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HEALTH & CONSUMER PROTECTION DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Directorate F - Food and Veterinary Office

DG(SANCO)/7541/2005 – MR Final

FINAL REPORT OF A MISSION
CARRIED OUT IN THE
UNITED KINGDOM
FROM 24 – 28 JANUARY 2005

IN ORDER TO EVALUATE THE SYSTEMS IN PLACE AND PROPOSED FOR THE
IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION OF OVINE AND CAPRINE ANIMALS
AND TO ASSESS THEIR CONFORMANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF
REGULATION (EC) NO 21/2004 (Section 5.1 of the annex)

Please note that factual errors in the Draft Report have been corrected. Additional information provided by the competent authorities of the United Kingdom is given as footnotes in bold, italic type, to the relevant parts of the report



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ABBREVIATIONS & SPECIAL TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

| | |
|------------|--|
| AHDO | Animal Health Divisional Office |
| AMES | Animal Health and Welfare Management & Enforcement System |
| AML | Animal Movement Licence |
| AMLS | Animal Movement Licensing System |
| CA(s) | Competent Authority(ies) |
| CCA(s) | Central Competent Authority(ies) |
| CET | Central Enforcement Team |
| CPH number | County-Parish-Holding number |
| DARD-NI | Department of Agriculture and Rural Development – Northern Ireland |
| DEFRA | Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| DVM | Divisional Veterinary Manager |
| DVO | Divisional Veterinary Office |
| ELU | Enforcement Liaison Unit |
| EU | European Union |
| FMD | Foot and Mouth Disease |
| FVO | Food and Veterinary Office |
| GB | Great Britain |
| IMSGO | Identification and Movement of Sheep and Goats (NI) Order 2004 |
| LA(s) | Local Authority(ies) |
| NISGIMS | The Northern Ireland Sheep and Goat Identification and Movement System |
| OV | Official Veterinarian |
| DG SANCO | Health & Consumer Protection Directorate General |
| SEERAD | Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department |
| SOG | Sole Occupancy Group |
| SVS | State Veterinary Service |
| UK | United Kingdom |

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission took place in the United Kingdom (UK) from 24 to 28 January 2005. The mission team comprised three inspectors from the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). The team was accompanied throughout the duration of the mission by representatives from the Central Competent Authorities (CCAs).

The mission was undertaken as part of the FVO's planned mission programme in response to the applications made by the Competent Authorities (CAs).

An opening meeting was held on 24 January 2005 with the CCAs. At this meeting, the objectives of, and itinerary for, the mission were confirmed by the inspection team, and additional information was requested for the satisfactory completion of the mission.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION

The mission took place in response to the applications made by the CCAs for the approval of an identification and registration system in accordance with Article 4(2)(d) of Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals.

The objective of the mission was to evaluate the systems in place and proposed in the UK for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and to assess their conformance with the requirements of Section 5.1 of the Annex to the above mentioned Regulation.

In pursuit of this objective, the following sites were visited:

| SITES | | | Comments |
|----------------------|---------|---|--|
| Competent authority | Central | 3 | DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs SEERAD Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development |
| | Local | 2 | |
| Holdings | | 4 | |
| Slaughterhouses | | 1 | |
| Livestock Market | | 2 | |
| Ear tag Manufacturer | | 1 | |

3. BACKGROUND

Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 establishes a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals. In accordance with this Regulation animals born after 9 July 2005 should be identified by two means of identification which comply with the requirements of Section A.1 to A.3 and Section A.4 of the Annex respectively. However, until 1 of January 2008 the second means of identification may be replaced by a system conforming to Section A.5 of the Annex, except in the case of animals involved in intra-Community trade.

The UK introduced such systems and applied to the Commission to have them approved. One request was sent for Great Britain (GB) on 10 June 2004 and another one was sent for Northern Ireland (NI) on 20 December 2004.

4. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE MISSION

The mission was carried out under the general provisions of Community legislation and, in particular:

- Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003 establishing a system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals and amending Regulation (EC) No 1872/2003 and Directives 92/102/EEC and 64/432/EEC.¹
- Council Directive 91/68/EEC of 28 January 1991 on animal health conditions governing intra-Community trade in ovine and caprine animals.²
- Council Directive 92/102/EEC of 27 November 1992 on the identification and registration of animals.³
- Commission Decision 98/139/EC of 4 February 1998 laying down certain detailed rules concerning on-the-spot checks carried out in the veterinary field by Commission experts in Member States.⁴

5. MAIN FINDINGS / MISSION OUTCOME

5.1. Competent Authorities

5.1.1. Legislation

Great Britain

The requirements have different legal bases in England, Wales and Scotland:

- In England “The Sheep and Goats Identification and Movement (Interim Measures) (England) (No. 2) Order 2002” was amended several times and defines the requirements for holding registration, animal identification, replacement of eartag procedure and movement recording and notification. The Disease Control (England) Order 2003 completes the requirements in relation to movements.
- The equivalent legislation in Wales is “The Sheep and Goats Identification and Movement (Interim Measures) (Wales) (No. 2) Order 2002.
- In Scotland “The Sheep and Goats Identification (Scotland) Regulations 2000 came into force 1st January 2001, was amended in 2002 and completed by “The Sheep and Goats Movement (Interim Measures) (Scotland) Order 2002”.

Some differences exist in the legal requirements applicable at present between England / Wales and Scotland (e.g. maximum age of the animals at marking).

New legislation to implement Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 has been drafted for England. However, the CA intends to await the outcome of the

¹ Official Journal 005, 09/01/2004 p.08-17

² Official Journal L 046, 19/02/1991 p. 19 – 36

³ Official Journal 355, 05/12/1992 p.32-36

⁴ Official Journal L 038, 12/02/1998 p. 10-13

Commission's decision regarding the UK derogation from double tagging before progressing further.

The current proposal (with requirements based on the granting of the derogation) has been drafted and prepared for signature and public consultation. The CAs indicated that if this proposal was presented for Ministerial Submission during the first week of February, and the compulsory 3 months consultation starting one week later, the legislation could be laid by mid June and come into effect by 9 July.

No draft had been prepared in case the derogation should be refused. Policy makers would have to draw up new proposals including requirements for double tagging and it is not expected to have the legislation coming into effect before January 2006 at the earliest.

Separate but similar legislation in Wales and Scotland is expected to follow the same process. Being based on the legislation submitted in England additional delays can be expected.

Northern Ireland

New legal bases introducing the Northern Ireland Sheep and Goat Identification and Movement System (NISGIMS) were signed on 30 November 2004. They consist of the Identification and Movement of Sheep and Goats (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 (IMSGO) and the Disease Control (Standstill) Order (North Ireland) 2004⁵.

From a first non exhaustive analysis of the new legal basis it was noted that:

- No date of “coming into operation” is provided in either of these Orders. The CA explained that these new requirements came into force on 1/01/05.
- Some of the requirements are more constraining and stringent than the EU requirements applicable in July 2005 (e.g. recording the individual animal identification number on the movement document for each animal moving off the holding)⁶.
- The definitions of “holding” in the new Orders are not the same. For the IMSGO it is “any establishment, construction or, in the case of an open-air farm, place under the same ownership in which animals are held, kept or handled and includes land with or without buildings”. For the Disease Control Order it is “any establishment, construction or, in the case of an open-air farm, place (including land with or without buildings) occupied by the same person and in which animals are held, kept or handled”. These definitions are not in compliance with EU legislation.

