

# A farmer's guide to EID



**Better Returns Programme**

A new EU regulation comes into force on 31 December 2009 regarding the individual identification of sheep and goats.

To help producers understand their obligations, EBLEX has produced this leaflet to answer many of the questions being asked in the run-up to the start of the new regime.

Failing to comply with the regulation is illegal and could lead to single payment penalties. Farmers need to start taking steps now in order to meet the new rules starting at the end of this year.



## EID terminology explained

<b>EID</b>	<b>Electronic Identification.</b>
<b>Holding Register</b>	A record of all the sheep on the holding containing details such as year of birth, date of identification, breed, date of death, replacement tag records and individual or batch movements.
<b>Reader Identifier</b>	A hand-held or static device that reads the electronic identifier.
<b>Electronic Identifier</b>	Method by which the animal is electronically identified, such as an electronic ear tag, electronic pastern tag or electronic bolus.
<b>Transponder</b>	The electronic microchip contained within a tag or bolus.
<b>FDX/HDX</b>	Full Duplex / Half Duplex. Different types of technology used in the transponders.
<b>Dual Technology</b>	Means both FDX and HDX. Readers should be approved to read dual technology.
<b>CPRC</b>	Central Point Recording Centre – an approved site where the animal's electronic identifier can be read and the movement records populated, eg a market, abattoir or third party.
<b>Match-up Tag</b>	An ear tag that is required in sheep that are individually identified. It has the same number as the electronic identifier.
<b>Slaughter Tag</b>	A single non-electronic (manual) tag or electronic tag that can be used in lambs destined for slaughter under 12 months of age.
<b>Batch-within-Batch</b>	The number of different flock numbers present within an overall batch of lambs.
<b>WYSIWYG</b>	'What you see is what you get'. This refers to the numbering system of the tag and means that the visual number on the tag is the same as the number on the transponder.



## WHY IS EID BEING INTRODUCED?

### Why is the legislation governing sheep identification changing?

The FMD outbreak in 2001 highlighted deficiencies with regard to sheep identification and tracing. The objective behind the changes to the system, agreed by the EU back in 2003, is to improve the identification and tracing of sheep by bringing in individual traceability across all EU member states.

### Is EID mandatory for all Member States?

EID is only mandatory in Member States with combined caprine (goat) and ovine populations of 600,000 animals and for Member States with caprine populations of over 160,000 animals. Individual recording is mandatory in all Member States, irrespective of flock size.

### What if I don't comply with the legislation?

Complying with legislation is a legal obligation and non-compliance will be illegal. Anomalies found during cross compliance inspections could lead to Single Payment Scheme financial penalties. Incorrectly identified animals cannot be moved off the holding.



## WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?

### Will I need to buy an electronic reader?

No. Whilst you may wish to buy a reader for your own convenience, you can read tags manually or when you move animals to a Central Point Recording Centre (CPRC), whereby an approved CPRC can read and record the tag data for you.

### What equipment would I need to buy if I wanted to invest in a reader?

Essentially you would need a reader and a computer. Alternatively some readers can transmit information directly to a printer. Readers vary immensely, both in terms of function and cost. You may also wish to invest in a software program to help analyse the collected data. Speak to stockists of EID equipment and ask producers already working with EID.

### Will any readers work with any tag and computer software package?

All readers and tags have to meet specified standards set out in the technical guidelines of the regulation. Ear tags must also pass an approval system before being sold in the UK. A list of reading equipment meeting these standards and approved ear tags is available on the Rural Payments Agency website, [www.rpa.gov.uk](http://www.rpa.gov.uk)

### What methods of electronic identification are there?

Electronic methods of identification include: an electronic ear tag, electronic pastern tag and bolus.

For sheep to be retained over 12 months of age you must use two methods of identification, one of which must be electronic. All electronic ear tags (with the exception of red electronic replacement tags – see later) will be yellow.

### Why will electronic tags be yellow? Can I use any other colour as my match-up tag?

It has been decided to retain yellow for electronic tags so that they are easily distinguishable. You can use any other colour with the exception of yellow, black and red for your match-up tag. Red is retained for replacement tags for sheep not born on your holding. Black is retained for the secondary identifier to an electronic bolus to identify that a bolus has been administered. You can also have additional management information put on your tag, provided it is not additional flock mark information.

 **ELECTRONIC**

 **BOLUS**

 **REPLACEMENT**

### Why can't we use an electronic chip similar to the one used for pets?

These are not yet approved for use due to migration issues from the injection site and potential public health issues. This will be reviewed as any new evidence comes to light.

