

Identification Registration and Movement (IRM) – Livestock Traceability - Bovine EID

Identification Registration and Movement (IRM)

All cattle in the European Union, and many other countries, are required to be uniquely identified with approved ear tags and their movements recorded throughout their lives. In the EU cattle ear tags are required to meet international standards - the system is known as the Identification, Registration and Movement (IRM) Requirements. This is essential for disease prevention, control, eradication and the protection of public health.

Bovine EID is the identification of cattle with a tag which contains an electronic identifier. It has to be noted that identifying cattle with electronic tags (EID) does not, in itself, improve on current cattle traceability without the data systems, Electronic Data Transfer (EDT), required to support its successful introduction. In Scotland the further development of the ScotEID database is key. The present Cattle Tracing System (CTS) will not support bovine EID GB wide. Defra are presently developing their Livestock Information Programme to support bovine EID in England and potentially Wales.

Benefits:

- EID, in conjunction with electronic reading and electronic data transfer, will reduce administrative burdens, such as written notifications about bovine identities, for the livestock sector;
- EID will also support the competitiveness of the sector as an excellent tool for improving farm management and on-farm automation; and
- additional benefits of bovine electronic identification cover disease prevention, control, eradication and the protection of public health. EID can also be used to prevent fraud, genetic improvement, crisis management and trade. In addition to strengthening the current system of traceability, consumer protection and food safety. Food processing establishments (e.g. Slaughterhouses) and markets will benefit, again there will be a reduction of the associated administrative work and labour costs.

Regulation - the EU Regulation for Bovine EID (EU) No 653/2014 amending 1760/2000 was published on the 27, June 2014 and came into force on 17, July 2014. The Regulation has a transition period of 5 years (June 2019) to allow Member States to introduce systems to support bovine EID.

We are still waiting for the European Commission to circulate the draft Implementing Act which is the crucial piece of tertiary legislation setting out the common standards for the EID technology for Member States.

UHF technology – Whilst we expect that the European Commission will legislate for LF technology (the same technology used for sheep) industry in Scotland recognise the benefits of UHF technology (particularly from a health and safety perspective – standing further back from the cattle and allowing for multiple read rates) however, ScotEID are not UHF exclusive. SG's position is that we are focussed on receiving

data by whatever means – manual read, barcode, LF, UHF. The ScotEID database is technology neutral and looks for data that is accurate and timely.

SG is not locking the whole chain into a technology, which might not be at all suitable for some. Key is electronic data transfer (EDT) as opposed to electronic identification (EID).

Trade

It has to be noted that the IRM controls that we currently have in place and measures to improve them are key for future trade agreements. Indeed, the question on the UK/GB readiness and preparedness for bovine EID is one of the requests that came up in the Chinese visit to the UK in 2017/18 to pave the way for their export ban on UK beef to be lifted.