ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION (EID)
Question and Answers

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Q.1 Why are changes being introduced?

New European rules intended to improve traceability by introducing individual animal recording came into force on 31 December 2009. This will allow us to manage a disease outbreak more effectively and these new rules are implemented and enforced by the Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) (Scotland) Order 2009.

Q.2 What are the requirements?

In practical terms there are five key requirements to the legislation, you must:

- register as a keeper on every holding that you use;
- identify each of your animals;
- keep your records up to date;
- complete movement documents for every move; and
- notify movements of animals on to your holding to the Scottish Animal Movement Unit (SAMU).

Q.3 Where can I find detailed guidance?

Detailed guidance can be found on the Scottish Government website http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/animal-welfare/Diseases/IDtraceability/SheepandGoats All sheep and goat keepers in Scotland will also receive this guidance in February.

Q.4 How do I have to identify my animals?

There are four animal categories and the identification and recording rules are different for each one. The categories are as follows.

- **full EID identified animals** (sheep born or identified after 31/12/09)
  These sheep must have two identifiers, one of which must be electronic.

- **double identified animals** (goats born or identified after 31/12/09)
  Goats that must have two identifiers.

- **slaughter animals** (lambs or kids – born or identified after 31/12/09 and intended for slaughter within 12 months of birth)
  These animals must have one tag – an 'electronic slaughter tag' for lambs and a 'non-electronic slaughter tag' for kids.

- **the historic flock or herd or historic animals** (older sheep or goats born or identified before 31/12/09).
  These animals will already be identified and do not need to be electronically identified.

Q.5 What is electronic identification (EID)?

Electronic identification, often referred to as EID, is a tool which allows keepers to record information on individual animals more quickly and easily, especially where large numbers of animals are moved at speed. The electronic identifier has a microchip which contains the animal’s individual number. The electronic identifier can be an ear tag, a bolus (an identifier in a container that is swallowed and stays in the animal's stomach) or a pastern tag (a band around the animal’s lower leg). The number in the microchip can be read by using an electronic reader.

Q.6 Does EID apply to all sheep and goats?
EID applies to all sheep born in Scotland as the UK has over 600,000 sheep which is the threshold for mandatory EID. It does not apply for goats as the UK has a population of less than 160,000 which is the mandatory threshold for EID for goats.

Q.7 When do I have to tag my sheep and goats?

• within six months of birth, if the animals are housed overnight
• within nine months of birth, if the animals are not housed overnight (i.e. in the field)
• or before the animal moves from its holding of birth (whichever happens first)

Q.8 How should my sheep be tagged?

Tags should be fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions which may vary from tag to tag.

Q.9 What will be printed on the EID tag – from 31st December 2009?

Full EID tag – a zero then your unique flock mark followed by a five-digit animal number; the microchip within the tag will be the same as the number printed on the outside. If you scan the EID tag with a reader it will display ‘826’ – the international standard (ISO) code for the UK.

Slaughter EID tag – your flock mark or herd mark.

Q.10 Do I need to buy a reader to read EID tags?

No. You can choose to manually record tag numbers instead of investing in EID reading equipment. The EU Regulation does not mandate electronic recording by keepers.

In certain situations this may be a practical way for keepers to gather the necessary individual tag numbers. However, in the UK, using a Critical Control Point will be one way that keepers who have to can do this. Also, for many keepers within farm business moves where the ownership does not change batch recording can be used.

Q.11 How will the new tag numbers be allocated?

As new tag numbers are allocated to tag manufacturers by ETAS*. When keepers order their first electronic tags ETAS will start at ‘00001’ and run in sequence. Keepers won’t be allowed to number skip (as they can now) – so when they put in their next order ETAS will start where they left off.

(*Ear Tag Allocation System that allocates official tag numbers in GB, operated by RPA-BCMS)

Q.12 Can sheep & goat ear tags be any colour?

The EID identifier in Scotland can be any colour, however, we recommend that you use yellow to follow the position in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who have reserved this colour for EID identifiers. You should check with your purchasers and suppliers for any preferences they may have.

The numbers and letters on all identifiers must be a different colour to the background of the identifier and must be clearly readable. You may use any colour, other than the reserved ones (red and black) for non-electronic tags and management tags. For official identification, you must only use approved identifiers.
Reserved Colours:—
Black: for ear or pastern tags where the sheep has an EID bolus
Red: for replacement tags only (including EID identifiers)

Q.13 Can keepers print additional information on official UK tags?
Yes. However, they must ensure their additional number/characters do not obscure or confuse the official UK number. Typically they might do this by prefixing their own management number with a letter code and/or print it on the other side/part of a tag from the official number.

Q.14 Can keepers insert their own management tags?
Yes. But the management tag must not contain the letters ‘UK’, show the official flock mark, or animal number or be reserved colours (red or black).

