New Entrants to Farming Fact Sheet

Cattle Record Keeping

This factsheet has been created to highlight the up-to-date requirements for cattle record keeping in Scotland.

Since October 2021 all cattle births, deaths and movements must now be reported to ScotMoves+, which is operated by ScotEID based in Huntly, Aberdeenshire. The ScotEID database now acts as a central location for all cattle movements, using ScotMoves and ScotMoves+, and the Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) eradication programme database, encompassing the Scotch Potential Eligibility Cattle Checker (SPECC). The rules and regulations for the registering and identification of cattle are required by Scots law and are essential for animal health and food safety by improving traceability and reducing the likelihood of a disease outbreak.

This factsheet will detail the specific rules and regulations that must be adhered to when keeping cattle and the records required, with links to further details.

Registering to Keep Cattle

Step 1: You must register your business and land with SGRPID (Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate), either online at **www.ruralpayments.org** or by contacting your local SGRPID office. Once registered, your business will be issued with a unique BRN (Business Reference Number) and any land registered will be assigned a CPH (County Parish Holding) number, i.e. 89/456/0123, also commonly known as a MLC (Main Location Code). A CPH number will be required when moving cattle to different locations or to market/abattoir.

Step 2: You must also register as a keeper of cattle with the APHA (Animal and Plant Health Agency), within 30 days of first keeping cattle. They will require information about you and the cattle you plan to keep and the CPH(s) where you intend to keep them. APHA will be responsible for allocating a unique herd mark (e.g. UK 123456) to you, which is required by law for animal identification. APHA are also likely to telephone or complete a site visit to new cattle keepers to make sure you understand the current BVD rules within Scotland.

Step 3: You must register with ScotMoves+, which can be found on the ScotEID website **(www.scoteid.com)** as this is where all cattle births, movements and deaths are reported.

Step 4: You may wish to register with a cattle health scheme or quality insurance scheme; however, these are not mandatory.

Holding Register

All cattle keepers must keep a Holding Register of all cattle births, deaths and movements 'on' and 'off' the holding.

A copy of a Holding Register is available to download from the FAS website here: **https://www.fas.scot/downloads/sample-blank-herd-register-bovine-animals/**

The minimum information that must be kept within the farm register for each animal is as follows:

- **Official ear tag number**
- **Date of birth**
- **Sex**
- **Breed**
- **Ear tag number of genetic dam, when calf is homebred**
- **Date of death of any cattle on the holding**
- **Dates of movements 'on' and 'off' the holding**
- **Details of where the cattle have moved to or from**

These can be kept either as paper-based records, computer-based or within cattle record keeping software. There are specific timescales in which details must be recorded within the holding register, these are explained in each of the sections below and highlighted in red.
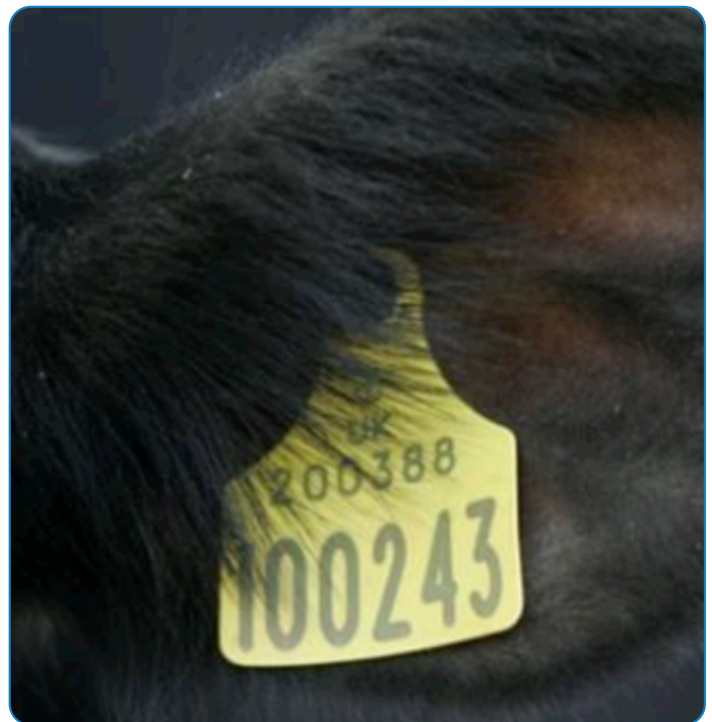
The Holding Register should be kept for a minimum of 10 years.

