

**Electronic identification of sheep
from 31 December 2009**

Ordering your tags



defra

Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs



The official Ear Tag Allocation System (ETAS) now supplies electronic identification (EID) numbers to your tag manufacturer. These must by law be used when sheep are being tagged for the first time on or after 31 December 2009. Sheep must then either be:

- **double identified:** one of which must be an electronic identifier – for sheep that will be kept for breeding or over 12 months of age (*usually an ear tag or bolus*); or
- **single tagged:** for lambs intended for slaughter within 12 months of age – single tagged with a conventional ear tag or an electronic ear tag.



Double identification: EID numbers – new format

EID numbers have a 12-digit format – your unique 6-digit flock number (preceded by a zero), followed by a 5-digit animal number. EID tags will be yellow.

UK 0 244220 00100

Your 6-digit flock number
(always preceded by a zero)

The 5-digit animal number

The same letters and numbers will be printed visually on both tags. They will also be programmed into the chip in the EID tag (or other EID device); this is known as WYSIWYG ('what you see is what you get'). If you scan the EID tag with a reader it will display the number printed on the tag; 'UK' will display as '826', the internationally recognised code for the UK.

Tagging options for slaughter lambs

You can choose from the following options:

- **double** identified EID (one conventional and one electronic tag);
- a **single** UK conventional (non-EID) slaughter tag showing just your flock mark preceded by 'UK'; or
- a **single** UK electronic (yellow) slaughter tag showing your flock mark preceded by 'UK' (recorded as a slaughter tag in the same way as the conventional slaughter tag). The electronic component will contain the full 12-digit format (as for EID identifiers).

Non-electronic slaughter tag

UK 244220

Flock mark only printed on the tag.
Any colour other than a reserved colour.

Electronic slaughter tag

UK 244220

Yellow = an **electronic** slaughter tag.
Flock mark only printed on it.
Full 12-digit number coded in the chip.

Considerations when tagging animals intended for slaughter under 12 months of age

While it may be cheaper to identify store and finished lambs with a non-electronic UK slaughter tag (which will show only the flock mark), markets, abattoirs and store lamb finishers may prefer lambs tagged with a single electronic UK slaughter tag. This will enable some of these animals to be upgraded by your customers to a double identified animal on its first move off your holding.

Although this type of tag will usually only show the flock mark (i.e. no individual number), the electronic chip will contain an individual number which will help them meet their obligation to record batch identities within mixed consignments of lambs.

Individual ID numbers which appear visually on official UK tags (full EID) will have to be recorded in the births/deaths/movement sections of the new holding register, a copy of which will be sent to keepers before 31 December 2009.

It is important that you check with the market, abattoir or store lamb buyer before deciding which type of tag to use on lambs intended for slaughter.

Reserved tag colours

The following colours are reserved for official UK tags. You may not use them for your management tags, or the matching conventional tag in UK double EID ear-tagged animals.

YELLOW

Can only be used for the EID tag.

RED

Can only be used for replacement tags – for animals not on their holding of birth (including replacement EID tags).

BLACK

Can only be used for the ear tag where a ruminal bolus EID is present (including when a replacement bolus is applied).

Printing additional information on UK tags

You can print management information on official tags as long as it does not obscure or confuse the official UK number. This may increase their cost.

Current stocks of tags

Current stocks can be used to tag untagged animals up to and including 30 December 2009. Thereafter they will no longer be permitted.

Tag suppliers and approved products

To see a list of suppliers of official UK tags and approved EID devices, search under 'Electronic ID' on the Rural Payments Agency website at:

www.rpa.gov.uk

Information to give your tag supplier when placing orders

- Be clear on what type of UK slaughter tag you require.
- In order that your UK tags are supplied in permitted colours, be clear if the tag is an electronic tag, a replacement tag, or an ear tag to accompany an electronic bolus.
- If ordering a pair of UK identifiers including a bolus from different suppliers, you must order the bolus first (to ensure the matching ear tag is supplied in black).
- Ask if your supplier produces the particular UK tag type you are considering in a replacement (red) version.



To decide which tags you will need to use from 31 December 2009 consult your tag supplier and customers now.

Detailed guidance on the new EID rules will be sent to you in December.

Telephone Defra – **08459 33 55 77**

Go online – **www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/farmanimal/**



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