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# Getting started

## 1.1 Introduction

The first Cattle keeper's handbook was sent to registered keepers in March 2005, and was replaced by an updated version in February 2007. This version replaces those earlier editions to include recent changes to our practices.

We may need to send you updates as practices change. You should keep updates with this booklet to make sure that the information you have is always current.

For more information you can look on our website at [www.rpa.gov.uk](http://www.rpa.gov.uk) or on Defra's website at [www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk), or you can phone our helpline. In Scotland you can also refer to [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk).

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is responsible for cattle identification and tracing issues in England. The Scottish Government is responsible for these issues in Scotland. The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is responsible for these issues in Wales.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA), through the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS), runs Great Britain's Cattle Tracing System (CTS) database on behalf of the English, Scottish and Welsh Ministers.

The main role of the **BCMS** is to:

- maintain the CTS database;
- issue cattle passports;
- process information about cattle movements received from keepers; and
- respond to customers' enquiries.

**CTS** makes it possible to:

- check which animals are present on a holding;
- check easily where cattle came from and where they have been during their lives;
- trace cattle more easily if there is a disease outbreak; and
- give buyers greater assurance about an animal's history.

## 1.2 What is a holding?

A holding is a place where cattle are kept or handled. Farms are holdings, so are livestock markets, calf assembly centres and slaughterhouses. Most keepers will have only one holding. However, some keepers may have more than one holding and some holdings may be used by more than one keeper. A business is not a holding. Many businesses may be made up of more than one holding.

A holding is identified by its CPH (county, parish, holding) number. This is how it is also identified on the CTS.

If you have more than one holding, you will have different holding numbers. Please make sure that your farm records and correspondence match the right holding.

You must tell us about any links you have with different herds and holdings (for example, using shared facilities with another holding). If you do have links with other farms or herds, it is likely that all the holdings will be restricted if there is an outbreak of disease on one of the holdings or in one of the herds.

We will review links to holdings so you should contact our helpline for up-to-date information.

### **1.3 Who is a keeper?**

A keeper is a person who is responsible for cattle, on a permanent or temporary basis. It is his or her duty to make sure that all legal requirements are met. The keeper is not always the owner of the animals nor the owner of the land where animals are kept.

Examples of keepers include:

- farmers;
- people who run livestock markets and calf assembly centres;
- dealers, who keep animals;
- transporters; and
- people who run slaughterhouses and lairages.

People who run a collection centre, for example a hunt kennel or a knacker's yard, are keepers if they handle live animals. (This is not a complete list of the different types of keeper.)

### **1.4 New keepers**

If you are a new cattle keeper you must do the following.

- First register your holding with the RPA Customer Service Centre (CSC) in England, your local Scottish Government, Rural Payment and Inspections Directorate (SGRPID) office in Scotland, or your local Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) divisional office in Wales. They will give you a CPH number. We cannot register you as a keeper until you have a CPH number.
- You must then tell us that you are going to keep cattle. You must also tell your nearest Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO), who will give you a herd mark for your holding. This herd mark means you will be able to buy ear tags.

- For up-to-date information on the CSC office, AHDOs, SGRPID offices and WAG offices, please phone our helpline.
- You need to keep a record of animals born, arriving, and leaving or dying on your holding. See section eleven for more information on record keeping.