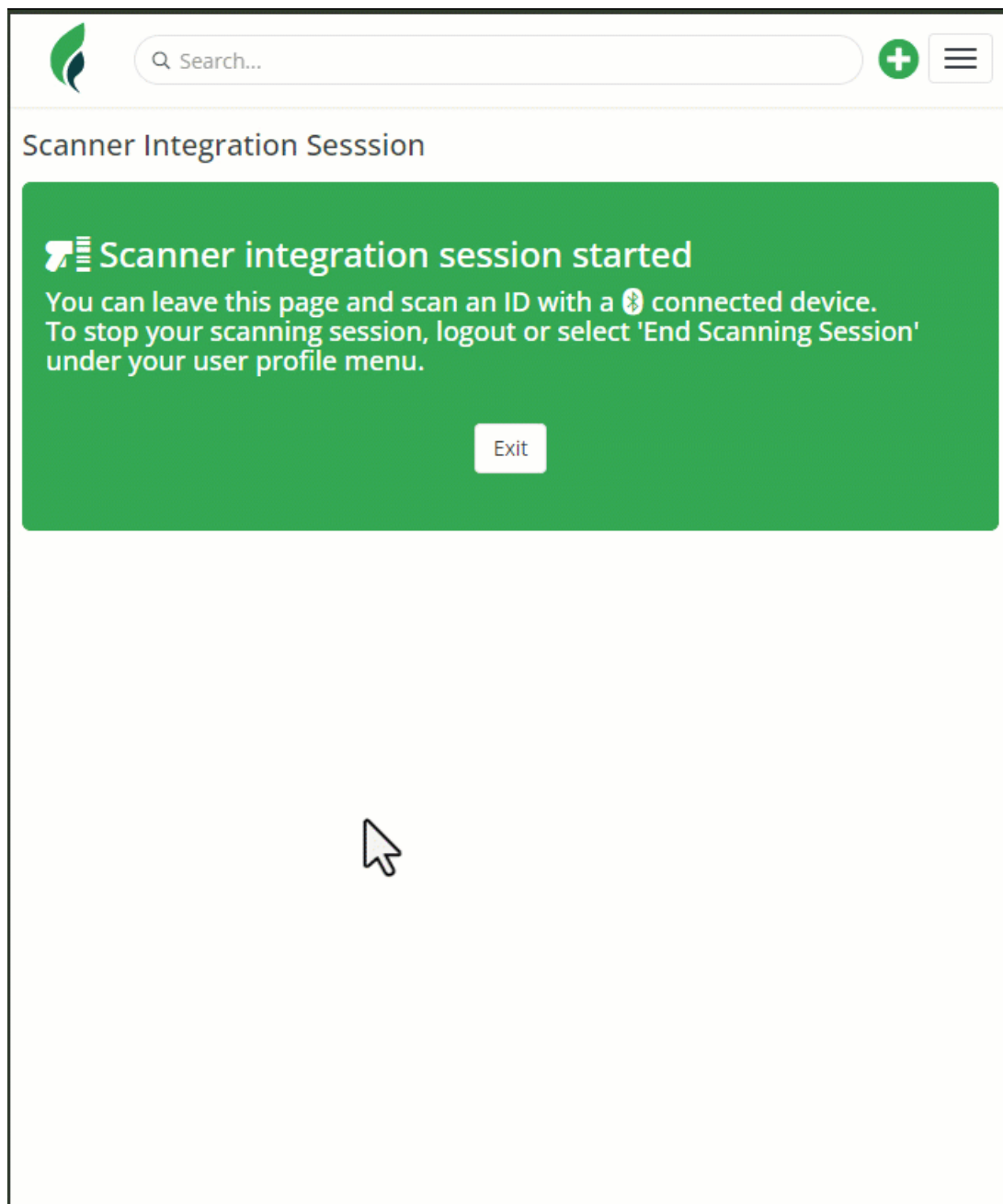
Scanning Offline

If you use Farmbrite's offline Scout Mode, you can still use an electronic ID scanner when you don't have internet service. The process is similar to what you read about above, but you don't have to start a scanning session. Scanning is always enabled in Scout Mode. Once you're offline, you can scan the tag and if the animal is recognized it will be automatically associated with whatever record you create from the quick add menu. If it's not found, you'll see the option to add a new animal instead.
