

Beef labelling guide for persons/organisations selling beef in England and Wales



Beef labelling guide (BL1)

This booklet provides guidance on the Compulsory beef labelling system and the Beef Labelling Scheme (the approval scheme for other labelling information).

For advice

Businesses in England should contact the Rural Payments Agency (RPA):

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Information can also be found on the RPA website :

www.rpa.gov.uk under Livestock Schemes, Beef Labelling.

RPA can provide copies of this Guide, the Beef Labelling Scheme application form BLAF1 (for labelling claims requiring approval) and a list of the recognised beef labelling verifiers. All of these documents are also available on our website.

Contents

Section A: General information

1. What is the beef labelling system?
2. What are the beef labelling rules?
3. Do the beef labelling rules apply to you/your business?
4. What type of beef must comply with the labelling rules?
5. What is labelling?
6. How should pre-wrapped beef be labelled?
7. How should non-pre-wrapped beef be labelled?
8. What is a traceability system?
9. What happens if you don't follow these rules?

Section B: Compulsory labelling

10. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling?
11. What are the labelling rules for pre-packed cut meat?
12. What are the labelling rules for non-pre-packed cut meat?
13. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for minced beef?
14. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for trimmings?
15. How should you label beef imported from a non-EC country for which not all the compulsory labelling information is available?
16. How do the compulsory rules apply to 'Scotch Beef', 'Welsh Beef' and 'Orkney Beef'?
17. What is the criteria for PGIs and PDOs?

Section C: New labelling rules on the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less

18. How should you categorise meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less?
19. What labelling / sales descriptions should be applied?
20. Can I mix batches of offal from bovines aged 12 months or less?
21. Can the meat of bovines aged up to 8 months and that of 8-12 months be mixed?
22. Can supplementary information be applied to my labelling?
23. Can I use the term Rosé veal?
24. Use of two or more descriptions.
25. What are the recording obligations for operators?

Section D: Other labelling claims under the beef labelling scheme approval system

26. What is the Approved Beef Labelling Scheme?
27. What information needs to be approved?
28. What information does not need to be approved?
29. What rules must you follow under the Approved Beef Labelling Scheme?
30. How do you apply for Beef Labelling Scheme approval?
31. When do I arrange an inspection?
32. How will the information you give us be used?

Section E: Labelling of imported and exported beef with non-compulsory information

33. Do you want to sell beef imported from other European Community (EC) countries and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?
34. Do you want to sell beef imported from outside the European Community (EC) and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?
35. Do you want to export beef to other European Community (EC) countries labelled with information other than that covered by the compulsory system?

Section F: Enforcement

Appendix 1: Examples of labels containing compulsory information

Appendix 2: Examples of a display for compulsory labelling for non-pre-wrapped beef (and blank labels)

Appendix 3: Examples of labels for the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less

Appendix 4: Beef labelling customer information

Appendix 5: Definition of terms

Appendix 6: Legislation

Section A: General information

1. What is the beef labelling system?

- 1.1 The beef labelling system is a European Community (EC) wide system which is intended to provide buyers with clear, reliable information about beef (including veal) on sale. A key requirement of the system is that it should enable beef on sale to be traced back to where it originated. Retailers may wish to copy the information in Appendix 4 to hand out to their customers, informing them of the traceability that is in place for beef. It is not compulsory to display this information. The legislation governing the system is listed in Appendix 6.

2. What are the beef labelling rules?

- 2.1 Compulsory rules apply for the labelling of fresh or frozen beef and veal (and these meats when minced). All beef offered for sale in the EC must be labelled with certain *compulsory* information. The beef labelling system governs all sales in the supply chain and is in two parts: (i) compulsory labelling and (ii) approved labelling under the Beef Labelling Scheme (BLS).
- (i) The **compulsory system** requires you to label your beef with prescribed information (see Section B for full details of what labelling information you need to display). As provision of this information is mandatory, you do not need to apply to RPA for its approval.
 - (ii) Any other labelling claims you wish to make about the regional/local origin, characteristics or production methods of the beef you sell or the animal(s) of origin, require **approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme** (see Section D on the requirements for approved labelling).

3. Do the beef labelling rules apply to you/your business?

- 3.1 Yes, if you are selling/supplying fresh or frozen beef or veal anywhere in the supply chain. For example, slaughterhouses, cutting plants, cold stores, re-packaging centres, butchers' shops, mobile shops, market stalls, supermarkets, or farm shops. Suppliers to hotels, restaurants and other catering facilities are also included.
- 3.2 No, if you are selling cooked beef. For example; hotels, restaurants, fast food outlets, cafes or canteens. Consumers of beef from catering establishments may expect that information equivalent to that provided on labels on fresh/frozen beef should be available to them on request, particularly where claims are made (e.g. on restaurant menus) as to the nature of the beef on sale.

4. What type of beef must comply with the labelling rules?

- 4.1 Fresh and frozen beef (including veal) for example a whole carcass, quarters, fresh or frozen bone in / boneless beef cuts, including joints, steak and dice. This includes mince (containing less than 1% salt) and uncooked beef burger patty with no added ingredients (for example soya protein, cereal binder). Uncooked meat that has been seasoned either in depth or over the whole surface of the product with seasoning either visible to the naked eye or clearly distinguishable by taste is not included. Beef and veal in processed products and offal, for example, processed beef burgers or steak and kidney pies, are not covered by the Beef Labelling System. Such products do not need to be labelled with the compulsory terms, nor do their labels require approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme. Fresh or frozen beef means all products falling within Customs Nomenclature (CN) codes 0201, 0202, 0206 10 95 and 0206 29 91. If in doubt please contact RPA.

5. What is labelling?

- 5.1 Labelling covers written information given to customers at the point of sale. This includes information given on packaging material and on labels near the product. It also includes information given at the point of sale in advertisements, posters, announcements and leaflets associated with the product. Information given by word of mouth is not covered, although it is an offence under other legislation to mislead the consumer. Information conveyed by pictures or symbols may require approval too. If in doubt please contact RPA.