⁵ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "Order (Northern Ireland) 2004 is not intended to implement Council Regulation No 21/2004. It is a piece of interim legislation to meet the needs of trade within the island of Ireland. It will be revoked and replaced in July 2005 with a new set of Regulations that are in compliance with Council Regulation No 21/2004."*

⁶ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "This is to bring Northern Ireland into line with the Republic of Ireland where individual animal identification and subsequent recording of all movements is required and is an integral component of All-Island Animal Health and Welfare Strategy."*

- The requirements for intra-Community trade are not in compliance with EU legislation:
 - Sheep less than 9 months of age, consigned from the holding of birth to the Republic of Ireland may be identified by mean of a single eartag.
 - For other sheep two eartags must be applied but their first and second means of identification bear different individual numbers (even if the animal is consigned from the holding of birth).
- There are differences between the terms and the procedures described in relation to movement documents in the IMSGO ('notification document') and the Disease Control Order ('movement document' and 'licence procedures').
- The model holding register provided in the schedule of the IMSGO does not contain all the information listed in the Annex to the Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.

The requirements contained in the IMSGO 2004 are significantly different and for many of them significantly more stringent than those in the previous 1997 Order (IMSGO 1997):

- Limit to 9 months maximum the age for tagging animals (the previous requirement was marking of the animals before movement off the holding of birth).
- Tagging of animal with a unique and individual identification number (the previous requirement was with a flock/herd mark).
- Establishment of central allocation system for ear tags.
- Recording of the individual animal identification number of each animal moving off the holding on the notification document.

5.1.2. Management structure and control systems

Great Britain

The structure of the CA remains as described in mission reports DG(SANCO)/8545/2002, DG(SANCO)/7267/2004 and DG(SANCO)/7251/2004 accessible on the following site http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fvo/index_en.htm.

In England and Wales, responsibility for enforcement of the rules rests with Local Authorities (LAs). A framework agreement signed with DEFRA defines the roles and responsibilities of the LA inspectors, describes best practice and sets the frequency of visits to be carried out based on a risk assessment. However, in one LA visited, insufficient staff was available to implement the Framework Agreement properly and the minimum frequency of visits to holdings and slaughterhouses was not respected⁷.

LAs can use the Animal Health and Welfare Management & Enforcement System (AMES) to support their enforcement activities. 97 out of the 170 LAs in England and Wales were using AMES in November 2004. These LAs cover the areas that

⁷ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities indicated that the reason for this was a high staff turnover and that funding is now agreed on a 3-year basis, which should address this high staff turnover problem*

represent approximately 95 % of the known movements. The Enforcement Liaison Unit (ELU) produces a monthly report based on data from AMES.

In Scotland, Agricultural inspectors within SEERAD are responsible for on-farm inspections. These are carried out each year in conjunction with inspections within the Sheep Annual Payment Scheme and include checks on the identification of animals, maintenance of the holding register and proper notification of movements. If the keeper is found to be in breach of the requirements a verbal or written warning may be issued. No financial penalties are imposed. During 2003 a total of 619 farms (approximately 5 % of the total) were inspected. These resulted in 78 verbal and 23 written warnings being issued. Details of the number and outcome of inspections carried out during 2004 were not available.

Scottish LA officials (including Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers as well as the police) are responsible for inspections in markets, farms and abattoirs as well as roadside vehicle checks. No formal agreement has been signed with SEERAD but local enforcement groups involving the Divisional Veterinary Manager (SEERAD) and Principal Agricultural Officer (SEERAD) meet regularly to agree inspection priorities and targets. The AMES system is not used in Scotland and details of the number and outcome of inspections concerning sheep identification carried out during 2004 were not available.

During the mission the following was noted regarding identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals:

- Staff at all levels were motivated and cooperative. However, the official controls of movement documents arriving at the livestock market and/or at abattoir was not always sufficient.
- Some information necessary for the proper enforcement of the requirements (e.g. flock/herd number, list of holdings with approved of multiple pick up and drop off facilities) is not available at LA level.
- Different events (e.g. agricultural shows) and tools (e.g. government stakeholder meetings, mail, web site) were utilised to achieve maximum compliance with current sheep and goat identification requirements.

