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Ref **BLS: Labelling requirements for Veal**

Date 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2009

Dear Sir / Madam

**EU BEEF LABELLING SCHEME  
NEW LABELLING RULES ON THE MARKETING OF MEAT OF BOVINE ANIMALS AGED 12 MONTHS OR LESS**

I am writing to inform you of new legislation, which came into force on 1 July 2008, which lays down new labelling rules on the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less and will now form an additional part of compulsory labelling under the Beef Labelling Scheme.

A proposal to set out new rules for the marketing of the meat and offal of bovine animals aged 12 months or less was originally introduced in 2006. This was subsequently adopted as Council Regulation (EC) No. 700/2007 and then incorporated into Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation or agricultural markets on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation) with effect from 1 July 2008 as a result of the amendments contained in Council Regulation (EC) No. 361/2008. The Commission implementing rules were subsequently laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No. 566/2008.

The new rules are intended to protect consumers from misleading or confusing sales descriptions from meat from bovine animals aged 12 months or less so that they can make a clear distinction between veal from animals aged 8 months or less and meat from animals aged 8-12 months, sometimes described as rosé veal. The effect is to make operators label the meat at each stage of production and marketing with the statutory defined descriptions for each category as laid down individually for each Member State.

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 i.e. 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 i.e. 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 bulls reared under a normal beef finishing system that reach slaughter weight at less than 12 months or age as well as calves formerly reared to 8 months and over under a rosé veal system.)

The categorisation must be carried out on the basis of the information contained in the passport accompanying the bovine animals. The category identification letters must be placed immediately

after slaughter and must be indicated on the outside surface of the carcase by using labels or stamps.

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. 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**'.

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

(i) the age of 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) above with the category identification letter (V or Z).

#### **Requirements by Slaughterhouses and Cutting Plants**

It is important that operators record this identification letter against their records which contain the animal's date of birth. This is because colleagues from the Livestock and Meat Inspectorate will be incorporating an additional check when they visit your premises and will use these records to highlight any under 12 month cattle and will check the relevant carcasses (if they are still on site) to ensure that the correct identification letter is being displayed. At a Cutting Plant, in take records will have to record the relevant category identification and description, i.e. V or Z; Veal or Beef. These records will be checked by the Inspectorate to ensure the out going product shows the correct code or written indication and description.

A detailed Q & A regarding this new legislation can be found on the RPA Website under RPA Schemes - Livestock Schemes – Compulsory Beef Labelling Scheme – Latest News and [Veal Guidance](#). Information has also been incorporated into the latest edition of the Beef Labelling Guide which will be available early Autumn and will be sent to all licensed premises. Alternatively, you may e-mail our mailbox at [MTS.carlisle@rpa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:MTS.carlisle@rpa.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

Mrs Esme Roscamp  
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MTS Section