6. How should pre-wrapped beef be labelled?

- 6.1 Pre-wrapped meat must be labelled on its packaging. If packages are grouped together and sold in a carton, the required information may be shown on the carton and not shown on the individual packages within it. If, however, the packages are sold without the outer covering, each must be labelled with the required information before sale.

7. How should non-pre-wrapped beef be labelled?

- 7.1 For non-pre-wrapped meat sold to the end customer, information must be on the meat or be displayed in the shop e.g. on a ticket in close proximity to the meat or on a sign on the wall visible to your customers (examples and blank labels are provided at Appendix 2). The display must ensure that the meat is distinguishable within the shop so that the customer can see which information applies to which meat. The reference numbers or code(s) on display must ensure that the meat can be traced back to its source through your traceability system.

8. What is a traceability system?

- 8.1 This is a manual or computer system kept by your business which will link the animals, or beef which you buy, to the traceability reference number or code of the beef which you sell. All operators in the supply chain must have a traceability system so that beef on sale to the consumer can be traced back to the animal or group of animals from which it was derived and to prove that the labelling information given to customers throughout the supply chain is correct.
- 8.2 You must have a traceability system. The exact type of information it should contain depends on the nature of your operation. It should record the arrival and departure of each animal, carcase, part carcase, primal or other cut of meat. It should also record the departure of the meat to ensure that there is a balance between arrivals and departures. Depending on your type of operation, you could record some or all of the following
- intake date (of animal, carcase or cut);
 - the supplier;
 - delivery note;
 - kill date and kill number;
 - weight;
 - UK ear tag/cattle passport number or reference code;
 - product (cut);
 - tray number or colour;
 - the date placed on the counter.

In addition to the above, Commission Regulation (EC) No. 566/2008 details new labelling rules for all bovine animals aged 12 months or less. (See Section C).

- category identification letter V or Z (bovine animals aged 12 months or less); and
- Date of birth of animal

and link these to:

- the reference number or code;
- the compulsory labelling about slaughterhouse and cutting plants; and
- any approved labelling claims made against sales.

9. What happens if you don't follow these rules?

- 9.1 Officers authorised by Defra, which include RPA Inspectors, Trading Standards Officers and Environmental Health Officers, will carry out checks to ensure that the rules for compulsory labelling and approved labelling are being followed. This will include checks on those operators who have been approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme (to ensure that they are continuing to label in accordance with their approval) and on those who have not been approved (to ensure that they are not giving their customers information which requires approval). You must give these officers access to your premises and to your records. Those operators who have been

approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme must be able to show the officers a certificate of product conformity issued by your Government-recognised verifier as a result of a previous inspection, and your approval document issued by RPA.

- 9.2 You must not supply inaccurate or misleading information. Unless you have reason to doubt its accuracy, you can assume that information supplied to you under the beef labelling system when you buy beef from your suppliers is accurate. If you fail to follow the rules, you will be required to remove your beef from sale until the beef or veal is re-labelled in accordance with the rules. If the meat cannot be adequately re-labelled, because insufficient information is available to trace it, you may be allowed to sell it on directly for processing into products. You could also be required to take further steps in order to correct your breach of the rules. Serious breaches of the rules could constitute a criminal offence which, on conviction, will lead to a fine.

Section B: Compulsory labelling

This Section explains the compulsory information you must show on your labelling for fresh and frozen beef. Special rules apply to **minced beef** and to beef from **non-EC countries** (third countries). These are explained in 13 and 15 respectively.

10. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling?

10.1 The following indications must be shown on your labels. For more detail see 10.2 to 10.9. **Please note that indications (5) and (7) below no longer need to be shown at retail level on beef which is sold loose (non-pre-packed) for example on serve-over counters (see paragraph 12).**

- (1) A reference number or code;
- (2) The name of the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals were born;
- (3) The name of the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals were raised;
- (4) 'Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]';
- (5) Licence number of the slaughterhouse
- (6) 'Cutting/cut in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]';
- (7) Licence number(s) of the cutting plant(s)

Reference number or code

10.2 Indication (1) at paragraph 10.1 is a **traceability reference number** or **reference code** which makes sure there is a link between the meat and the animal or group of animals from which it is derived.

For a slaughterhouse – the reference number or code may be the identification number or any other number or code relating to the individual animal concerned, or to a group of animals, carcasses or quarters. Carcasses should be individually identifiable by the kill number. Where carcass batches are created in a slaughterhouse the individual animal's identity must remain with the carcass. If the kill number does not remain on any cuts the batch/cutting records must show the relevant kill numbers and the new batch identity on the labels.

For a cutting plant – the reference number or code may be the identification number or any other number or code relating to the animal from which the cut meat is derived. However, it could be a batch number. For this purpose, a batch may comprise at most one day's production in a cutting plant (see 10.10). A batch formed in a cutting plant may only be formed from beef which has been slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse and, if relevant, cut previously in the same cutting plant or plants. If you are cutting meat from a number of different slaughterhouses, beef from each slaughterhouse must be assigned a different reference number. You may, however, include in a single batch, beef slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse but on different days. (See also batching rule at 10.12).

For a retail outlet or wholesaler – any reference number or code enabling traceability within your premises can be used provided there is a link through your register and documentation to your supplier's reference number or code. It could be a batch number.

