

New Sheep and Goat Double-Tagging Rules

Q. Why is double-tagging being introduced?

A. European legislation has required it since July 2005. The UK initially obtained a derogation which allowed us to keep our national system. However we lost this in the summer, due largely to poor compliance with the rules, and we are now having to introduce double-tagging

Q. When will double-tagging be introduced?

A. The target date for the new legislation is 11th January 2008. Any animal born after 11th January 2008 or not yet officially identified by this date, should be tagged according to the new rules.

Q. What happens to the identification of Older Animals?

A. Animals that have been identified before 11th January 2008 with an **Official UK tag*** can continue to be identified with a single ear tag.

Q. Will double-tagging apply to all animals?

A. No. Only animals which are NOT intended for slaughter within the UK by 12 months of age need to be double-tagged. All other animals can still be single-tagged.

Q. Must the two tags be identical?

A. The identification numbers on the two tags must be identical, when first applied. However, the style or colour of the two tags may be different.

Q. Which ears should the two tags be applied to?

A. We advise that one tag should be applied to each ear. Advice on tagging can be found on the DEFRA website, at <http://defraweb/animalh/id-move/sheep-goats/tagging.htm>

Q. Will tattoos still be allowed?

A. Although we refer to "double-tagging", tattoos are allowed as a secondary means of identification. This means that, provided an animal has one tag, the second means of identification can be a tattoo. However the tattoo must be in the ***Official UK format***.

Q. How do I identify animals intended for slaughter?

A. Animals which are intended for domestic slaughter within 12 months of age, either directly or indirectly, may be identified by a single **Official UK tag*** which must be applied within six months of birth for intensively reared animals or within 9 months of birth for extensively reared animals, or before movement off the holding, whichever is the soonest.

Q. If slaughter animals reach 12 months of age will they need to be double tagged?

A. If you keep a single-tagged animal which has reached 12 months of age, then you must double-tag the animal. The keeper can choose to apply an additional UK tag with an identical number or two new UK tags with a different number which must be cross referenced in the holding register with the number on the original single tag. (Note: if a new pair are applied the single tag should NOT be cut out, removed or defaced in any way).

Q. What are the rules for replacement identification for double tagged animals?

A. Lost or damaged tags for double tagged animals must be replaced within 28 days of the loss or damage being detected by an identical tag/replica tag, OR (if the animal is on its birth holding) another UK tag, OR (if the animal is not on its birth holding) a red R tag. When a red R is applied, the full number of the R tag and the remaining tag must be cross referenced in the holding register. Whenever any replacement tag is applied (whatever type), a record should be made in the replacement section of the holding register (columns 1-3). It will be an offence for animals to leave a holding without the correct identification.

Q. What are the rules for replacement identification for single tagged animals?

A. Lost or damaged tags for single tagged animals (those tagged before January 2008 and slaughter animals born during or after January 2008) must be replaced within 28 days of loss or damage being detected. The same rules apply as above

Q. Can management information still be used?

A. Yes. Management information can continue to be used provided it comes after the official number and is separated so as not to be confused with the official number. This can be achieved by using adequate space, -, /, etc.

Q. Can keepers choose different colours for their ear tags?

A. Yes. Keepers can use any colour **except Red**, as this is used for replacement tags.

Q. Will movement tags (S tags) still be required?

A. No. S movement tags will no longer be necessary for any animals moved after the new legislation takes effect. If an S tag is lost from an animal born prior to January 2008 it does not have to be replaced. **Therefore you should ensure you don't order stocks you won't need after the introduction of the new rules in January.**

Q. Will S baseline tags still be required?

A. No. Under the new rules, animals which are not already identified with an individual number must be double-tagged. If an animal is identified with an S Baseline tag prior to 11th January 2008 the animal can be moved without any further identification. **Therefore you should ensure you don't order stocks you won't need after the introduction of the new rules in January.**

Q. Will F tags still be required for imported animals?

A. No. Animals entering the UK from outside the EU will require UK tags rather than F tags. (Although the final position on this is still to be decided). Animals entering from within the EU will retain their existing double tags applied in the country of origin. Animals from NI officially identified during or after January 2008 should be double tagged, unless intended for domestic slaughter before 12 months of age. Animals officially identified before January 2008 can be single tagged. **Therefore you should ensure you don't order stocks you won't need after the introduction of the new rules in January.**

Q. Will the requirements for tagging animals for export change?

A. All animals consigned for export must be identified with two identical ear tags; tattoos are not permitted. Tags must be Official UK format* It is proposed that exporters should be allowed to apply two new identical UK tags to single-tagged animals, rather than having to apply an identical "match-up" tag. However, the two new UK tags would have to be cross-referenced to the existing single tag and exporters should first check with the authorities of the importing country that these arrangements are acceptable to them.