



To Sheep and Goat Keepers in England

27 February 2012

## RECORDING ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS CROSS COMPLIANCE

I am writing to give you some important information about possible implications of recording sheep movements through Central Point Recording Centres (CPRCs) and to update you on the good news about the deferral of individual movement reporting requirements for older sheep and goats.

### CPRC TOLERANCE

If you move adult sheep (or goats) which are individually *electronically* identified you must record their individual tag numbers in your holding register and movement document. It is up to you to decide whether you read and record their individual identification numbers yourself as they move off your holding or use a CPRC to read electronically the numbers on your behalf. It is not possible for CPRCs always to read every tag so you may on occasion find that the individual animal information they provide to you for your holding register is incomplete. Where animals' individual EID tag numbers are not recorded at all or are recorded inaccurately in holding registers, keepers run a risk of a cross compliance reduction to their Single Farm Payment (SFP) if that is found during an inspection. We inspect 3% of sheep and goat holdings annually.

Due to this risk, your industry representatives asked Defra to consider allowing a record keeping tolerance for keepers when individual animal details are recorded on your behalf by CPRCs. Whilst Defra is sympathetic to these concerns, there is no evidence to support the perception that a large numbers of keepers will see their SFP reduced as a result of inaccurate information being provided by CPRCs. From 1,762 sheep inspections carried out in England in 2011 only seven keepers were found to have breaches that were solely the result of failure to read tags at CPRCs. We have calculated that of those only five would have benefitted from an EID record keeping tolerance. The total value of the SFP reductions the sheep industry would have avoided is estimated at £2,680. If Government applied a tolerance and the EU Commission did not accept our arguments for it we could be faced with a disallowance bill of up to several million pounds. Therefore, on balance we are not persuaded that the small overall benefit justifies the introduction of such arrangements in England, and Defra will not apply a tolerance. We will, however keep this under review for future years.

### OLDER ANIMALS

I am pleased to confirm the excellent news on the requirement to include *individual* tag numbers on movement documents for older 'historic animals' (those identified before 31 December 2009). We have persuaded the EU to defer this requirement until 1 January 2015. There will be no deferral beyond this date so please do not wait until then to decide how you will record the movement of any of these animals that you may have from that time onwards. Please also remember, however, that historic animals moving to a *slaughter* market or direct to an abattoir will continue to be recorded beyond 1 January 2015 on a batch basis in holding registers *and* on movement documents.

If you have any questions on livestock ID and recording please ring the DEFRA helpline on 08459 335577, or visit our website at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/food-farm/animals/movements/>

Yours faithfully

Andrew Bishop  
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