Country of origin (birth and rearing)

- 10.3 Indication (2) must show the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals were **born**. The indication shall read **'born in'** and the **country name**. This must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country. Care must be taken to ensure that beef imported into the UK is appropriately labelled with the correct country of origin. A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme, for example, 'Devon' or 'England' is not sufficient. Meat from animals born in different countries cannot be put in the same batch.
- 10.4 Indication (3) must show the names of all the **Member States** or **non-EC countries** where the animal or each of the animals in the group lived between birth and slaughter. The indication shall read **'reared in'** or **'raised in'** and the **name of the country or countries of rearing**. Only cattle reared in the same country/countries can be included in a batch. If the animal or animals spent less than 30 days immediately after birth in the country of birth, you do not have to list that country on the label as a country of rearing. Also, if the animal spent less than 30 days immediately before slaughter in the country of slaughter then you do not have to list that country on the label as a country of rearing.
- 10.5 Where your beef comes from animals that were **born, raised and slaughtered** in the same Member State or same non-EC country, instead of showing separate indications (2) for birth and (3) for rearing, your labelling can be shown as **'Origin: [name of Member State] or [non-EC country]'**, along with indications (1) and (4) to (7). The following is an example, 'British Beef - Origin: UK', and the label would also have to show the indications 'Slaughtered: in UK (approval number), Cut in: UK (approval number)', together with the reference number or code. **Any imported cattle slaughtered in the UK can not be labelled as Origin**. For example, beef imported from Eire should be labelled accordingly;
- Born in IE
 - Reared in IE/UK
 - Slaughtered in UK (plus plant number).

Operators should ensure that the carcasses of these cattle are not boned and batched with UK origin beef.

This also includes animals imported outside the E.U. which under Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 have to be retagged and given a 'UK' passport and ear tag. It is the operator's responsibility to ensure that these are identified in appropriate records and labelled accordingly.

Country of slaughter

- 10.6 Indication (4) must show the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the **slaughterhouse** is located. Your labelling must include the words: **'Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]'**. This must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country for example, 'Slaughtered in: UK'. A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme, for example, 'Devon' or 'England' is not sufficient.

Slaughterhouse licence number

- 10.7 Indication (5) is the **licence number** of the **slaughterhouse** in which the animal or group of animals was slaughtered. *This is the veterinary approval number which has been allocated to the establishment or premises, and which appears on the health mark stamp.* There must be only one slaughterhouse number on the beef label and to ensure traceability, all beef sold together in a pack or batch must be from *one* slaughterhouse only. Plant numbers must be adjacent to the wording of the indication. (For pre-packed cut meat see paragraph 11.) Beef from two or more slaughterhouses must not be combined to form a pack or batch. (For batching of cut meat, see 10.12).

Country of cutting

- 10.8 Indication (6) must show the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the **cutting plant** is located. Your labelling must include the words: **'Cutting in: or Cut in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]'**. This must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country. A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme, for example, 'Devon' or 'England' is not sufficient.

Cutting plant licence number

- 10.9 Indication (7) is the **licence number** of the **cutting plant** in which the beef was cut (and/or deboned). *This is the veterinary approval number which has been allocated to the establishment or premises, and which appears on the health mark stamp.* For traceability purposes where a batch of beef is processed through more than one cutting plant, your labelling must show the licence numbers of **all** the cutting plants at which the meat was processed. **Plant numbers must be adjacent to the wording of the indication.** (For pre-packed cut meat see paragraph 11). Beef which has not been slaughtered in the same abattoir or cut in the same cutting plant or series of cutting plants must **not** be mixed to form a pack or batch. (For batching of cut meat see 10.12). Where beef is cut in unlicensed premises, for example, butchers, farm shops or other shops, the address of the premises must be shown in place of a licence number. But where the beef is cut and sold in the same unlicensed premises, the indication may state "on these premises". If a slaughterhouse also does the cutting then the slaughterhouse licence number should be used if no cutting plant number is allocated. (See 10.12).

Definition of size and composition of a 'group' of animals

10.10 The size of the group is defined as follows:

- (a) during the cutting of carcasses or quarters, the size of the group is defined by the number of carcasses or quarters cut together and constituting one batch for the cutting plant concerned;
- (b) during further cutting or mincing, the size of the group is defined by the number of carcasses or quarters whose meat constitutes one batch for the cutting or mincing plant concerned.

The size of the group may not, in any case, exceed the production of one day.

10.11. When constituting the batches referred to in paragraph 10.10, operators must make sure that:

- (a) following cutting of carcasses or quarters, all the carcasses or quarters of the batch must come from animals that were **born in the same country, reared in the same country or countries and slaughtered in the same country and at the same slaughterhouse.**
- (b) during further cutting, all the carcasses or quarters of the batch must come from animals that were born in the same country, reared in the same country or countries and slaughtered in the same country and at the same slaughterhouse. **All the carcasses must have been cut up in the same cutting plant.**
- (c) following mincing, the meats in the batch must come from animals **slaughtered in the same country.**

Batching rule on production of cut meat

10.12 As a derogation to the rules on a **single** slaughterhouse and **single** cutting plant for carcasses referred to in paragraph 10.11(b), during the production of cut meat, operators can make up batches from meat originating from animals slaughtered at a **maximum of three** different slaughterhouses and from carcasses cut up at a **maximum of three** different cutting plants. However, cut meat is defined as meat which has been cut into small cubes, slices or other individual portions that do not require further cutting by an operator before being bought by the final consumer and can be directly used by that consumer. Therefore, a batch of cut meat from three different abattoirs/ cutting plants must go straight to retail packaging.

Batching rule on production of trimmings (as defined in Appendix 5)

10.13 The following rule requires that trimmings are to be treated in the same way as for mince when making up batches: As a derogation to paragraph 10.11(b), during the production of trimmings, operators are only required to follow the rule relating to a single country of slaughter when making up batches.

11. What are the labelling rules for pre-packed cut meat (as defined in Appendix 5)?

- 11.1 As a derogation to Article 13(2)(b) (to show slaughterhouse licence number) and (c) (to show cutting plant licence number), of Regulation 1760/2000, where operators wish to make use of the approach on further cutting using a **maximum of three** slaughterhouses and **a maximum of three** cutting plants, they should list the following information on the labels of pre-packed cut meat in addition to the information listed in Article 13(5)(a) (on countries of birth, rearing and slaughter):
- (a) **country of slaughter** and **slaughterhouse licence number**, or where required, the **two or three slaughterhouse licence number(s) where the animals in the group were slaughtered**. The information must be shown as: '**Animals in the group slaughtered in [name of Member State or non-EC country of slaughter]**' and the licence number(s) of the slaughterhouse or the two or three slaughterhouses concerned.
 - (b) country in which the **carcasses were cut** and the **cutting plant licence number**, or where required, the **two or three cutting plant numbers at which the carcasses were cut**. The information must be shown as: '**Cutting of meat in batch in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of cutting]**' and the licence number(s) of the cutting plant or the two or three cutting plants concerned.

