

Sheep EID – Reading and recording requirements for slaughterhouses in England and Wales

April 2010



This guidance explains how the new rules for sheep and goat identification and recording, which took effect from 31 December 2009, apply to slaughterhouses.

It is designed to be a general guide to help you meet the law, it is not a definitive guide.

How to contact us

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1. Introduction

New rules on electronic identification of sheep and individual recording of sheep and goats came into force on 31 December 2009. This guidance explains the reading and recording implications for English and Welsh slaughterhouses. It is not a definitive guide. Operators should access legal advice or consult relevant legislation as necessary, as well as understanding current guidance from the above authorities/associations before making business decisions.

2. Being a Central Point Recording Centre (CPRC)

From spring 2010, *destinations* using EID readers can record *individual* sheep ID numbers on behalf of consigning keepers for *their* records. Many markets may provide this service. You may wish to also provide such a service if there is a demand from your customers. The application and approval process is administered by Animal Health. The approval requirements together with an application form are published at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/inspecting-and-licensing/sheepeid/index.htm>.

3. Identification of animals arriving at the slaughterhouse

The tags you see will depend on type and age. You should visually check a sample of between 2% and 5% (on a risk basis) of every consignment upon arrival to ensure that animals are correctly identified.

Animals identified since 31 December 2009, to be kept beyond 12 months of age, must be double tagged and one of their UK identifiers must now be electronic (for Wales, animals born on or after 31 December 2009). These will most likely be EID ear tags (bolus and pastern tags are permitted). Both tags must bear the same individual number – which will need to be recorded in your register.

Lambs intended for slaughter under 12 months can be single tagged, with UK and a visible flock number *only* on the tag. This tag may be electronic but it does not have to be read electronically. You may however have a commercial preference for handling only animals with EID slaughter tags (if that is how you want to record mixed batches in your Register – see below & Annex B). If this is the case you should make this clear to your customers.

Since it is difficult to determine the exact age of lambs, the policy of Defra and WAG for enforcement of the slaughter derogation is that lambs born during a lambing season (Dec – May) and identified by a single slaughter tag are deemed to comply with the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (England) Order 2009 and the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (Wales) Order 2009 if they are slaughtered before 30 June in the year following the lambing season. For example, lambs born in the Dec 2009 – May 2010 season may be presented for slaughter with a single tag up to 30 June 2011. These animals are therefore properly identified and can be accepted for slaughter. Failure to properly identify animals may result in action being taken by the Local Authority.

Details of animals presented for slaughter with a single slaughter tag after 30 June, which you believe are older than 12 months of age and should therefore be identified with double tags, should be recorded and made available to the Local Authority on request.

4. Completing the holding register

All animals identified before 31 December 2009	No change – record the number of animals, where they have come from (including markets) and the date of arrival.	
All animals identified after 31 December 2009	<i>Double tagged (including one electronic identifier)</i>	Record the individual animal number, where the animals have come from and the date of arrival.
	<i>Single tagged (lambs with an electronic or non-electronic slaughter tag)</i>	Record total in a batch. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it includes mixed holding of birth identifiers, the number of animals from each holding of birth needs to be recorded ('mixed batch' – see Annex B).

Operators can decide how to obtain this information, e.g. from a 100% EID read, a visual tag check (the number written on the outside of the tag is the same as the electronic number), or vendor information (at your own risk). Mixed batch data for consignments of slaughter lambs must be recorded in the holding register, but there is no requirement for this data to be recorded in the movement document – just the total, so if you want this information compiled for you by the despatching premises you will need to agree a commercial arrangement with them to provide this.

Whatever method you choose you remain responsible for ensuring the accuracy of your holding register. Electronic tagging/recording may be a preferred option – unless the batch/es of animals come direct to slaughter under one batch identifier (i.e. one origin premises). You should let your customers know your preferred animal ID/tagging option. Holding registers must be retained for a minimum of 3 years.

5. Movement documents (example at Annex C)

You should ensure that all movement documents are checked on arrival and correctly completed. Incomplete movement documents or inaccurate ones should be reconciled. Movement documents must be retained for 3 years.

