

**CLITHEROE AUCTION MART CO LTD**  
**SHEEP TAGGING – ELECTRONIC IDENTIFICATION**  
***OUR ADVICE TO YOU . . . .***

Electronic Identification (EID) in sheep was introduced for any sheep born from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

All sheep born from this date and **NOT** intended for slaughter before 12 months of age will have to be electronically identified. These sheep will have two identifiers, one of which must be electronic. These will be identical tags with the flock mark and animal number visible and this information will also be contained in the electronic chip.

Sheep can be electronically identified with either an EID tag, an EID bolus or pastern tag. EID tags must be YELLOW so they are easily identifiable.

Replacement tags must be RED (if not on holding of birth) and the matching tag in a sheep with an EID bolus must be BLACK.

The secondary tag for a sheep with an EID tag can be any colour apart from YELLOW, RED or BLACK.

**Sheep intended for slaughter before 12 months of age have three options**

1. Full EID tag and visual match up as with breeding sheep
2. Single electronic slaughter tag with visual UK flock number and individual number contained in the chip
3. Single non EID tag displaying UK flock mark only

The slaughter derogation allows sheep intended for slaughter under 12 months of age to be identified by a **non electronic batch tag** but this will create a number of problems; for instance for store lamb buyers who may buy and sell large numbers of lambs from different holdings of birth and buyers who take lambs from our Tuesday prime market to a holding centre for batching with other lambs for onward movement to slaughter.

The problems associated with non electronic tags are that, when sheep have been mixed with other lambs, the buyers need then to provide a record of animals with different flock numbers within each batch. This would require them to individually check each ear tag and make a record of this. Where there may be a wagon with over 400 lambs loaded from many different batches, the practice of individually checking ear tags would prove very time consuming and therefore costly. There is the likelihood that large scale finishers will discount lambs without EID tags, as not being able to read their tags electronically will mean more costs for their business in terms of finance and time (this could also include abattoirs).

All this is true not only for farmers but for market staff as well. If a farmer unloads a trailer full of lambs which are electronically identified, the process of handling the lambs through the race, scale and penning system will be no different to how it is now. For non EID tags, the process will be slower in that farmers will need to identify whether the lambs are from their own holding of birth or if they are a mixed batch. If they are from the holding of birth they will be processed as a batch but where they are from different holdings the farmer will need to read all individual tag numbers and record the different flock numbers on the AML1 plus identify visually with differing spray marks.

Chris Dodds, secretary of the Livestock Auctioneers Association said, 'When we look at prime sheep markets, an EBLEX study showed that one third of all prime lambs leave the auction mart gathering destined for a non abattoir holding . . . just putting a cheap and cheerful 10p tag in might end up being the worst decision you ever make so it is very important farmers understand the needs of the market to make sure they realise the full value of their animals.'

Where lambs have an electronic slaughter tag, and traceability can be proved (even via a market) they can be upgraded to full EID tags, meeting the regulations for breeding sheep. This may be an important consideration for future months for those farmers selling store lambs including gimmers. Where there may be the possibility for these lambs to be upgraded to breeding stock they would need electronic batch tags for this process.

The choice of tagging system is entirely down to the farmer and we will accommodate all tag choices at Clitheroe Auction, however, it is **OUR ADVICE** that in order to retain the maximum number of options for marketing your lambs that at the very least you use Electronic slaughter tag in each lamb as these are capable of being upgraded to breeding stock and read electronically, whereas a manual tag is not.

Farmers will **NOT** need to purchase an EID reader or equipment of their own.

Clitheroe Auction will record all the individual tag number of EID tags presented and as a vendor or purchaser we will present you with a full print out list on the sale day of individual sheep identities which can then be used to populate your holding register.

**In order to show customers the processes we are aiming to put in place we will hold a demonstration day on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010**

**More details to follow soon**