

EID – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

EID for sheep is now with us and here we answer some of the key questions regarding its implementation:

Q What are the options for EID?

A There are three: an EID tag, an EID bolus or a pastern tag.

Q Can we use chips similar to those implanted in pets?

A No – because of concern that the chip can move within the animal's body there are not an option in the UK as they may cause a public health problem.

Q What are the rules about the colour of tags?

A For sheep born after 31 December 2009, EID tags must be yellow. If a replacement tag is required and the animal is not on the holding of birth, it must be red and the matching tag in a sheep with an EID bolus has to be black. For sheep with an EID tag, the secondary tag can, therefore, be any colour except yellow, black or red.

Q Which sheep need to be electronically identified?

A All sheep born on or after 31 December 2009 and not intended for slaughter within 12 months old have to have to be electronically identified. These sheep will have two identifiers, one of which

must be electronic.

Q What happens with sheep that will be slaughtered before 12 months old?

A These can be identified with the full EID tag and visual match-up. Alternatively they can be identified by either a single electronic tag or a single non-EID tag, both of which will visually only bear the UK flock number.

Q What about sheep born before 31 December 2009?

A There is no need to electronically identify them or record their movements individually in the holding register. However, from 31 December 2011, these animals will have to be individually recorded on movement documents unless they are moving direct to slaughter or via a market to slaughter. When moving to slaughter, a batch movement document can still be used.

Q Can I use up existing stocks of tags?

A The way tags are numbered changes from 31 December so new tags will be needed for all sheep born after that date.

Q What numbering will be on the new tags?

A On non-EID tags for sheep going to slaughter under 12 months old, it will just be the flock number. EID slaughter tags for sheep going to slaughter before 12 months old will only the flock mark will be printed on the tag: for these animals the flock mark and an individual

number will be on the EID chip inside the slaughter tag. EID tags for sheep not intended for slaughter before 12 months old will carry both the flock mark and the individual number both on the tag and on the chip inside the tag.

Q Will the data on the EID chip and the tag look the same?

A Mostly it will look the same but on the EID chip the letters UK will be replaced by the numbers 826. This will be followed by the six-digit flock number preceded by a zero and followed by a five-digit individual animal number starting back at 00001.

Q What happens if a sheep with an EID tag and a non-EID tag loses one?

A You can either order an identical replacement or you can remove the remaining tag and replace it with two new ones. If you replace both and the sheep is not on its holding of birth, the replacements must be red. The old and new tag numbers will also need to be cross referenced in the flock register.

Q What if a sheep loses both tags?

A You will have to fit two new tags and make a note in the flock register entering the sheep as 'identity unknown' and cross reference this to the new tag number.

Q How quickly do I need to replace lost tags?

A Within 28 days from discovering the loss. It will probably be simpler to keep a stock of replacement tags and fit them as you find losses.

Q How much will EID tags cost?

A Costs will vary but they should start at around 65p per single EID tag. Standard non-EID tags should remain at round 75p upwards for a pair.

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Q Are some tags better than others?

A So far there is no firm evidence to say that some are better retained than others. Retention problems can be because of poor insertion technique or because the wrong applicator is used. For all tags the closer to the head they are inserted, the less chance there is of them being caught on fences or feeders. For loop tags, inserting them on the front of the ear, about one-third of the distance from the head has been shown to work the best.

Q What do I need to record on the holding register and movement forms?

A For animals born and identified after 31 December 2009, individual numbers have to be recorded when the animal is first tagged, when they are moved on or off your holding, have a tag replaced, are upgraded or die. Most of this recording will not require a single-line entry and CPRCs will send back movement-related entries. Slaughter lambs identified by batch tagging will continue to be recorded on a batch basis, but in addition batch within batch recording must take place to record the number of lambs of different flock numbers. Will movement forms need individual numbers on them?

For animals born after 31 December 2009, movement forms will have to include individual numbers from 1

January 2011. This can be done by attaching a list to an AML1 form. Animals identified with a batch tag will need to be on a batch basis, and batches within the main batch will have to be recorded. When moving to a CPRC, the AML1 only needs to record the number of sheep moving.

For more detailed information on the new EU regulation, EBLEX has produced an excellent farmer's guide to EID. Copies of the guide are available, free of charge, from RBST. To obtain a copy, call 024 7669 6551 or email enquiries@rbst.org.uk.

Lambs for Slaughter – Full EID or not?



RBST Council member Richard Barker farms Fowlescombe, a


mixed organic farm in Devon where he rears Manx Loaghtan and Hebridean sheep. Having considered all the options, Richard has chosen to go the full EID route for all of his lambs.

He explains: "We put 130 ewes to ram in November so we are anticipating quite a few lambs to deal with in the spring. The regulations give us two choices for lambs destined for

slaughter but we decided to keep things simple and use the full EID tags across the board.

"In reality with a number of native breeds, the meat sold is hogget rather than lamb since the animals don't go to slaughter until they are between one and two years old – ours tend to be around 14 months. Effectively, therefore, whether the lambs are intended for slaughter or will be kept as pedigree breeding stock, the regulations will require them to have the full EID tag and visual matchup."

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