

Cattle identification and registration (SMR 7)

This is an old version of the page

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

You must:

Tagging

1. tag all calves born on your holding, or cattle imported from outside the European Union (EU)* with Defra-approved eartags* within the following timescales:

- dairy calves – with one eartag within 36 hours of birth and with the second eartag within 20 days of birth
- bison calves – within nine months of birth or when they are separated from their mother if this is earlier
- other calves – within 20 days of birth
- all animals leaving your holding – with both tags before they leave
- cattle imported from outside the EU – within 20 days of release from import checks

2. replace illegible or lost eartags within 28 days of noticing the damage or loss*

Passports and registration

3. register cattle born on your holding no later than 27 days after birth (seven days for bison) by making an application for a passport from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) through an approved channel*

4. register cattle imported from within the EU, but outside Great Britain, within 15 days of its arrival on your holding by sending the foreign passport/movement document to BCMS and making an application for a passport

5. register cattle imported from outside the EU within 15 days of tagging the animal and no later than 35 days from its release from import checks by making an application for a passport from BCMS

6. produce a signed and valid passport for every animal in your care on request

7. make sure that when cattle are moved off your holding* they are accompanied with their valid passport, properly completed and signed

Notification of movements and deaths

8. notify BCMS through an approved channel** of any movements of cattle onto and off your holding within three days of the movement

9. notify BCMS through an approved channel* of any cattle deaths on your holding within seven days of the date of death*. If your chosen method is to complete the Death details section of the passport, you must return the passport within seven days of the date of the death*

10. notify BCMS by returning the passport of any lost or stolen animal within seven days of becoming aware of the loss or theft

On-farm records (herd register)

11. keep on-farm records for your holding, which include the following appropriate details for each animal:

- official eartag number
- dam's official eartag number
- date of birth

- sex
- date of movements on and off your holding
- details of where the animal has moved to or from
- breed
- date of death

12. complete the herd register within the following timescales:

- movements – 36 hours of them taking place
- birth of a dairy calf – seven days
- birth of any other calf – 30 days
- a death – seven days
- eartag replacement where the eartag number is changed – 36 hours of the replacement

13. holding registers must be retained for 10 years from the end of the calendar year in which the last entry was made. Other registers (eg those kept at markets) must be retained for three years from the end of that year.

You must not:

Tagging

1. remove or replace eartags without permission from Scottish Ministers (obtained through BCMS), except when replacing lost or illegible tag
2. alter, obliterate or deface an eartag

Passports and registration

3. alter or deface a cattle passport

Further information

Full guidance on how to comply with identification rules can be found here:

[Guidance on keeping cattle, bison and buffalo in Great Britain](#)

BCMS email: bcms-enquiries@bcms.rpa.gsi.gov.uk

BCMS Helpline: 0345 050 1234

*Explanation of terms

'Cattle imported from within the EU' must keep their original identification.

'Eartags' should be applied one in each ear and bear the same unique identification code. You can get these from the manufacturers listed on our website.

'Replacement eartags' should bear the same number if cattle were born after 1 January, 1998. For older cattle a new tag number may be used and a new passport requested.

'Approved channels' are, a pre-printed application form, CTS online, CTS Web Services or CTS Self Service Line. This includes (but not exclusively) moving to another farm, market, collection centre, export assembly centre, abattoir or showground.

** *'Approved channels'* are CTS Online, CTS Web Services, CTS Self Service Line, through an Agent or by Movement Card (if applicable).

If an animal is slaughtered outside a slaughterhouse but sent to a slaughterhouse for dressing, you must complete the *'death details section'* in the passport and send it with the animal to the slaughterhouse. Responsibility then lies with the occupier of the slaughterhouse to return the passport to BCMS within seven days of the death.

If the other methods are chosen, the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 (as amended) require you to return the passport within *'seven days of the date of death'*. This is not a Cross Compliance rule, but failure to do so is an offence under the Cattle Identification Regulations.

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