

Ear Tagging.

This is one of the most common topics that members ask for advice about. There is a lot of confusion about what tags are needed and the information that needs to be on them. Hopefully this will provide some guidance and answer some questions.

Statutory Requirements.

- 1) All sheep born on or after 31st December 2009 must be identified according to the current rules. Older sheep are covered by earlier legislation.
- 2) All sheep kept beyond 12 months of age must be identified with one electronic tag/bolus and one visual tag.
- 3) Any sheep intended for slaughter before 12 months of age can be tagged with a single slaughter tag which can be electronic or visual, although they may also be identified as per point 2). However, in Scotland, any slaughter tag **MUST** be electronic. From 2015, all UK slaughter tags must be electronic.
- 4) In England and Wales, electronic tags **MUST** be yellow and visual tags must not be yellow. Scotland is different in that although SEERAD recommend yellow as the colour for EID tags, it is not compulsory and is also permitted as a colour for matching visual tags.
- 5) Red is the colour reserved for replacement tags where the animal **IS NOT** on its holding of birth. Where the electronic identification is a ruminal bolus, rather than a tag, the visual tag **MUST** be black. Red and black are reserved for these purposes only.
- 6) If an animal is tagged with a slaughter only tag, and is still on its holding of birth, it may be upgraded to full EID (double tagged) by removing the slaughter tag and inserting one electronic tag and a matching visual tag.
- 7) Rules covering replacement tags are the same for animals born since the introduction of EID and older animals. Where the sheep is on its birth holding, a lost tag can either be replaced by a replacement identical to the lost tag **OR** the remaining tag can also be removed, and a new pair of tags applied. Where the latter option is used, the old and new tag numbers must be cross referenced in your flock record book.
- 8) Replacement tags for animals not on their holding of birth are as per 7) except that the tags **MUST** be red.
- 9) Where a sheep has lost a slaughter tag, it can be replaced with another. Where the animal is not on its birth holding, the new slaughter tag must be red.

eg:  (YELLOW)  (OTHER COLOUR)

Full EID - UK number & Individual Number Double tags for animals kept for more than 12 months.

 (YELLOW)

Slaughter only - UK flock number only. Can be electronic or electronic. Must be yellow if electronic.

Pedigree Information: Ryeland & Coloured Ryeland Flock Books

It is vital to remember that your pedigree information is required **IN ADDITION** to that required by DEFRA/SEERAD/WAG.

- 1) Your tags must display your ryeland or coloured ryeland flock number. This number identifies the flock in which the sheep was bred.
- 2) Your tags must display the year of birth letter relevant to the animal in question i.e., 2023 born lambs, the letter D must be present. This identifies the year in which the lamb was born.
- 3) Tags must also include an individual number. This identifies the particular animal within that year's crop of lambs.
- 4) The individual number can be anything, so long as it is unique within that birth year. Some breeders begin at 1 each year. Others use the individual number that is part of the DEFRA/SEERAD/WAG information.
- 5) It should be possible to put all the pedigree information on the reverse side of the tags carrying the statutory information i.e. noneed to use a third tag.

A lot of members contact me to ask what they should put on their tags. My advice is as follows:

Order the number of tags that you need. They will automatically have the correct statutory information on them. Ask for your flock number and the year of birth letter to added as "additional information" Eg:

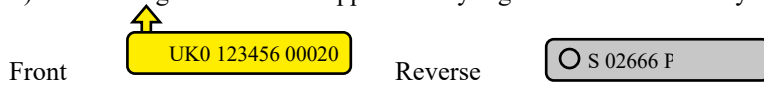
Front  Reverse 

The tag number for this animal would be noted in the RFBS records as 02666/P00001.

Supplementary Register:

If you have animals to register in the Ryeland supplementary register both the above sections apply, but with the following addition.

1) Animals registered in the supplementary register must have the Ryeland flock number prefixed by the letter "S". Eg:



The tag number for this animal would be noted in the RFBS records as S0266/P00020.