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Cattle identification inspections - what you should do when you are inspected

7.1 Why we have inspections

By law we must carry out cattle identification inspections. Inspectors examine cattle, their ear tags, passports and farm records to check that the rules for identifying cattle are being met.

7.2 What the inspector does

The inspector checks all the animals on your holding or holdings, whether they were born on your holding or bought in. They also check imported animals. You need to gather together all the animals that are being inspected. The inspector will check:

- farm records that show which animals are present on the holding or have been on the holding;
- births, movements and deaths are correctly recorded;
- all animals are correctly tagged, and match the animal's identification document;
- all identification documents are present and correct;
- deadlines for identifying cattle and keeping records have been met; and
- all identification documents for animals that are moved or slaughtered have been passed to the new keeper or returned to us.

7.3 What you have to do

An inspector has the right to visit farms to make sure that the rules for identifying cattle and keeping records are understood and being followed. You must let the inspector see all the documents and records relevant to the inspection. It is against the law not to have documents available for inspection, so they should be kept by the keeper of the animal. You should make sure that the inspector can safely inspect your animals. You must provide suitable handling facilities and people to gather the cattle together.

At the end of the inspection the inspector will ask you to sign the cattle identification inspection report form 1 (form CPP18), and give you a copy. (This does not apply in Scotland.)

a If an inspector is obstructed

If an inspector is obstructed, your whole herd will be restricted, and any payments due to you may be at risk.

7.4 The farm records you need to keep

You must keep records of all cattle births, movements and deaths, which include details of:

- the ear-tag number;
- the date of birth;
- the sex;
- the breed;
- the dam identity;
- the date of movements 'on' and 'off' your holding; and
- the details of where the animal has moved to or from.

You must keep a record of all cattle movements even if you don't have to report them to us. You must also record links with other farms in your farm records, and movements between your farm and the link farm.

The record may be paper or stored on a computer, and must record details of births, deaths and movements on and off the holding. Use an Agriculture Department Herd Register, a Local Authority Record Book, a computerised spreadsheet, software package or a record book. As records must be available on request, if you keep your records on computer, you may wish to keep a paper copy as a back-up. We can supply herd register books. Contact our helpline to enquire about this.

You must keep farm records for **10 years**, and three years in any other case (for example markets), from the end of the calendar year in which the last entry was made.

a Deadlines

You must complete your farm records within the following deadlines.

- 36 hours in the case of movements 'on' or 'off' a holding.
- 7 days for the birth of a dairy animal.
- 30 days for the birth of cattle not in a dairy herd.
- 7 days for a death.
- 36 hours for replacement ear tags.

We recommend you update your records as soon as possible after the event as this makes it easier to keep your records accurate.

7.5 How long the inspection takes

How long an inspection takes will depend on the size of your holding, the number of cattle involved, and the quality of your records. If your records are set out clearly and accurately, the inspection won't take as long. Reporting movements will help you to make sure your records are up to date. It is quicker, safer and more accurate if you report them electronically. We aim to carry out inspections quickly and efficiently with as little disruption to you as possible.

7.6 How we choose farms for inspection

We may choose to inspect any holding. We are more likely to inspect you if we found problems during a previous inspection as a higher enforcement weighting will be applied to your holding. The number of farms we visit each year partly depends on how well the rules for identifying cattle and keeping records are being met in Great Britain.

7.7 Other inspections

Inspections are also carried out as part of the Single Payment Scheme in England and Wales, and the Single Farm Payment Scheme in Scotland. The results of these inspections may affect any payment made to you.

Where both single payment and cattle identification inspections are needed, we will try to carry them out at the same time.

The results of the cattle identification inspection are sent to us to decide what action should be taken, if any is needed. The results are passed to the paying authorities in England, Scotland and Wales.

7.8 What happens if an inspector finds problems?

a Mistakes in cattle passports

If the inspector finds mistakes in any cattle passport, either after inspecting the animal itself or when he or she checks your farm records, the inspector will collect those cattle passports from you and give you a receipt for them.

If we can correct the passports, we will do so and return them to you free of charge. You should check the passports carefully when they come back. Please phone us if you do not get your passports back within four weeks of the inspector taking them.

b Differences between the information given on ear tags, in passports and in your herd register

If the inspector finds any differences between an animal's ear tag, its passport and its entry in your farm records, a movement restriction may be placed on the animal. Our inspector will do this either by taking the animal's passport away to be corrected or by giving you a movement restriction notice for the animal (form CPP27/CPPS27 - notice restricting the movement of individual cattle).

If one of your animals is placed under a movement restriction, this means the following.

- You cannot move that animal from your holding until you have made sure that it is correctly tagged, its passport is correct, and the animal's details and movements are correctly recorded in your farm records.
- The movement restriction notice tells you what you need to do to put things right.
- We will lift the movement restriction as soon as you have correctly identified the animal. This will be when we have corrected and returned the animal's passport or when you have put matters right yourself by following the information in the movement restriction notice.

