

Technical Article, July 2012 – Sheep Identification and Movement Guidance

Sheep (and goat) identification and movement legislation exists to enable the tracing of their movements in a disease outbreak. To improve the traceability of sheep across the EU, new rules for electronic identification (EID) and individual recording of movements were introduced on 31 December 2009.

Certain provisions of this legislation are cross compliant (Statutory Management Requirement 8). As such, Single Farm Payment (SFP) reductions can apply for non-compliance. In 2011, of the 170 holdings that failed one or more elements of SMR8, 152 (13% of those inspected) had reductions made to their SFP.

The main areas of non-compliance found by inspectors are:

- Flock/herd records not maintained in accordance with legal requirements.
- Sheep/goats that have never been tagged or are incorrectly tagged.

This article aims to provide some guidance on the implementation of EID and movement recording to reduce the risk of non-compliance and also explain some management benefits of EID.

Identification

The rules for identification depend on the intended purpose of the animal (i.e. for breeding or slaughter) and the length of time that the animal will be kept.

Lambs born on your holding must be identified:

- Within six months of birth if they are housed overnight.
- Within nine months of birth if they are kept in extensive conditions.
- Before they move from the holding of birth (for whatever purpose) if this is sooner than the dates above. The only exception are moves for emergency veterinary treatment

You do not need to identify animals that die before these deadlines.

Identifiers must be applied to animals on the holding of birth as follows:

1. Animals intended for the breeding flock or for slaughter after 12 months of age will require two identifiers - one of which must be electronic.
2. Animals intended for slaughter before 12 months of age can be identified with a single EID batch tag or a non-electronic batch tag*.

* *It is very important that animals are **tagged appropriately according to the intended market**. EID batch tags for slaughter lambs may considerably reduce your sellers/customers recording burden (e.g. livestock markets and store finishers). This is because of the requirement they will have to record how many animals they receive with different flock marks in any batch of sheep being moved (so called 'batch within batch' recording). It is recommended that you check before tagging to determine which tags they would prefer.*

Historic flock – Sheep born before 31 December 2009 do not need EID and can retain their conventional tags. Keepers can continue to move these animals as a batch. This will be the case until 31 December 2014. If keepers do wish to upgrade to full EID for management purposes before this date, they can do so by replacing the original tags with two new identifiers, one of which must be electronic (and if this is not on the holding of birth you should cross reference the old and new numbers in your holding register).



Upgrading tags

If you wish to upgrade tags to allow animals originally intended for slaughter to be retained for breeding this must be done under the following conditions before the animals reach 12 months of age:

- **Non-EID slaughter tags** – you can upgrade non-EID slaughter tags to EID slaughter tags, but they can only be upgraded to full EID if the animals are still on their holding of birth.
- **EID slaughter tags** – these animals can be upgraded to full EID as long as they are on their holding of birth or have moved to their present holding either directly from the holding of birth or from the holding of birth through a market.

The full individual animal number encoded in their EID chip must be scanned and recorded when the animals you intend to upgrade to full EID are moved to your holding.

This must happen on the first holding they are moved on to after they are born. If they are moving to it through a market they must be individually recorded before they leave the market. The full EID number scanned from their slaughter tag must be cross referenced with the replacement tag in the holding register. You cannot upgrade an animal to full EID that was originally upgraded to an EID slaughter tag from a non-EID slaughter tag.

Replacing tags

Other than the upgrading provisions above this should only happen where one or both tags have been lost, or damaged. Appropriate replacements must be used and cross referenced as appropriate in the holding register.

For further information see:

<http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/movements/sheep/documents/sheep-tag-rules101217.pdf>]

Where one tag is lost

Option 1

Apply a replacement tag that has the same identification number as the original tag (a 'replica'). You will need to order a tag with the same number from your supplier. The tag must not be red.

Option 2

Remove the remaining tag and apply a new set of identifiers from your stock of tags. If the animal was identified after 31 December 2009 and is kept for breeding or is older than 12 months, one of the identifiers must be electronic, and the following will apply:

- If the animal is not on the holding of birth, the replacement tags must be red (unless a replica pair is applied).
- If the animal was first identified before 31 December 2009, replacing with a full EID pair is optional.
- You must cross reference the old number and the new number in the replacement section of the holding register, except for older sheep still on the holding of birth, when no cross reference is necessary.