12. What are the labelling rules for non pre-packed cut meat (as defined in Appendix 5)?

- 12.1 At retail level, when displaying non-pre-packed cut beef at the same time for sale to the final consumer, operators must make sure they have followed the rule on batch composition for further cutting using a maximum of three slaughterhouses and three cutting plants for all cut meat. (See 10.12)
- 12.2. As a derogation to Article 13(2)(b) (to show slaughterhouse licence number) and (c) (to show cutting plant licence number) of Regulation 1760/2000, operators must, at the points of sale to the final consumer, label all non pre-packed cut meats displayed for sale in accordance with paragraph 12.1 by indicating the name of the **country of birth, rearing and slaughter** of the animals from which the meat originates, followed by the name of the **country of carcass cutting**.
- 12.3. Meat of animals born and/or raised and/or slaughtered in different countries must be clearly separated from each other, including when displayed for sale. The information displayed in the retail outlet must be placed near these meats to enable the final consumer to distinguish easily between meat of different origins.

- 12.4 Operators who sell non pre-packed cut beef displayed together for sale must record each day, with the date, the licence numbers of the slaughterhouses where the animals were slaughtered and those of the cutting plants where the carcasses were cut. Operators must provide this information to any consumer who requests it.
- 12.5. As a derogation to the requirement on batch composition during further cutting or mincing (paragraph 10.2(b)) under 'Size and composition of a group'), and provided the requirements laid down in paragraph 12.2 above are followed, the size of the group may exceed one day's production for non-pre-packed cut beef and/or veal displayed for sale to the final consumer.

13. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for minced beef (as defined in Appendix 5)?

- 13.1 Your label must show the following indications. However, if you wish you may label with all the indications at 10.1 above. You may also include the date of mincing. For more detail see 13.2 to 13.6 below.
- (1) A reference number or code
 - (2) **Member State** or **non-EC country of slaughter**
 - (3) **Member State** or **non-EC country of mincing**
 - (4) If different from the country of mincing, the country where animals or group of animals have lived from birth to slaughter, **Origin: [name of member State and/or non-EC country] or 'Origin: Non-EC' if the country is outside the EC.**
- 13.2 Indication (1) should be a **traceability reference number** or **reference code** which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef used for mincing.
- 13.3 Indication (2) must show the name of the **Member State** and/or **non-EC country** in which the animals were **slaughtered**. Your labelling must include the words **'Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]'**.
- 13.4 Indication (3) must show the name of the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the meat was **minced**; the batch must be minced in only one country. Machines must be cleaned between consignments of meat where the animals have been slaughtered in a different country from the previous batch. Your labelling must include the words **'Minced in [name of Member State or non-EC country]'**.
- 13.5 Indication (4) must show the names of the **Member States** or **non-EC country** where the animal or group of animals lived from birth to slaughter. Your label must include the words **'Origin: [name) of Member State) and/or non-EC country'**, or **'Origin: Non-EC'** if the country is outside the EC. Indication (4) does not need to be shown if the country of origin of the animals is the same as the country of mincing.

- 13.6 Where mixed minced meat is sold and the larger proportion of the meat is beef (for example 60% beef, 40% pork), the compulsory indications must be shown.
- 13.7 The revised Beef Labelling Scheme regulations require that mince can be derived from animals slaughtered in one country only. However, when the compulsory rules came into force in 2000, the UK and other member states decided to support mince manufacturers by allowing beef to be derived from animals slaughtered in not more than two countries as stated in the 2005 version of the BLS Guide. The Commission have since advised this is unacceptable.
- Although offal itself does not fall within the scope of Beef Labelling regulations, if it is mixed with a majority or raw beef mince from the same country of slaughter, such mixing is permitted and the mince would need to be labelled with the particular compulsory indications for mince. To conclude;-
- It is no longer permitted for cutting plants to mix raw beef mince (irrespective of whether it includes offal) from two or more different countries of slaughter.
 - Mixing of beef with offal for mincing from the same country is permitted and must be labelled with the compulsory indications.

14. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for trimmings (as defined in Appendix 5)?

- 14.1. As a derogation to Article 13(2)(b) (to show slaughterhouse licence number) and (c) (to show cutting plant licence number), and paragraph 5(a)(i) (to show Member State or non-EC country of birth) and (a)(ii) (to show Member State or non-EC country of rearing) of Regulation 1760/2000, the following must be shown on labels for trimmings:
- (a) name of the **country of slaughter** of the animals from which the trimmings originate. The information must be shown as: ***"Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of slaughter]"***.
 - (b) name of the **country of production** of the trimmings and the approval number of the plant at which they were produced. The information must be shown as: ***"Produced in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of production]"*** and the plant approval number.
 - (c) the **names of the countries of birth and rearing** of the animals in the group. The information must be shown as: ***'Born and raised in: [names of the countries in which the animals were born and raised]'***.

14.2. As a derogation to paragraph 14.1(a) and (c), when the country of birth, the country of rearing and the country of slaughter is the **same** for all animals in the group, operators may use the indication '*Country of origin: [name of Member State or non-EC country in which birth, rearing and slaughter took place]*'.

15. How should you label beef imported from a non-EC country for which not all the compulsory labelling information is available?

15.1 Where all the compulsory information is not available on non-EC country imports, you must label, as a minimum, with the wording '**Origin: Non-EC and Slaughtered in [name of non-EC country]**'. You should also supply a reference number or code when the beef is cut or repackaged after import.