## How much will electronic identifiers cost me?

Costs vary. There is a variety of tags available ranging from 65p to over £1. A bolus will cost in the region of £1.20 – £1.50.



## What information will be printed on the ear tag?

Tags used for individually identifying sheep will contain your existing UK flock number followed by a five digit individual number. The flock number will be preceded by a '0' and all individual numbers will start at 00001. For example Tag example should read UK 0 123456 00001. Both electronic and non-electronic slaughter tags will not show the individual number.

## What is meant by dual technology?

In the UK both FDX (Full Duplex) and HDX (Half Duplex) transponders will be used. These transponders read in slightly different ways. Dual Technology readers are required to meet standards so that both types of transponder can be read.

## WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

### When do I need to first identify my sheep?

For intensive systems you have to identify sheep by the time they are six months of age. For an extensive system they must be identified by the time they have reached nine months of age, or before they leave the holding of birth, whichever is sooner.

### What does the slaughter derogation mean?

Lambs that are intended for slaughter under 12 months of age can be identified by a single non-electronic slaughter tag, (ie visual flock number only). However, under this derogation there are issues related to reading tags from

mixed holdings of birth, ie store finishers, and in large throughput situations.

To facilitate the recording of batch within batch information in these and similar scenarios, an electronic slaughter tag (visual flock number only) has been approved for use. It is advisable to speak with your local auctioneer if you sell live, your abattoir operator if you sell direct, or your lamb feeder if you sell privately to enquire what means of identification they require, or recommend, prior to tagging/selling your lambs.

### For lambs going to slaughter within 12 months of age, can I use up slaughter tags that I have left over from this year?

No.

### What if I want to retain my lamb that was originally destined for slaughter for breeding instead?

If the lamb is on the holding of birth then the non-electronic tag can be removed and double individual identifiers applied, noting this in your holding register.

### What if the lamb was bought in?

You cannot upgrade any lambs with non-electronic batch tags if they have not been born on your holding. However, you can upgrade the tag to full EID if you can show the animal's full traceability. This can be achieved if the lamb has an electronic slaughter tag, and has moved directly from its holding of birth (or via a market), and the market can read the full individual number contained within the chip.

You can use that information to record the movement on to your holding and to cross reference the new double individual identifiers you apply to the lamb. You cannot upgrade a slaughter animal on subsequent holdings.

### Do I need to re-identify my existing flock so they have an electronic device?

No. Sheep identified prior to 31 December 2009 will continue to be identified as they are currently, with either one or two tags in accordance with their date of birth. The regulation regarding electronic devices only applies to sheep identified after 31 December 2009.

### What if I wanted to electronically identify my existing flock, can I do that?

Yes. You will need to apply a new set of identifiers, one of which is electronic, and remove the existing tags. You will need to cross reference this information in your holding register.



# 31 DECEMBER

# 2009

All sheep born or identified after this date, which are not intended for slaughter within 12 months of age, must have two identifiers (containing a flock and individual number), one of which must be electronic. Separate rules apply for sheep intended for slaughter within 12 months of age

## WHAT HAPPENS ABOUT LOST TAGS?

### If my sheep loses a tag do I have to order and put in an identical match-up tag?

Not unless you wish to or unless the animal has a bolus and has lost its original black match up tag. The rules vary depending on whether the sheep is still on the holding of birth, when it was identified (see next question) and what it is identified with.

- **For animals born or identified after 31 December 2009 and identified with a matching pair of tags (one of which is electronic).**

If still on the holding of birth you can remove the remaining tag and apply a new set of UK tags, cross referencing it in the holding register. If no longer on the holding of birth you can either apply a like-for-like replacement or apply a new set of red replacement tags (one of which is electronic), cross referencing again in the holding register.

- **For lambs identified with slaughter tags.**

If on the holding of birth, replace with either a slaughter tag or an electronic batch tag and record that a replacement has been applied in the holding register. If no longer on the holding of birth replace with either a red slaughter tag or a red electronic slaughter tag and record the old (if known) and new replacement flock marks in the holding register.

- **If the animal has a bolus and it's the black tag that has been lost.**

You will need to read the transponder number and order and apply a new identical black tag. You will also need to record that a replacement has been applied in the holding register.

### Will I need to buy red replacement tags separately?

Red replacement tags should be purchased as part of the normal run of tags and their individual number will be part of the numbering sequence.

### What about the replacement rules for animals born and identified before 31 December 2009?

Replacements for animals born before 31 December 2009 can be an identical replacement or a new matching pair. These do not have to be electronic.

