



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Changes to Sole Occupancy Authorities (SOAs)

Stakeholder information note – June 2013

What is a SOA?

A group of premises within the same management and control may be approved by the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) as a Sole Occupancy Group (SOG) (commonly known as a Sole Occupancy Authority / SOA). The details are as follows:

- Movements of livestock between such premises will not trigger a standstill.
- There is no distance limit on the premises that make up the SOA (except for SOAs within the Intensive Action Area (IAA), which are restricted to 16km between premises).
- Standstill applies to all premises in the SOA for movements of livestock onto any of the premises in the SOA from any premises outside the SOA.
- Keepers can move cattle between premises in the SOA without pre-movement testing for TB.
- Identification and movement reporting rules still apply to all movements within a SOA.

What is changing?

From 1 November 2013 we will:

- Accept no new SOA applications or requests for the addition of new holdings to existing SOAs. (This includes SOAs within the Intensive Action Area [IAASOAs]).

In the long term it is possible that all SOAs and CTS links (linked holdings) may be abolished in Wales as part of a rationalisation of the County Parish Holding (CPH) system. This would be to implement the Working Smarter recommendation to simplify livestock movement controls.

What will farmers need to do and when?

Farmers should prepare for these changes and make adjustments to their business if necessary. Any farmers wishing to set up a new SOA this year would need to do so before November.

Why make changes?

- **Disease control** – SOAs allow animal movements over long distances with no standstill or pre-movement testing for TB and therefore involve a risk of disease spread. Stopping issuing new SOAs (and removing SOAs in the longer term) will reduce that risk.
- **Working Smarter** - Stopping the issuing of new SOAs would be a first step towards the longer term objective of removing all existing SOAs as part of a wider reform of the CPH system – i.e. implementing recommendation 32 of the Working Smarter report.
- **Consistency** – These changes would ensure a consistent approach with England, where Defra stopped issuing new SOAs in July 2012.

Q&A

What about CTS links (linked holdings)?

CTS links (linked holdings) are not affected by these changes.

A **linked holding** is an administrative arrangement with BCMS, which enables a farmer to move cattle to and from different holdings under their management without the need to notify BCMS. If you have a BCMS link, it is important to remember the following:

- Records must be maintained within 36 hours of the movement in the herd register.
- Cattle must be pre movement tested (unless they qualify under the exemptions listed in The Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010.
- The holding of destination will be subject to the 6 day standstill.
- Linked holdings are valid for one year only; after this period you must re-apply for a linked holding with BCMS.

What happens to my existing SOA?

You can retain your existing SOA and the operational requirements associated with it will be unchanged. You will not be able to add new premises to your existing SOA.

What if I have a SOA within the Intensive Action Area (IAA)?

The same will apply as for other SOAs.

Further information

For further information on SOAs, please contact your **local AHVLA office**.

Contact details are available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/helpandadvice/rateams/ahoffices/?lang=en>

For further information on CTS links (linked holdings), please contact BCMS on 0845 0501234.

Further information on livestock movement rules is available at:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/ahw/farmanimaltracing/;jsessionid=9D95A2D2EC69F6F187D55EA3C5F0D472?lang=en>

Cattle keepers within the Intensive Action area (IAA) should refer to the guidance received in June 2010 on the additional cattle controls in the IAA.