16. How do the compulsory rules apply to 'Scotch Beef', 'Welsh Beef' and 'Orkney Beef'?

16.1 Products under the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) and Protected Designated Origin (PDO) system, for example 'Scotch Beef', "Welsh Beef" and 'Orkney Beef' must be labelled with the compulsory indications listed at paragraph 10.1.

17. What is the criteria for PGIs and PDOs?

17.1 Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products are produced, processed or prepared within a geographical area, as defined under Council Regulation (EC) No 510/2006 of 20 March 2006 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs. The product must have a specific quality, reputation or other characteristics related to the area. For example, "Scotch Beef" is a PGI. To qualify as "Scotch Beef", the product must come from cattle born, bred, slaughtered and dressed within Scotland, and quality assured. Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products are produced, processed and prepared in a geographical area, and the features and characteristics of the product must be due to the geographical area and methods of production unique to the area. "Orkney Beef" is a PDO and is produced, slaughtered and dressed exclusively on Orkney.

Section C: New labelling rules on the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less

18. How should you categorise meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less?

18.1 On slaughter, all bovine animals aged 12 months or less must be categorised into one of the following 2 categories:

- **Category V:** bovine animals aged 8 months or less ie bovines from the day of birth until they reach the age of 8 months (Category identification letter "V");
- **Category Z:** bovine animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months ie bovines from the day after reaching the age of 8 months until the day they reach the age of 12 months. (Category identification letter "Z").

(Category 'Z' includes fast growing young bulls reared under a normal beef finishing system that reach slaughter weight at less than 12 months of age as well as calves formerly reared to 8 months and over under a rosé veal system.)

18.2 The categorisation must be carried out on the basis of the information contained in the passport accompanying the bovine animals or, failing this, on the basis of the data contained in the Cattle Tracing System (CTS). The category identification letters must be placed immediately after slaughter and must be indicated on the outside surface of the carcass by using labels or stamps. The labels must be of a size not less than 50 cm² and in cases where stamps are used, the letter shall be not less than two centimetres in height. The labels or stamps must be applied on the hindquarters on the striploin at the level of the fourth lumbar vertebra and on the forequarters, on the brisket between 10 and 30 centimetres from the cut edge of the sternum.

19. What labelling / sales descriptions should be applied?

19.1 The meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less can only be marketed in the Member States under the compulsory sales description(s) as listed in the EU legislation. The sales description may be supplemented by an indication of the name or designation of the pieces of meat or offal concerned, if required.

19.2 For meat marketed in the UK the following sales descriptions apply:

- meat from animals slaughtered aged 8 months or less must be described as **'veal'**;
- meat from animals slaughtered aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months must be described as **'beef'**.

19.3 The sales descriptions vary between Member States. These are laid down in the relevant EU legislation, see Annex X1a to Regulation (EC) No.1234/2007 as amended (previously Annex II of Council Regulation (EC) No.700/2007).

19.4 At each stage of production and marketing, the meat must be labelled with the following information:

(i) the age of the animals on slaughter using the wording:

- **'age on slaughter: up to 8 months'** in the case of animals aged 8 months or less, or
- **'age on slaughter: from 8-12 months'** in the case of animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

However, operators may at each stage of production and marketing, except on release to the final consumer, replace the wording at (i) with the category identification letter (V or Z) (See paragraph 18.1).

(ii) the relevant minimum sales descriptions as laid down for the UK in Annex XIa of Regulation (EC) No.1234/2007 as amended (previously Annex II of Council Regulation (EC) No.700/2007).

19.5 The indications of the age of the bovine animal on slaughter and the sales description must be:

- Clearly legible at each stage of production and marketing;
- Presented in the same visual field and on the same label at the point of sale of the meat to the final consumer.

20. Can I mix batches of offal from bovines aged 12 months or less?

20.1 Mixing batches of offal is permitted provided that they are appropriately labelled. If the mixture includes offal from bovines of less than 8 months and of bovines between 8 and 12 months, both sales descriptions and age brackets should be shown on the label. The age brackets may be replaced by the corresponding category identification letter V or Z at each stage of production and marketing, except on release to the final consumer.

20.2 The use of the wording 'calves liver' as a supplement to the sales description is acceptable in the case of liver from bovines aged less than 8 months (Category V). However, use of the wording 'calves liver' should not be used in the case of bovines from 8 to 12 months (Category Z) in the UK because we have designated any meat of 8 months and above as 'beef', and calling it 'calves liver' could cause confusion among customers.

21. Can the meat of bovines aged up to 8 months and that of 8-12 months be mixed?

- 21.1 With the exception of offal, mixing of meat of different categories is not permitted, as the purpose of the Regulation is to separate the two types of meat by age. There is no requirement in the Regulation for physical separation of, for example, labelled boned out meat in chillers.

22. Can supplementary information be applied to my labelling?

- 22.1 Under the new Regulation, operators are permitted to supplement the compulsory descriptions 'veal' (Category V) or 'beef' (Category Z) on the label with optional information approved in accordance with the procedure laid down in Articles 16 or 17 of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 (under the provisions of the voluntary Beef Labelling Scheme). Operators may therefore apply under the voluntary scheme to use supplementary descriptions which, for example, refer to the manner in which the calves are reared in relation to their feeding and housing conditions, in order to produce welfare friendly veal or beef.

23. Can I use the term Rosé veal?

- 23.1 Producers and sellers of veal (Category V) are not permitted to label their product as 'rosé veal'. The term 'rosé veal' appears in Annex X1a III 2(B) of Council Regulation 1234/2007 (as amended) for use with Category Z animals only and may only be used in this way in the Member States that have decided to do so. We have chosen to use the term 'beef' to apply to Category Z animals.

24. Use of two or more descriptions.

- 24.1 The sales description applicable for the Member State in which the meat is marketed needs to be put on the label. It is possible for the meat to have two or more different labels on it at the same time covering the sales descriptions in different Member States.

