

Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Cùisean Dùthchail agus na h- Àrainneachd
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Sheep EID and cross-compliance – guidance on tagging and recording

Dear Producer

You may already know that the Scottish Government, working with the UK Government and consulting with Scottish industry representatives, has successfully negotiated with the European Commission (EC) for a more proportionate EID cross-compliance system for Scottish sheep farmers.

I am writing to you, and to all of Scotland's sheep farmers, to explain what this development means.

Scottish farmers must continue to comply with EC regulations to avoid penalties, so best practice in tagging and recording your sheep is still essential. In February 2010 we sent you the document 'Sheep and Goat Identification and Traceability – Guidance for Keepers in Scotland', and this guidance still applies.

However, some leeway at cross-compliance inspections will be allowed to account for technology failures and the difficulties with gathering sheep on extensive hill terrain.

I enclose three documents which explain this in detail:

- a Q & A leaflet,
- a tagging guide, setting out the steps you should take to comply and achieve the best read rates when your sheep are electronically read at markets, ferry terminals or abattoirs, and
- a guide to ScotEID, which details how to use the information in the ScotEID system to maintain your flock register.

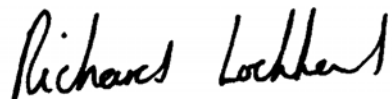
As you may recall, we invested £5 million in the ScotEID system to meet industry needs, prevent disease through better traceability and limit burdens on farmers. This is helping farmers to meet cross-compliance requirements, and therefore helps safeguard millions of pounds of EU Single Farm Payments each year.

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The more proportionate EID system the the Scottish Government has secured will only be retained if we continue to show that we can comply with EU regulations. I have said all along that we will work flat out to avoid a situation where farmers are deterred from producing, and on this occasion we have made some progress.

I hope that this good news will lift the fear that unavoidable errors will lead to unfair penalties, which I know has been a source of anxiety for many. Implementation of the EC regulations regarding EID is not easy for Scottish sheep farmers and I will continue to push for a common sense approach to compliance, working with sheep farmers to get the most out of the significant investment we have made in ScotEID.



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