

Cattle identification and registration

The aim of these requirements is to maintain a system for the identification and registration of cattle to facilitate their traceability, in particular in the event of a disease outbreak. They apply to you if you keep cattle.

A. You must

Tagging

1. tag all calves born on your holding, or cattle imported from outside the EU,¹ with Defra-approved eartags² 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 9 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 loss;³

Passports and registration

3. register cattle born on your holding no later than 27 days after birth by making an application for a passport from the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS);
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 to BCMS;
6. produce a signed and valid passport for every animal in your care on request;
7. ensure that when cattle are moved off your holding⁴ they are accompanied with their valid passport, properly completed and signed;

Notification of movements and deaths

8. notify BCMS of any movements of cattle on to and off your holding within three days of the movement;

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

2 Eartags should be applied one in each ear and bear the same unique identification code. They can be obtained from manufacturers listed on the Defra website.

3 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.

4 This includes (but not exclusively) moving to another farm, market, collection centre, export assembly centre, abattoir or showground.

9. notify BCMS of any cattle deaths on your holding within 7 days by completing the death details in the passport or certificate of registration and returning them and any other official identification documents.

On-farm records (herd register)

10. keep an up-to-date herd register for your holding, which includes 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;
11. complete the herd register within the following timescales:
 - movements – 36 hours of it taking place;
 - birth of a dairy calf – 7 days;
 - birth of any other calf – 30 days;
 - a death – 7 days;
 - eartag replacement where the eartag number is changed – 36 hours of the replacement;
12. keep the herd register for 10 years from the date of the last entry and make it available on request.

B. You must not

Tagging

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

Passports and registration

3. alter or deface a cattle passport.



Further advice and guidance

The *Cattle Keeper's Handbook* published by BCMS gives full guidance on how to comply with the cattle identification rules.

BCMS Helpline – **0845 050 1234** – or email enquiries@bcms.rpa.gsi.gov.uk

Cross compliance advice line – **0845 345 1302**

Defra helpline – **08459 33 55 77**

Defra Livestock Identification Helpline – **0845 050 9876**