25. What are the recording obligations for operators?

- 25.1 At slaughterhouse level, operators must record an indication of the identification number and the date of birth of the animals. (Please also see paragraph 8.2).

Section D: Other labelling claims under the beef labelling scheme approval system

26. What is the Approved Beef Labelling Scheme?

26.1 The Beef Labelling Scheme has been in operation in the UK since 1997. It implements EC legislation which requires beef labelling information, apart from compulsory labelling indications, to be approved by the authorities in the Member State(s) and checked by recognised verifiers.

27. What information needs to be approved?

27.1 Non-compulsory labelling information on the method of production, the characteristics of the meat or animal from which it came, and origin claims such as the region or locality. The following are examples of information that needs approval.

- region or locality where the animal was born and reared, for example Cumbrian;
- breed or cross breed (see 19.2);
- age or gender of animal;
- method of production (for example, farm assured, grass-fed);
- method of slaughter (for example, Halal);
- date of slaughter;
- method or length of maturation.

If you are not sure whether the information you wish to use requires approval, please contact RPA.

27.2. If you intend to label your beef with this or similar information, you must make sure that the information you are providing is common to all animals/meat from which the labelled product has been sourced. Unless you can guarantee this, we will not be able to approve your application. You will need to obtain approval when a name is given to a product range where all the produce is said to share certain characteristics. This would include, for example, a farm assurance scheme where all the beef is said to have been sourced only from farms and slaughterhouses in certain locations or that meet certain standards. If you are labelling your beef with the name of the breed, your labelling must make clear that the beef is derived from an animal that was either pure-bred or from a cross breed. For example, when labelling your beef as 'Galloway' we would expect the animal from which the beef was derived to have been pure-bred (both its sire and dam were Galloway). However, if only the sire was Galloway your label should make this clear by stating, 'Galloway cross' or 'Galloway-sired', or by providing a qualifying statement on the label. Where beef is sold loose, information must be displayed at point of sale and be visible to customers. Terms must also be clear to your customers. For example, a term such as 'grass-fed' must mean, as a minimum, that the animal concerned was fed primarily on grass in the field.

27.3 Under the compulsory system all beef sales must be labelled with the Member State or non-EC country of origin (where born, raised and slaughtered). Approved regional or local origin claims will still be allowed but will be subject to approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme and will be in addition to the compulsory origin labelling described in Section B. If you wish to put, for example, 'English' or 'West Country' on the label you will require approval. You will also need to add the compulsory UK origin indications. Approval is also required where the claim being made on the label is a marketing (promotional) claim to consumers (for example, 'Argentinean', 'Irish', 'New Zealand', 'Uruguayan' appears as the headline claim and is being sold as a promotion for Argentinean, Irish, New Zealand or Uruguayan beef). Therefore, marketing claims are regarded as voluntary under the Commission Regulations even though the compulsory country of origin information must also appear on the label. Where for example, beef is marketed simply as 'Fresh Beef' and it originates from Argentina or New Zealand, approval is not required because no marketing claim is being made. However, under the compulsory information the label must show the country of origin indication, for example 'Origin: New Zealand'. For information on compulsory indications see Section B.

28. What information does not need to be approved?

28.1 Compulsory labelling (Section B) does not require approval. Nor do you require approval for information that can easily be checked at the point of sale and information which other legislation requires you to give. You do not need approval for the following:

- the name of the product or cut (e.g. sirloin);
- the weight of the product;
- the 'Best before' or 'Use by' date.
- storage conditions or conditions of use (e.g. 'keep refrigerated');
- instructions for use (e.g. cooking instructions);
- the name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller;
- statements that the product has been packaged in a protective atmosphere;
- statements in accordance with the carcass classification grid; e.g. 'E3' which is fine on carcass labels for Beef Carcass Classification (BCC) purposes. (However, boxed beef labelled with 'E3 beef' would require approval).
- the health mark required by the Fresh Meat Directive and other similar veterinary indications;
- labelling as 'Organic'.
- labelling as 'Kosher';
- PDO and PGI products. (The only British beef this currently applies to is 'Scotch Beef', 'Welsh Beef' and 'Orkney Beef'). For further details on the criteria of PGIs and PDOs, see paragraph 17).

- 28.2 If you are not sure whether the information you wish to use requires approval, please contact RPA.

29. What rules must you follow under the Approved Beef Labelling Scheme?

- 29.1 The information you give to your customers must be clear and not misleading. You must be able to prove that the information you give about your beef is true. For this purpose you must employ an independent verifier from our list of Government-recognised beef labelling verification bodies, who will inspect your traceability system to ensure that your labelling information is true. A list of the recognised verifiers is despatched with the application form or can be requested from RPA.
- 29.2 The Government-recognised verifier(s), who you will be required to engage and employ at your expense, will check that the labelling information you are giving to your customers is accurate. You must give the verifier access at all times to your premises and to your records. Before the inspection of your traceability system you must let the verifier know exactly what labelling claims you are making by letting them have a copy of your application and approved specification. You must have available copies of your approval document issued by RPA and the certificate of product conformity issued by your verifier as a result of your last inspection. Your verifier must carry out regular checks to prove that your information is correct.
- 29.3 You must set up a system to guarantee that the information you give is accurate. This will probably involve further action by your suppliers and by yourself, in addition to that required under the compulsory labelling arrangements. As with compulsory labelling, your system must guarantee a link between your beef and the animal or group of animals from which it came so that you can prove the accuracy of the information you are giving to your customers.
- 29.4 If you wish your application to cover your beef when it is sold at outlets outside your business, you must list all of these outlets in your group application and update the list at least annually if it changes. You will need to employ your verifier to report on your controls as well as those of your outlet. If the outlets are subject to verification for other claims, it may be convenient for the verifier(s) to co-ordinate verification to reduce costs.