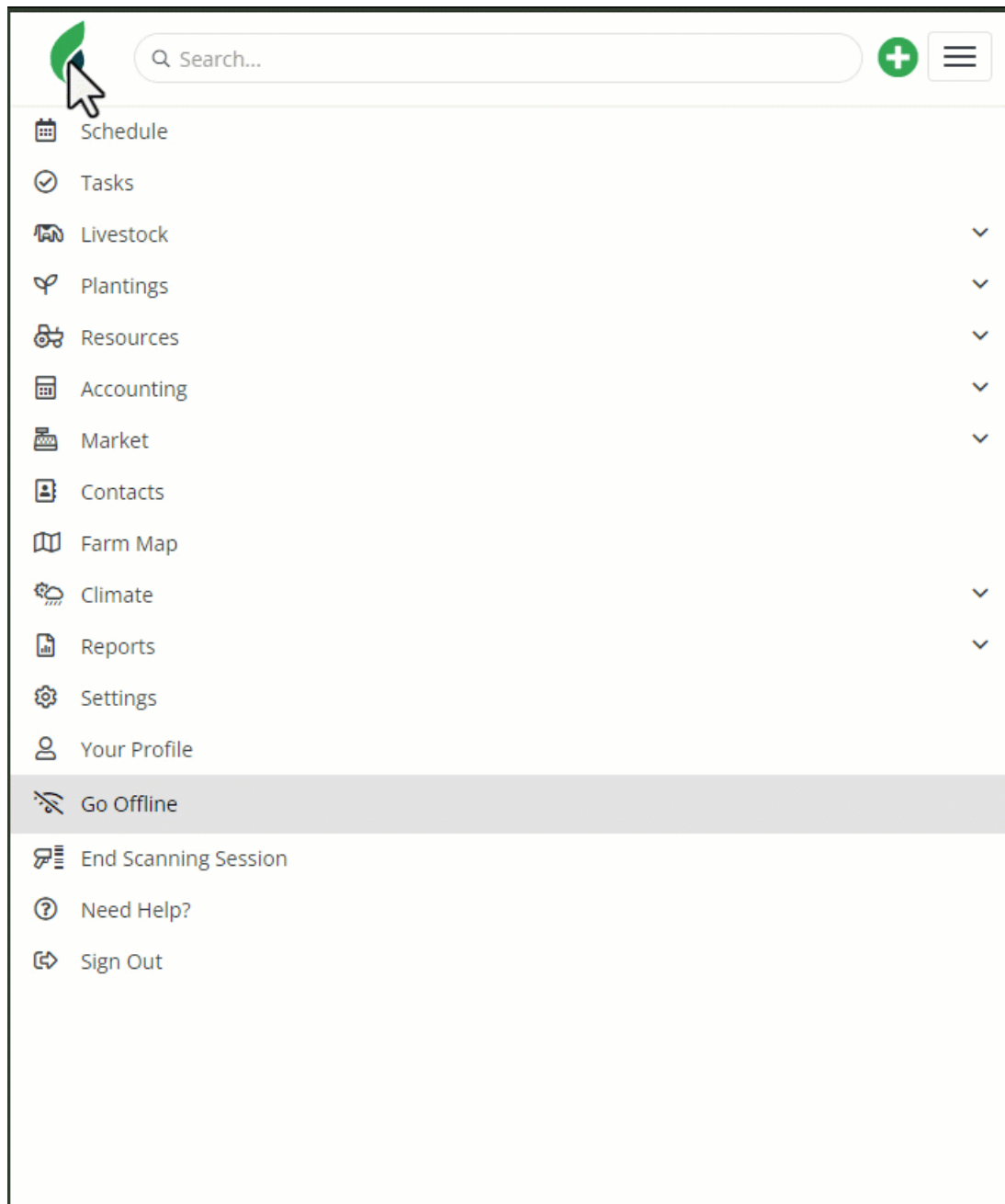
Let us know if you have any additional questions about using electronic identification tags for your animals. We'd love to hear about your experience with this feature!