Up until 1 January 2011, movement documents for non-EID animals will contain only batch information. This will continue to be the case for single tagged slaughter animals and animals identified before 31 December 2009 moving to slaughter, but from 1 January 2011, double tagged animals, which are electronically identified (for Wales animals born on or after 31 December 2009), must be individually recorded on the movement document. As an alternative to listing individual animal numbers, batch information is permitted for animals moving **to** a CPRC, where the CPRC sends individual animal numbers back to the consigning keeper for their register and to the local authority within 24 hours of receipt of the consignment of 'CPRC' animals.

Movement documents now also include a provision for keepers to include a Food Chain Information (FCI) declaration. They are not required to use it for that purpose but it may be a convenient way to do so for many keepers.

6. Contingency Plans

You can agree a Contingency Plan, if appropriate, with your Local Authority, to exempt you from reading and recording individual IDs and mixed batch data in the event of reading equipment failure or power failure. The consent of the local authority will be required (as soon as possible) for each occasion you wish to apply exemptions agreed in a contingency plan. You *will* need one if you want to provide a CPRC service. Generic requirements are on LACOR's and Defra's websites – speak to your LA.

7. Reserved tag colours

For animals identified after 31 December 2009, three colours have reserved uses:



Yellow: used only for electronic tags (England & Wales)



Black: used only for ear tags where the sheep has an EID bolus (GB)



Red: used only for replacement tags (incl. replacement electronic tags)

Tag colours used in Scotland and Northern Ireland vary slightly. Scotland has no reserved colour for animals EID tagged there. Northern Ireland has not reserved a colour for animals EID tagged there, but has reserved light blue for the bolus matchup tag. Sheep from other EU member states may have different colour combinations. Some combinations of different types of ID that may be presented in the lairage are at Annex A.

8. Reading equipment

Readers should cope with the volume and speed of animals they will be required to read. The RPA website holds details of recommended readers (search for 'electronic id' at www.rpa.gov.uk).

9. Disposal of EIDs

You should destroy or dispose of EIDs in a secure manner that prevents their reuse.

10. Further Information

	Website: www.aims2001.co.uk/index.html		Website: www.bmpa.uk.com/content/home.asp
	Website: www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/movements/sheep/index.htm		

Annex A – Types of ID combinations that may be presented in the lairage

Type	Tag colour(s)
Single tagged with UK flock number (lambs identified <i>before</i> 31/12/09, – most likely presented in the earlier half of 2010)	Any colour
Double tagged animals identified before 31 December 2009	Any colours – red if replaced other than on HoB
Slaughter lambs, single tagged post 31/12/2009 (most likely later in 2010 onwards): 1) Electronic 2) Non-electronic	1) Yellow 2) Any colour other than yellow, red or black Note – where tags have been lost and replaced other than on the HoB the replacement, including EID replacements, will be red in colour
Double EID identified (animals identified after 31 December 2009): 1) EID ear tag + conventional ear tag 2) EID ear tag + tattoo 3) EID ear tag + conventional pastern tag 4) EID bolus + conventional ear tag 5) EID bolus + conventional pastern tag 6) EID pastern tag + conventional ear tag	1) Yellow + any colour other than yellow, red or black 2) Yellow + n/a 3) Yellow + any colour other than yellow, red or black 4) n/a + black 5) n/a + black 6) Yellow + any colour other than yellow, red or black
Scottish sheep	As above except EID tag could be any colour
Welsh sheep	Same options as English sheep
Northern Irish sheep	EID tags any colour Historic tags green Bolus match-up tags light blue
<i>At the time of writing no pastern tags have been approved as UK identifiers.</i>	

Annex B – Mixed batch

If a batch of animals identified with slaughter tags contains sheep from many origins, e.g. lambs from a finisher or grouped together from a market, each of the batch numbers must be recorded in the holding register together with the corresponding number of animals originating from each holding of birth. E.g. in a consignment of 100 animals with animals from 4 different holdings of birth:

- 50 animals – batch number UK 123456
- 20 animals – batch number UK 234567
- 20 animals – batch number UK 345678
- 10 animals – batch number UK 456789

It might be worth considering market arrangements in relation to mixed batch recording. A commercial arrangement might be put in place for mixed batches to be recorded on movement documents, so slaughterhouses can just put these straight into their holding registers. Should you agree this option you continue to be responsible for the accuracy of the information recorded in your holding register.

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