Cattle Ear Tags

Before you can order cattle ear tags, you will have to complete the steps listed above, to obtain your unique herd mark (e.g. UK 123456). Tags must also be ordered from an approved ear tag manufacturer, which are made to the PAS 44 quality standards.

Cattle ear tags will be a unique number assigned to each animal for its lifetime. The tags will have a crown logo, country code (UK), your herd mark and the 6-digit cattle individual identifier thereafter, i.e. UK 123456 500089.

Tags will be issued sequentially and will be unique to your CPH. All ear tags ordered are recorded on the ETAS (Ear Tag Allocation System) so that no matter which tag manufacturer you use, they will have a record of the previous tag numbers issued to you. SGRPID also have access to the ETAS system to record which tags are allocated to each herd and when they have been ordered.

It is recommended that you should limit your tag order to a maximum of one years' supply to save having 'old tag' stocks, should legislation or requirements change.

The use of EID ear tags in cattle has been discussed for many years and while the roll out of compulsory EID in cattle has been delayed. EID systems are available and have the potential to revolutionise your cattle enterprise. At present, cattle tags available to purchase on the market are geared towards low frequency tags and systems.

When EID in cattle becomes compulsory it is likely that a UHF (Ultra High Frequency) system will be used. The two different systems will require different tag readers and data loggers, therefore this should be considered when making upgrades.

There are several videos available about current cattle EID technology on the Farm Advisory Service website here: **https://www.fas.scot/livestock/beef-cattle/record-keeping/cattle-eid/**

Tags for New-born Calves

All calves born on your holding must be tagged within the following timescales:

- **Beef calves – an ear tag in each ear within 20 days of birth, or before if the calf is to be moved off the holding of birth before it reaches 20 days old.**
  The holding register must be updated to contain the details of the beef calf within 30 days of birth.
- **Dairy calves – at least one ear tag within 36 hours of birth and the second ear tag within 20 days of birth. Both ear tags must be fitted before the calf leaves the holding of birth.**
  The holding register must be updated to contain the details of the dairy calf within 7 days of birth.

Replacement Tags

Lost, illegible, or damaged tags must be replaced within 28 days of when the loss/damage is first noticed. The replacement tag must contain the same unique animal identification number to the tag that was lost or damaged, which also matches the number on the individuals' cattle passport. Some cattle tag manufacturers offer free cattle ear tag replacements.

Management Tags

In addition to the two mandatory tags, you may also wish to use management tags to make reading tags at distance and recording information slightly easier. Often management tags are used to identify animals using a different numbering system or by individual names.

Cattle Passports

All cattle born or imported into the UK must have a cattle passport. The passport must remain and move with the animal throughout its life. There are two types of cattle passports currently in circulation. Since 2011, cattle passports are a single-page passport (CPP52). Prior to this they were a cheque-book style passport (CPP13). Since the move to ScotMoves+ in 2021 all new Scottish passports will now be a single-page blue passport and will also contain a QR code for scanning with a mobile phone, all other details on the passport remain as before.

Applying for a Cattle Passport

You must register a calf with ScotEID within 27 days since its date of birth, and within 7 days of tagging. You can register a calf on ScotMoves+ online or by using a paper Passport Application Form, if you use a livestock recording programme to keep your records, this can usually be linked to ScotMoves+ to save double entering information. To register the calf, you will need to record the following information on the ScotEID website:

- **The calf's individual 12-digit ear tag number**
- **Sex of the calf (Bull, Heifer, Steer)**
- **The calf's date of birth**
- **Breed of calf**
- **The birth dam's ear tag number (the animal that gave birth to the calf)**
- **The genetic dam's ear tag number, if different to the birth dam (if known)**
- **The sire's ear tag number (if known)**

Cattle passports should arrive within 7 days when applied for electronically and within 14 days from paper applications. Please remember that after you receive the passport from ScotEID to check that all details within it are correct. If all details on the passport are correct, apply your barcode label (available from ScotEID) and sign the passport. It is the keeper's responsibility to check the passport is accurate and notify ScotEID if any amendments are required.

Registering calves within 27 days is critical. Late calf registrations will result in a 'Notice of Registration; being issued for any late registered cattle, which means that the individual will not be eligible to enter the food chain and must remain on the holding for its lifetime. These cattle can be used for breeding and any calves born or sired by them should be registered in the usual way.

Lost Passports

If you lose or damage a cattle passport, you will need to get a replacement passport before you can move the animal off your holding. Lost, stolen, or damaged cattle passports can be replaced by contacting ScotEID. You will be charged a replacement fee of £20 per passport. Passports notified to ScotEID as not received within 6 weeks of issue will be replaced free of charge.