Where both tags are lost

Option 1

Apply two tags (ordered from your supplier) with the same number as the original - a replica pair (if you know it). Make a record of the replacement in the replacement section of the holding register.

Option 2

Apply two new tags from stock (must be red if the animal is not on the holding of birth). Cross reference with the original tag number (if you know it) in the replacement section of the holding register. If you do not know the animal's identification number, you must still make a record of the replacement in the replacement section of the holding register.

Movement recording and reporting

A movement must be recorded when an animal moves on or off your holding. Recording the movement involves filling in the appropriate columns in the holding register and also reporting the move to the local authority.



The holding register

- Individual recording – for animals born or identified after 31/12/2009 and intended to be kept past 12 months of age.
- For all animals born/ID'd after this date also:
 - date of identification & year of birth (HoB)
 - month & year of death.
 - on or off movements
- Batch recording for
 - slaughter animals
 - 'historic' animals
 - moves within a business where there is no change of keepership.
 - full EID animals moving to a Central Point Recording Centre that is providing the keeper with the individual numbers
- A separate register must be kept for each County Parish Holding (CPH).

They can all be kept in one place but must be made available if an inspector asks to see them.



AML1 Movement document

Not required for:

sheep that are moved within a business where ownership **and** keepership does not change and the land on which they are moved to is part of the same CPH, and within a 5-mile radius of the main holding.

Required for:

all other movements, with the exception of moves to veterinary surgeons, linked common land and adjacent land identified in your holding register.

Keepers receiving animals must send the white top copy of the document to their local authority within three days of the move taking place.

The tables below summarise the recording/reporting action required in the holding register and on **the AML1** movement document. The key considerations are: how are the animals tagged and is their keepership changing or not?

Change of keepership <i>(someone else will be responsible for day to day care of the animals)</i>	Full EID sheep	Slaughter tags	Historic flock
	Holding register		
	Record each animal's EID number.	Batch record the number of animals with the same flock number.	Batch record the number of animals <i>(even after 2014)</i>
	AML1 Movement document		
	Record each animal's EID number.	Record only the number of animals being moved (flock marks optional) .	Record only the number of animals being moved - <i>until 31 December 2014</i> .
			From 31/12/2014 record each animal's individual ID <i>unless</i> they are moving direct to slaughter or via a market to slaughter.
Receiving keeper sends the white (top) copy of the AML1 movement document to their local authority.			