Where the animal is not on its holding of birth, non-identical replacements need to be red. When non-identical replacements are applied on the holding of birth, only the new individual number needs to be recorded in the holding register. A full cross reference is required when replacements are applied on holdings other than the holding of birth.



## WHAT INFORMATION IS REQUIRED IN THE HOLDING REGISTER AND ON MOVEMENT LICENCES?

### What information will I need to include in my holding register?

It will depend on when the animal was identified and how it is identified.

- For animals born or identified after 31 December 2009, you will need to record individual numbers when first identified, or moved on or off the holding. You will also need to record the year of birth, date of identification, month, year of death, breed and if known genotype.
- The requirements for the existing flock remain on a batch system.
- Slaughter lambs identified with a batch tag will be recorded on a batch system as present; the only exception being that batch-within-batch recording must

take place, ie the listing of the number of lambs under different flock numbers.

### Will I need to populate individual identities on movement licences?

It will depend when the animal was identified, with what and whether you are having animals read at a Central Point Recording Centre (CPRC) for example at a market or abattoir.

- For individually identified animals born after 31 December 2009, you will from 1 January 2011, have to populate movement licences with the sheep's full identification number.
- Slaughter lambs will be recorded on a batch basis, but must show batch-within-batch details.

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## 1 JANUARY

2011

Individual recording is required on movement documents for all animals electronically identified after 31 December 2009. Batch-within-batch recording required for slaughter lambs.

## 31 DECEMBER

2011

Individual recording is mandatory on movement documents for all animals born before 31 December 2009. Batch recording will continue for these animals going direct to slaughter.

## MANAGEMENT BENEFITS

### Are there any management benefits from EID?

Some producers already use EID to record management operations and track on-farm performance. This may include monitoring breeding programmes, recording weights, calculating daily liveweight gains, and monitoring medicine withdrawal periods. Some abattoirs may even be able to offer feedback on individual carcass data.



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- From 31 December 2011, animals born before 31 December 2009 will have to be individually recorded on movement documents unless moving to slaughter (directly or via a market), in which case batch recording is acceptable.

Where animals are read electronically a list of the individual numbers can be downloaded and attached to the holding register.

Recording individual or batch-within-batch information on movement documents will need to be completed prior to leaving the holding of departure, unless they are moving to a Central Point Recording Centre (CPRC). If this is the case, you would need to record batch information prior to departure, but the CPRC would read the tags and provide individual identification data. If you use a CPRC, you will need to record the individual or batch-within-batch information in your holding register within 48 hours of the animals leaving your holding.

### Who will be Central Point Recording Centres?

It is likely that markets and abattoirs will seek approval to act as CPRCs, although there may be other third parties, such as hauliers and livestock agents, who will also offer this service. An approved list of CPRCs will be published and details of where this can be accessed will be made available later this year.

### What about farm to farm movements such as moving sheep to winter grazing? Do I need to record all the individual identities?

No, unless there is a change of keepership or ownership. If this is the case individual identities and holding of birth identities for slaughter lambs will need to be recorded. Where the animals are moved within a business (ie no change of ownership) and animals remain under the control of the keeper, then these animals can be recorded on a batch basis. This is currently an interim measure and Defra will issue further guidance later this year.



# KEY DATES

## 31 December 2009

### Identification:

All sheep born or identified after 31 December 2009, which are not intended for slaughter within 12 months of age, must have two identifiers (containing a flock and individual number), one of which must be an electronic form of identification.

For sheep intended for slaughter within 12 months of age apply **ONE** of the following options:

- a single non-electronic batch tag (only flock number shown visually)
- a single electronic batch tag (only flock number shown visually)
- Full EID

### Holding Register:

From 31 December 2009 individual recording in the holding register of all sheep double identified with a matching pair of identifiers (one of which is electronic). Includes recording of: year of birth, date of identification, month and year of death, breed, genotype if known and individual movements. Batch records continue for animals born before 31 December 2009 and slaughter lambs. For animals identified with either a single non-electronic batch tag or a single electronic batch tag the holding register must detail the number of animals in a batch with the same flock number (also referred to as batch-within-batch recording).

## 01 January 2011

### Movement Documents:

Individual recording is required on movement documents for all animals electronically identified after 31 December 2009. Batch movement documents continue for slaughter animals (batch-within-batch applies) and animals born before 31 December 2009.

## 31 December 2011

### Movement Documents:

Individual recording is mandatory for all animals born before 31 December 2009, except if animals are moving direct to slaughter or via a market to slaughter where batch recording will continue to apply.

**For further information please contact Defra:**

**Website:** [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/livestock](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/livestock) **Defra helpline:** 08459 335577

**This leaflet has been supported by:**



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