Q.15 How can keepers order official tags?
Official identifiers (conventional and EID) have to be approved before they can be supplied by tag manufacturers as official tags for sheep and goats. Keepers should consult their tag suppliers to see if they can supply EID as well as conventional tags.

Q.16 Can keepers ‘upgrade’ lambs to double tags if they want to keep them beyond 12 months?
Yes - in certain circumstances - as long as the animal is completely traceable (i.e. back to the holding of birth). This means they can ‘upgrade’ a single tagged animal to a double tagged animal in order to keep it beyond 12 months of age.

Q.17 When must individual sheep & goats IDs be recorded in holding registers?
From 31st December 2009 – for animals born or identified from that date.

Q.18 When must individual sheep & goats IDs be recorded in movement document?
- no animal has to be *individually recorded* on a movement document until 1 January 2011 except for movements to show grounds (Q.20)
- no animals born before 31/12/2009 have to be individually recorded on a movement document until 31 December 2011; except for movements to show grounds (Q.20)
- no animal born before 31/12/2009, and moving to slaughter (directly or via a market) have to be individually recorded on a movement document at all.
- A derogation to permit the use of Critical Control Points (CPP’s) will allow individual information to be read on behalf of keepers (Q.22)

Q.19 What do I do about moves between holdings within my business?
The Scottish Government recognises there could be practical problems associated with individually recording post 31/12/2009 double tagged animals for these frequent movements. Where animals are moved from one holding to another but the ownership of the animals does not change, an entry should be recorded in the holding register showing the number of animals moved at batch level.

Q.20 What about movements to show grounds?
For movements to show grounds or exhibitions you will need to record each animal’s individual identification number; and complete a movement document for each move to and from the show ground.

**Q.21 What about movements to a vet?**

Your animals should normally be correctly identified before they move. However, in an emergency you can move animals to a vet without them being identified. You should record the move in the holding register but you do not have to fill in a movement document.

**Q.22 What are the rules for Exports and imports?**

If you are exporting sheep and goats, either to another EU country or to a country outside the EU, animals must (depending on when they were born) be fully EID identified or double identified with identifiers which bear the same individual identification number. Full guidance will be issued to all keepers and published on the SG website.

**Q.23 What about moves within the UK?**

Moves to Scotland from England, Wales, and Northern Ireland will be accompanied by a movement document required by the legislation in that country. The receiving keeper in Scotland should action these as they would a Scottish movement document. Scottish movement documents should be completed for moves into England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

**Q.24 What is a Critical Control Point?**

To help with recording the animal’s individual number, we have introduced critical control point (CCP) recording. This is where an approved CCP, such as a market or abattoir, will electronically read the animal’s individual identification numbers for you.

**Q.25 How much will EID cost UK sheep keepers?**

A set of double tags (1 conventional & one EID) could cost around £1. A basic stick / wand type reader could cost about £450

The cost of both tags and equipment to read EID tag numbers will however vary according to the type of tag and complexity of reading equipment, but in all cases is expected to reduce over time.

Remember, beyond electronic tagging of some animals, many keepers will not need to invest in reading equipment.

Grant assistance of up to £1000 is available for the purchase of reading equipment through the SRDP.

**Q.26 What is the Scottish Government EID Research Pilot**

The Scottish EID research Pilot is aimed at finding workable and cost effective solutions to EID in sheep.

**Q.27 How do I join the Scottish Government EID Research Pilot?**

Go to www.ScotEID.com and click the link to register.
We are currently setting up an information centre. If you do not have an internet connection you will be able to register through the information centre shortly. We are also investigating the possibility of the marts registering customers with the pilot. Please ensure you have the following information to hand when you register:

- Your holding numbers
- Your flock numbers
- Approximate number of breeding ewes

Q.28 What is a partner farm?

A partner farm is a farm who has registered to participate in the EID Research Pilot and together will provide the numbers of EID tagged sheep to fully test the EID systems that have already been installed and new systems still in development.

Q.29 What is the pilot likely to achieve?

Ongoing work carried out by the Research Pilot is focused by the Scottish sheep industry’s request to provide full traceability using EID, with minimum disruption to farms, markets and abattoirs. This close involvement with industry in building the Scottish system has developed a range of world leading solutions.

Q.30 What are the additional benefits of joining the pilot?

You will be able to log in to the Scot EID database to see your individual movement records. The pilot database stores your movement records and these can be printed out.

The movement history of your recorded sheep is shown along with movement types and other information.

Your flock register can be kept here and can be downloaded in spreadsheet format for importing into your own third party software, or just for use as a local spreadsheet.

You will help your Market and/or Abattoir test the systems required to provide EID traceability with minimum disruption to the industry.

You will be able to access day to day developments on the progress of the pilot, and participate in the online forum where your views and ideas will be appreciated.

You will be able to provide information and comments concerning EID working in real conditions, this will help ongoing research work continue to develop solutions towards using EID for sheep traceability.