30. How do you apply for Beef Labelling Scheme approval?

- 30.1 If you are a new applicant please contact RPA to obtain an application pack. Your application must show the labelling information you wish to give your customers (including a copy of your label(s)) and explain how you can provide evidence (through your records) that the information is true. Your specification must describe your traceability control system which will be applied at all stages of production and sale (from sourcing of

animals, slaughter, cutting/de-boning, packing, through to retail level, as applicable). Your control system must demonstrate that the beef you sell or supply can be traced back to the animal or group of animals from which it was derived. Depending on your type of business the control system which supports your labelling claims might include the use of cattle passports and eartags, slaughterhouse records, documents from supplier(s), a computer traceability system or records within your business. You should send your completed application form (BLAF 1) with your traceability control procedures to RPA. If your business is located in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland you should apply to the appropriate department on their application form:

- Scottish Government Rural Development (SGRD) – Agriculture and Rural Development Division, Rural Directorate, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh, EH14 1TY

Tel: 0131 244 6400

Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) - Department for Environment, Planning and Countryside, Government Buildings, Y Lanfa, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 1AS

Tel: 0845 010 3300

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) – Rural Policy Division, Service Assurance Branch, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB

Tel: 028 9052 4990

31. When do I arrange an inspection?

- 31.1 If we have any questions about your application, we will telephone or write to you. Once we have approved your application you may add the appropriate approved information to your label. As soon as you receive our approval letter you should contact your nominated independent verifier to arrange for an inspection to be carried out. If, following this inspection, your verifier is satisfied with the standard of your traceability system; a certificate of product conformity will be issued by the verifier for a stated period. The report should explain the controls that the verifier has carried out and comment on the reliability of your labelling information. You must send RPA a copy of your verifier's certificate of product conformity within six months of the date of your approval. After the first report, further reports will be required annually or at intervals decided by your verifier. We will review your approval in the light of each certificate of product conformity, or information from your verifier.

32. How will the information you give us be used?

- 32.1 We, and the enforcement authorities, will use the information in order to decide whether your application meets the rules of the Beef Labelling Scheme. We may also use the information for other purposes such as evaluation of the Scheme. Any data stored electronically is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section E: Labelling of imported and exported beef with non-compulsory information

33. Do you want to sell beef imported from other European Community (EC) Member States and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?

- 33.1 If you want to label beef imported from another EC country with information in addition to the compulsory indications (Section B) you may need to send an application for approval to the authorities of the country in which the production or sale of the beef in question takes place. Please first contact RPA for advice on how to proceed.
- 33.2 If it is necessary to send an application to the authorities of that country you will need to specify what information you wish to include on the label and explain the measures you will take to ensure the accuracy of the information. This should include the control system that would be applied at all stages of production and sale, and would also cover the handling or processing of the fresh or frozen beef and veal that takes place in that country. You would then only be able to label this beef in the UK once each country had approved your application.
- 33.3 Simpler rules apply if you are importing beef in small retail packs labelled in one Member State according to an approved specification, where no additional information is added to the label. Labels only require approval from the originating (exporting) country and can be sold in the UK without further approval from us provided that:
- the packaging has not been changed in any way;
 - the originating Member State has provided all relevant information to us in advance;
 - the approval of the originating Member State also covers the labelling specification of the retail package sold here.

34. Do you want to sell beef imported from outside the European Community (EC) and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?

- 34.1 If you want to label beef imported from a non-EC country with information in addition to the compulsory indications (Section B) please contact RPA for advice on how to proceed. You can only label with the additional information that the European Commission has given permission for the non-EC country to use.

35. Do you want to export beef to other European Community (EC) countries labelled with information other than that covered by the compulsory system?

- 35.1 If you want to export beef to another EC country, you must follow all export legislation in force at the time. If you want to label this beef with the additional information to that covered by the compulsory system (Section B) you may need to send an application to the authorities of each country involved. Please contact RPA for advice on how to proceed. If it is necessary to send an application to the authorities of that country you will need to specify what information you wish to include on the label and explain the measures you will take to ensure the accuracy of the information. This should include the control system that would be applied at all stages of production and sale, and would also cover the handling or processing of the fresh or frozen beef and veal that takes place in that country. You would then only be able to label this beef with the additional information in that country once the authorities there had approved that application.
- 35.2 Simpler rules apply if you intend to export beef in small retail packs to another Member State, where the beef has been labelled in the UK according to an approved specification and where no additional information is added to the label. The labels will only require approval from the RPA and can be sold in the importing Member State without further approval from the competent authority in that EC country provided that:
- The packaging has not been changed in any way,
 - All relevant information has been provided in advance to the importing Member State, and
 - The approval granted by the RPA also covers the labelling specification of the retail package to be sold in the importing Member State.

The RPA can give you more information about this and will be able to give advice if you experience difficulties in obtaining approval for your labels in other countries.

Section F: Enforcement

The new Statutory Instrument (SI), 'The Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations 2008' (SI 2008 No. 3252) provides appropriate enforcement powers along similar lines to those in existence for current EU beef labelling legislation. This SI also incorporates the existing enforcement powers as contained in the Beef Labelling (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000 No.3047) and the Beef Labelling (Enforcement) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002 No. 2315).

As laid down in the SI, RPA is working closely on the development of an Enforcement Notice and operators inspected under this scheme who fail to comply with labelling requirements may be guilty of an offence that RPA Inspectors may be required to serve a notice on the person in possession of the beef. This notice would require its removal from sale until the beef is relabelled in accordance with the regulatory requirements or if traceability is lost, beef may be sent for processing.

RPA will be issuing further written guidance once the procedures have been finalised. Updates will also appear on our website (www.rpa.gov.uk).

Appendix 1

Examples of labels containing compulsory information

In the examples below, information which is compulsory is shown in **bold** type. Information which requires approval and independent verification is shown in *italics*.

