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Transcript of video.

EID in Sheep – England

Identification of sheep identified after 31 December 2009

The system currently requires farmers to identify lambs within 6 or 9 months of age or before they move off the holding whichever is sooner depending on whether they are intensively or extensively reared. These time periods won't change but the method of identification will.

To safeguard welfare and to maximise retention rates, all forms of identification should be applied according to best practice, following manufacturer's guidelines.

You can no longer use your existing stock of tags for animals born after the 31 December 2009.

Any animals identified after the 31 December 2009 and which you intend to keep for breeding or beyond 12 months of age must be identified by a matching pair of identifiers, one of which must be electronic. This is where one of the animals identifiers has an electronic micro-chip inside which contains the UK flock mark and individual number. For electronic identifiers the choices are an ear tag, rumenal bolus or pastern tag, which is attached to the animal's leg.

The number programmed in the chip is the same as the one printed on the outside of both the electronic and match up tag. Which means that they can be read manually too. This numbering system is called WYSIWYG or 'What You See Is What You Get'.

When you place an order, the supplier will confirm your flock mark and, where individual identification is needed, will give you a series of numbers in sequential order. You can't choose these numbers as they will be issued in sequence.

Non electronic options are ear tag, tattoo or pastern tag. Keepers have a choice about how they identify lambs intended for slaughter within 12 months of age.

First of all they can be identified with a single non electronic slaughter tag. These don't have an individual number displayed. Because if the tag contains an individual number then under the new rules this must be recorded each time the animal moves from a holding. Instead, only the flock mark is printed on the ear tag, and without the leading zero that's shown when a full individual number is displayed.

Alternatively, a single electronic slaughter tag may be used. This too only has the flock mark printed on the ear tag. This enables manual recording of the flock mark printed on the ear tag. But because the tag also contains an electronic chip the tag can be recorded electronically. This will be particularly useful for markets and specialist store lamb finishers.

When deciding on the type of slaughter tag you should apply you need to consider how long you are going to keep the animal and the preferences of who is going to purchase it. For example you may find if you are selling lambs for further fattening that the purchaser may request that you use an electronic slaughter tag.

You can still use different coloured tags to signify different years of birth, but there are 3 colours which are reserved. These are:

- Yellow which is only to be used for EID tags
- Black which is to be used to signify that the sheep has a bolus identifier; and
- Red, which is to signify that the ear tag has been replaced on a holding other than holding of birth. Red is also used for EID replacements.

You can ask your supplier to add additional management information to the tag and you can purchase additional tags providing that they don't contain the letters UK or a flock mark. This is to prevent confusion.

For sheep which carry full EID, when they are first identified an individual entry has to be made in the holding register. However, if sheep are identified sequentially, you can record the first and last number. For slaughter lambs, only a record of the number of tags and the date of insertion is needed.

So to Summarise

- From the 31 December 2009 existing stocks of tags can no longer be used to identify sheep
- Animals which you intend to keep beyond 12 months of age must carry full EID
- All other sheep can be identified using a single slaughter tag
- Slaughter tags can be electronic or non electronic
- Yellow, red and black are reserved colours
- Speak to prospective purchasers before finally choosing the system of ID