Recording Cattle Movements

All 'on' and 'off' movements should be recorded via ScotEID/ScotMoves as follows:

- **Sale, show, hire movements (moves recorded on the passport) must be reported to ScotEID within 3 days.**
- **Within business moves (moves recorded on ScotMoves by those that use additional holdings), where the animal does not change ownership, must be reported on ScotEID within 48 hours.**

All Scottish marts will automatically report any movements to ScotMoves on your behalf when moving cattle from the farm to the market when selling, and from the market to the farm when buying. Scottish abattoirs will also report any cattle movements when moving cattle from the farm to the abattoir. It is also advisable to check ScotMoves to verify that the movements and details are correct for your farm.

Remember to apply barcode label, sign and date the passport for each movement. For individual animals which are moved several times (e.g. herds with several grazings or show animals), you should apply for a cattle passport continuation sheet to continue recording movements for the individual animal in the required format. In addition, barcode labels can be requested, free of charge from ScotEID.

The holding register must also be updated with the 'on' and 'off' movements within 48 hours of the movement taking place.

Recording Cattle Deaths

You must report the cattle death to ScotMoves+ online or by phone and return the cattle passport to ScotEID within 7 days of the death. When sending away the passport remember to apply your holding barcode label and sign and date the passport, where indicated. **The holding register must also be updated with the cattle death within 7 days.** In addition to notifying the death and updating your holding register, you should also contact a collector within 24 hours to arrange for the carcass to be uplifted (exemptions apply in the remote areas within the Highlands and Islands). Cattle that are over 48 months of age must be tested for BSE, for traceability the carcass must be left with a section of the passport (preferably in a small plastic bag to protect it from the elements). The single page passports have a cut off strip (TSE), at the bottom, which is to be left with the carcass. If your animal has the older chequebook style passport the movement card should be left with the carcass.

Extracting Data from On-Farm Records

While many farmers keep only the statutory records required (e.g. births, deaths and movements), valuable information can be extracted from these to gauge performance of the cattle herd. Extracting information from records is rewarding and time well spent, even with basic information. It gives insight into the efficiency of the business, where problems lie and where performance needs to be improved. Some details which can be worked out from simple on-farm records include:

- **Mortality rate – Target: Cows < 2%, calves < 3%.**
- **Calving spread – Target: 65% of cows to calf within first 21 days, 90% by 42 days, with only 10% of the herd calving over 42 days from the first calving.**
- **Calving Interval – Target: 90% of the herd < 370 days.**
- **Calves reared – Target: > 94%.**
- **Age profile of the herd – gives an indication of the age of cows within the breeding herd.**

The above is only a handful of the data that could be assembled for a herd. For additional details and calculations please visit the FAS New Entrants to Farming Fact Sheet: An Introduction to Benchmarking for the Suckler Herd. **https://www.fas.scot/downloads/an-introduction-to-benchmarking-cattle/**

Computer Software

To save yourself from the stress of keeping manual paper-based records it is best that you incorporate a cattle record keeping software programme, especially in larger herds. Using computer based record keeping software can help by saving your time and improve business performance. With paper based records comes to exposure to high risks of human errors and extra time taken to find/follow cattle through a paper Herd Register. Using a cattle management software for your business will automatically track the records for you from birth to sale, with options to add in as much information as required about the animals performance throughout its lifetime.

There are many cattle record keeping software packages available within Scotland, therefore each one should be investigated before you decide on which one to move forward with. Overall, computer based records can help in providing an efficient record keeping system on-farm, most can be linked directly with ScotMoves to save double entering information and it allows easier analysis, benchmarking and monitoring of the cattle enterprise to help make future decisions about the herd.

Seeking Further Guidance

For further assistance in cattle record keeping, tagging and passports please contact:

FAS Helpline: **0300 323 0161, advice@fas.scot**

ScotEID/ScotMoves+: **01466 794 323, help@scoteid.com**

SGRPID: Find your local office **https://account.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/topics/contact-us/**

APHA: Find your local office **https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening#scotland-field-service-offices**

Additional Information

In addition to the information contained within this fact sheet, the following weblinks are also useful sources of information:

https://www.scoteid.com/

https://www.fas.scot/livestock/beef-cattle/record-keeping/

Livestock identification and traceability: guidance – gov.scot **https://www.gov.scot/publications/livestock-identification-and-traceability-guidance/pages/cattle/**