Label for carcasses:

British Beef
03/04/07/42864/1 – reference number/code
Classification: CR3L (Compulsory for most abattoirs)
Weight: 152 kilos
Origin: UK
Slaughtered in: UK (1234)

Label for retail (pre-packed):

British Beef
08/07/07/324694/1 – reference number/code
Sirloin Steak
Weight 600 grams
Price £3.00
Unit Price £5.00/Kilo
Aberdeen Angus sired
Origin: UK
Slaughtered in: UK (1234)
Cutting in (or Cut in): UK (5678)

Label for mince:

British minced beef
08/07/07/346248/2 – reference number/code
Farm Assured
Weight 1 Kilo
Price £4.75
Minced in: UK
Slaughtered in: UK

Where all animals from which the minced beef is derived were born, raised and slaughtered in the UK.

Appendix 2

Examples of a display for compulsory labelling for non-pre-wrapped beef (and blank labels)

Rump steak

| | |
|--|---|
| Tray: A | Reference number/code: AB 1234 00107 (<i>example only</i>) |
| Origin: UK* - British | Slaughtered in: UK Slaughterhouse licence No. 1234 |
| Cut in: UK Cutting plant licence No. 5678 | |

(*where born, raised and slaughtered in the UK)

Striploin

| | |
|--|---|
| Tray: B | Reference number/code: F18 – 23/07/07 (<i>example only</i>) |
| Born in: Netherlands | Reared in: Netherlands and Belgium |
| Slaughtered in: Belgium Slaughterhouse licence No. 4321 | Cut in: UK Cutting plant licence No. 9876 |

Minced beef

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Tray: C | Reference number/code: HB 626 – DN 5 (<i>example only</i>) |
| Origin: Eire | Slaughtered in: UK |
| Minced in: UK | |

(where animals were born and raised in a different country of mincing)

Blank labels for non-pre-wrapped beef

| | |
|--|--|
| Tray: | Reference number/code: |
| Born in: | Raised in: |
| Slaughtered in: Slaughterhouse licence No. | Cut in: Cutting plant licence No(s). |

Minced beef (see paragraph 13.1 at Section B)

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Tray: | Reference number/code: |
| Slaughtered in: | Minced in: |
| Born in: | Raised in: |

Appendix 3

Examples of labels for the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less

Carcase label

Category V – appropriate age categorisation

03/04/08/42864/1 – reference number/code

Weight: xx kilos

Origin: UK

Slaughtered in: UK (1234)

Display Label

| | |
|--|--|
| Tray: Green trays | Reference number/code: MB 535 WB 14/06/07 <i>(example only)</i> |
| Origin: UK* - British | Slaughtered in: UK Slaughterhouse licence No. 1234 |
| Cut in: UK Cutting plant licence No. 2345 | Veal. 'age on slaughter: up to 8 months' |

(*where born, raised and slaughtered in the UK)

Carcase label

Category Z – appropriate age categorisation

03/04/08/42864/1 – reference number/code

Classification: CR3L (BCC abattoirs)

Weight: xxx kilos

Origin: UK

Slaughtered in: UK (1234)

Display Label

| | |
|--|--|
| Tray: Green trays | Reference number/code: MB 535 WB 14/06/07 <i>(example only)</i> |
| Origin: UK* - British | Slaughtered in: UK Slaughterhouse licence No. 1234 |
| Cut in: UK Cutting plant licence No. 2345 | Beef. 'age on slaughter: from 8-12 months' |

(*where born, raised and slaughtered in the UK)

Appendix 4

Beef labelling customer information

Compulsory beef labelling for fresh and frozen beef and veal helps to inform you about the origin of the beef you buy and provides reference numbers or codes to trace the meat back to its source.

By law labels must contain information about the countries of birth and rearing from within the EU and whether the beef is imported into the EU. Also, where your beef was slaughtered and where the cutting operations were performed.

All other labelling claims concerning the regional and local origin, type and method of production of beef offered for sale have to be traceable and approved.

Appendix 5

Definition of terms

For the purpose of Regulation 1760/2000, the following definitions apply:

- (a) "minced meat": any meat that has been minced into fragments or passed through a spiral-screw mincer, and that falls within one of the CN codes referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 and contains less than 1% salt;
- (b) "trimmings" : small pieces of meat recognised as fit for human consumption produced exclusively during trimming operations during the boning of carcasses and/or the cutting up of meat;
- (c) "cut meat": meat which has been cut into small cubes, slices or other individual portions that do not require further cutting by an operator before being bought by the final consumer and can be directly used by that consumer. This definition does not cover minced meat and trimmings;
- (d) "pre-packaged cut meat": the individual pack offered unaltered to the final consumer or to an establishment engaged solely in retail sales, made up of cut meat and the packaging in which it was packed before being offered for sale, whether the packaging covers it fully or partially, but such that the content cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging;
- (e) "non-pre-packaged cut meat": cut meat displayed for sale non-pre-packaged in outlets for sale to the final consumer and all pieces of meat displayed for sale non-pre-packaged in outlets for sale to the final consumer, intended to be cut at the request of the final consumer;
- (f) "batch": meat, on the bone or boned, for example, carcasses, quarters or boned pieces of meat, cut up, minced or packed together under practically identical conditions;
- (g) "retail": the handling and/or processing of meat and its storage at the point of sale or delivery to the final consumer, including caterers, company canteens, institutional catering, restaurants and other similar food service operations, shops, supermarket distribution centres and wholesale outlets;
- (h) "final consumer": the ultimate consumer of cut meat who does not use it as part of a food business operation or activity.

Appendix 6

Legislation

- Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 820/97
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1825/2000 of 25 August 2000 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 275/2007 of 15 March 2007 amending Regulation (EC) 1825/2000 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 of 22 October 2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation).
- Council Regulation (EC) No. 361/2008 of 14 April 2008 amending Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation).
- Commission Regulation (EC) No. 566/2008 of 18 June 2008 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 as regards the marketing of the meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less.
- Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 3047
The Beef Labelling (Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2000
- Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 2315
The Beef Labelling (Enforcement) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2002
- Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 3252
The Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations 2008