

Sheep and goat identification (SMR 8)

Date published: 7 February, 2019

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

The aim of these rules is to maintain a system for the identification, registration and traceability of sheep and goats.

You must:

Identification

1. identify all sheep and goats with the correct means of identification within six months of birth for intensively farmed animals and nine months for extensively farmed animals, or before they leave the holding of birth, whichever is sooner
2. for intra-community trade, identify sheep and goats with two identically numbered eartags. If identified on or after 31 December, 2009, one identifier must be electronic
3. replace any lost or illegible means of identification within 28 days of noticing their loss or illegibility or before the animal leaves the holding, whichever is the earlier
4. only keep sheep or goats identified with a single slaughter tag beyond the age of 12 months if the animals are completely traceable. You must then replace the single means of identification with two new identifiers. For sheep, one of the identifiers must be electronic

Record keeping

5. for animals born and identified before 31 December, 2009 keep on-farm records with the required information, including:

- details of the movement of sheep and goats on and off your holding, including:
 - the date of the movement
 - the number of animals moved
 - the destination or origin of the animals moved
 - the transport details for the animals leaving your holding
- additionally, for animals born or identified on or after 31 December, 2009 these details must include:
 - the individual identification numbers of individually identified animals and in the case of batches of animals identified with a single slaughter tag which originate from different holdings of birth, the number of animals with each different flock/herd mark
 - in the holding of birth, the individual identification number of the animal, number of animals identified, year of birth and date of identification
 - the breed and, if known, the genotype
 - the individual identifier, month and year of death of an animal on the holding
- for all animals, an annual inventory of the animals kept at 1 December

6. make sure that these on-farm records are up to date, kept for at least three years from the last day when an animal referred to in the register dies or leaves the holding and are available on request to an inspector

You must not:

Identification

1. alter, obliterate or deface any means of identification attached to an animal. However you may apply additional management information provided the legibility of the UK flock mark or UK individual ID number is not affected

Further information

The 'Sheep and Goat Identification and Traceability – Guidance for Keepers in Scotland' gives full guidance on how to comply with the sheep and goat identification rules.

[Sheep and Goat Identification](#)

[Previous versions](#)

[Previous versions of this page](#)

[Download guidance](#)

Click 'Download this page' to create a printable version of this guidance you can save or print out.