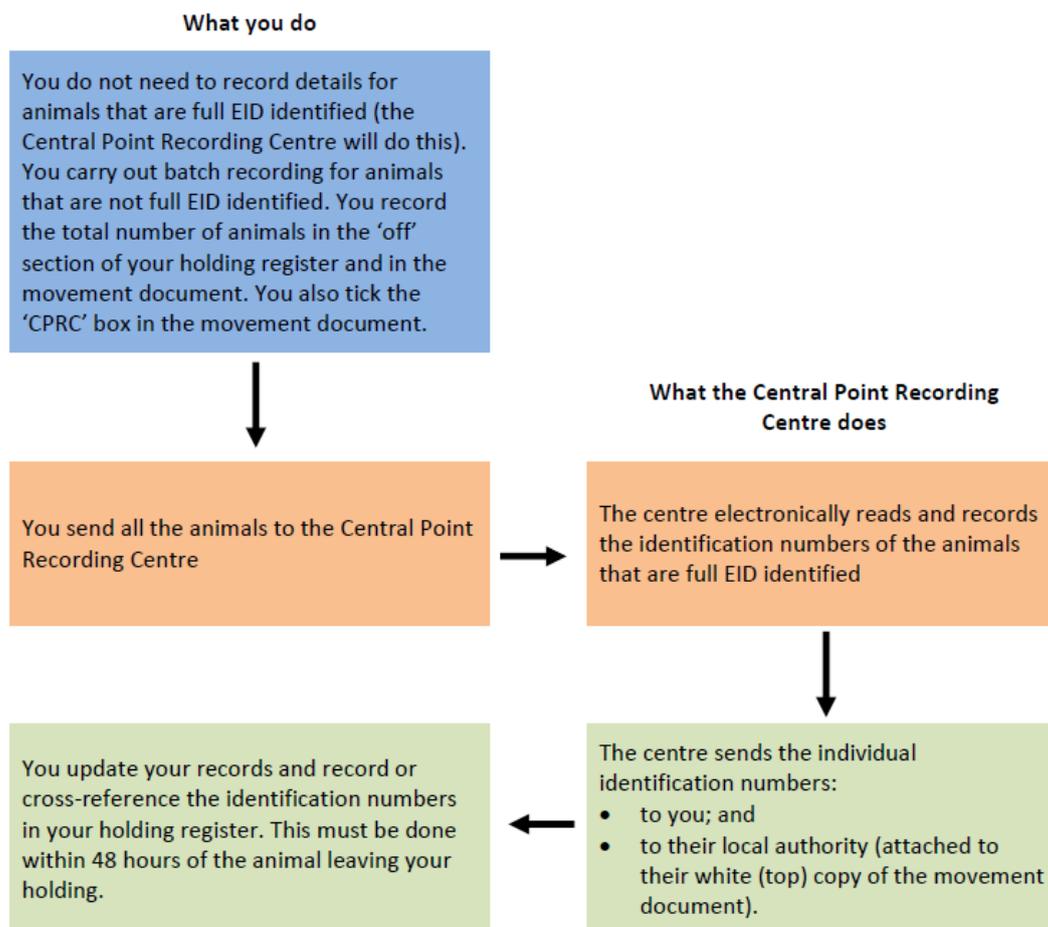
No change of keepership		Full EID sheep	Slaughter tags	Historic flock
	Move to land with same CPH number and within 5 miles of it	No recording or reporting		
	Move to land with same CPH number and more than 5 miles <i>or</i> any land with a different CPH including a temporary CPH (see exception below)	Holding register Batch record the number of animals.		
		AML1 Movement document Record only the number of animals being moved.		
Sheep walking/walked to adjacent or close proximity land with a different CPH	Holding register If moving frequently to/from the different CPH, on foot, without mixing with other livestock – record the CPHs and frequency of moves in the holding registers only. (No AML1 movement document required).			

Note: The rules for recording and reporting movements are not affected by whether or not a holding is part of a Sole Occupancy Authority. Moves to SOA, and moves between different premises within a SOA must still be recorded and reported.

Central Point Recording Centres (CPRCs)

For individual recording, you may choose to read and record an animal's individual identification number yourself as it moves off your holding (in your holding register and on the movement document) *or* use the CPRC they are moving to (such as a market or abattoir specifically approved for that purpose) to electronically read and record the numbers on your behalf.

How a CPRC works



There may however be occasions when a CPRC is unable to provide you with a complete list of individual EID numbers for the animals you have sent to them. This is not surprising given the many millions of animals moved through markets each year. There can be many causes such as lost, damaged, or faulty tags, or temporary problems with reading equipment. This is why CPRCs cannot and do not guarantee a 100% read rate for every batch of animals they will read.

You must be aware that in those instances your holding register records will be deemed to be inaccurate and if that is spotted at an inspection an SFP reduction may be applied (3% of sheep keepers are inspected each year).

It is for you to decide whether you wish to use the services of a CPRC or alternatively read and record the individual numbers of your animals before they move off your holding. There is no record keeping tolerance of incomplete EID data. Defra wrote to all keepers last February to explain why¹ (the costs to Government of allowing this would massively exceed the small amount of SFP

¹ <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/movements/sheep/documents/eid-cross-compliance.pdf>



reductions that keepers would avoid). CPRCs nevertheless are saving keepers between £7-18 million p/a in not having to buy and use their own reading equipment if they do not wish to.

Management benefits of electronic identification

There is potential to take advantage of certain management benefits. With the appropriate EID readers and computer software, EID can simplify record keeping including on and off movements, and medicine records. The margin for error and time required is reduced in comparison with manually recording individual animal movements.

Individual EID recording can help to track productivity of the breeding flock and monitor live weight gains of individual progeny. It provides an incredibly useful tool for flock improvement as recording this information can inform decision-making on retention of breeding replacement animals.

Further guidance

Defra – [guidance for keepers in England](#) – rules for identifying sheep and goats

Defra website – www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/movements/sheep/

Video guidance – www.youtube.com/user/DefraUK/videos?query=EID

Farming Advice Helpline – 0845 345 1302

Email – Advice@farmingadvice.service.org.uk