The movement restriction is not self-lifting; you must tell us when you have corrected any errors.

An inspector may return at a later date to check that the animal has been correctly identified.

Remember: you must tell us when you have made corrections.

c If more than 20 per cent of cattle are not correctly identified, or you fail to report births, movements and deaths

If, at the end of the inspection, our inspector has found that more than 20 per cent of the cattle on your holding do not meet with the identification and traceability rules, a whole herd movement restriction will be put in place restricting movements 'on' and 'off' your holding.

If the inspector found that more than 20 per cent of the cattle on your holding failed to meet with identification and traceability rules **and** you failed to report births, movements and deaths to us, a movement restriction will be placed on all cattle moving 'off' your holding. Also, cattle cannot move 'on' to your holding.

This means the following.

- You will receive a movement restriction notice for your whole herd (form CPP28/ CPPS28 - notice restricting the movement of cattle 'off' and 'on' to a holding). This lists all the animals on your holding and tells you what you need to do to put things right.
- You cannot move any animals 'off' your holding until more than 80 per cent of your cattle meet the regulations. If the movement restriction is for both 'on' and 'off' movements, you cannot move any animals 'on' or 'off' your holding until more than 80 per cent of your cattle meet the regulations.
- We will send you a letter listing the number of animals on your holding, the number of corrections to be made and the number of corrections you need to make to lift the part of the movement restriction that applies to your whole herd. We will also tell you what you need to do to put things right.
- You must tell us when 80 per cent or more of your herd meet the regulations. You can do this by phone or by using a notice of compliance (form CPP29/ CPPS29). If you are not sure, please contact us and we will check for you.
- Once you have told us that enough of the herd meet the regulations to lift the movement restriction, we will confirm this to you by letter. We will also list any animals we still believe have mistakes and are restricted to your holding.
- We may ask an inspector to visit your holding to check that the action you have taken is correct. If you give us any false information to lift a movement restriction on your whole herd, we may take enforcement action against you.
- If you move animals from your holding while the movement restriction is in place, you are committing an offence, and we may take enforcement action against you.

If less than 20 per cent of your animals did not meet the regulations, they will be individually restricted. This means you will not be able to move a restricted animal off your holding until the mistakes for that animal have been put right.

We will place a whole herd movement restriction on any holding which has refused entry to cattle inspectors. The above conditions will apply.

d Animals failing to meet any of the rules

An animal does not meet all the rules if:

- it is not tagged according to the legislation in force at the time of the animal's birth;
- the inspector cannot trace the identity of the animal through your farm records;
- you have not recorded its birth or any movement 'on' your holding in your farm records; and

- the animal does not have a valid passport, certificate of registration or notice of registration.

If our inspector finds any unidentified animals on your holding, you will get a notice telling you to identify the animals (form CPP30/ CPPS30). The notice will not allow you to move the animals off your holding.

The inspector will return to your holding after two working days to check if you have tagged the animals. If you have not, you will be given a notice of removal of cattle for compulsory slaughter (form CPP31/ CPPS31). The animal will be destroyed, and we may recover the costs of the compulsory slaughter from you.

Any problems found during a cattle identification inspection or a cross-compliance inspection may affect your subsidy payment.

7.9 Are the results of inspections made public?

There is a yearly programme of inspections. We produce results about the number of farms we visit each year and how well the rules are being followed. These are made public. They are sent to the European Commission and shared with other member states. We do not name individual results in these reports.

7.10 Follow-up action

The inspecting officer sends us a copy of the report. We look at the findings and decide what action is needed. If we find any mistakes or faults with any animal's identification or with the supporting paperwork, we will sort them out.

If we find mistakes during the inspection, we may apply one of the following restrictions.

- Individual cattle with mistakes on their ear tags, passport or farm records, which you do not correct at the time of the inspection, have a movement restriction placed on them, or the passport is removed so we can correct it.
- We place a movement restriction on all the cattle on the holding if the percentage of cattle on the holding with unresolved mistakes is more than 20 per cent at the end of the inspection.
- We lift these movement restrictions once we are told what action you have taken or after a re-inspection.
- If an animal has no ear tag, passport or farm record, we ask you to identify it. If you do not do this within two working days, we could have the animal destroyed without paying any compensation to you.

7.11 Penalties

The agriculture departments may take legal action against any keeper believed to be breaking the rules. If the court finds that a keeper is guilty of an offence, they may set severe penalties, including fines of up to £5,000 for each animal. In the worst cases, the court can also give the keeper a prison sentence.

Problems found at inspection may lead to a reduction in payment under the regional subsidy schemes (England, Scotland and Wales).

You can find details of the reductions and a list of the most common problems found at inspection on the cross compliance pages of our website at www.rpa.gov.uk.