Regarding the proposed system it was noted that:

- In England and Wales, the CA have yet to assess the additional staff resources required to deal with the work that will be generated by the introduction of the new requirements, in particular the increase in movements to be recorded⁸.
- Communication on key changes to the system in July 2005 has been delayed by the CA. For example a DEFRA' leaflet entitled "are your animals properly identified?" that was issued to all flock keepers mentioned that "the use of the temporary paint mark will be further limited from 9 July 2005" but no information has been made available so far. Some of the changes will be required whether or not the derogation is granted and present significant changes to the present requirements (e.g. new model of holding register,

⁸ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "This does not apply in Scotland as most moves are recorded electronically."*

tagging of animal going to slaughter, reduction of time for identification of animals etc.)⁹.

- The officials, keepers and operators met were unsure of the changes intended.

Northern Ireland

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) is responsible for implementation of the legislation and its enforcement. Since April 2004 a Central Enforcement Team (CET) has been created within the Veterinary Services and specialises in enforcement and complex or confrontational cases.

It was noted that:

- Regular discussions about the new IMSGO have taken place between DARD and sheep industry representatives since 2003. At the most recent meeting in November 2004 some union and industry representatives expressed the view that the proposals were impractical and would not be accepted by their members¹⁰.
- Communication on the new legal requirements focused directly on sheep keepers was made in December 2004, only 1 month ahead of entry into force of new legislation. However, the information circulated is in contradiction with the new legislation in some points. For example, the guidance instructs keepers not to apply a third tag to the right ear in the event that a purchased sheep loses its natal tag. The legislation requires a third tag to be applied in such an event.
- At the time of the mission the new requirements were hardly implemented. The CA explained that delays were already noted in the implementation of some of them (use of the notification document, use of the new holding register model).
- Some DARD officials responsible for the enforcement of the new legislation were unsure of the requirements (for example, the tagging of animals on arrival).
- Veterinary Service staff maintains a permanent presence at livestock markets and slaughterhouses. However, their main responsibility at livestock market is limited to the issuing of licences for the movements of animals leaving the market and at slaughterhouse to public health controls.
- Regular inspections are carried out at farm level by DARD's Grants and Subsidies inspectors. The farm inspection report form used does not cover the whole scope of the Order, particularly regarding controls of movement documents and the Subsidies inspectors report to the Veterinary Services only when deficiencies are noted.
- Enforcement of IMSGO forms part of the core remit of the CET with its regular inspections at different levels. However, the CA explained that for the

⁹ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "We are therefore awaiting the result of the derogation decision before finalising the communications materials."*

¹⁰ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "The Department continues to discuss with sheep industry representatives how the system will work in practice. DARD also met a number of Sheep Breeders' Associations to discuss the technical aspects of the system and further discussions will take place in April 2005."*

time being as there is only one CET unit, inspections are targeted on markets. From the inspection form used during these inspections it appears that they are focusing on the correct identification of the animals presented rather than enforcing requirements for registration and movements.

In relation to the efficiency of the official supervision of identification and movement serious deficiencies were detected in the official supervision of one livestock market visited. Significant number of animals moved regularly from this market to unregistered holdings. Although the official inspector was fully aware of these practices no corrective action had been taken. The regular inspections from the CET did not detect these serious shortcomings.

5.2. Identification and registration system

5.2.1. Holding registration

Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 specifies that “Member States shall ensure that the competent authority has a central register of all the holdings relating to keepers of animals in their territory except transporters” and indicates which information need to be included.

At present separate computerised holding registers exist for Great Britain (Vetnet) and for Northern Ireland. No link exists between these two registers.

Great Britain

It was confirmed that not all animal holdings are registered as required in EU legislation (Council Directive 92/102/EEC and/or Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004). In particular, many businesses comprising several locations on which animals are kept are registered under one holding number (County Parish Holding - CPH).

Despite a common register the rules for the registration of holdings differ between Scotland and England/Wales particularly with regards to multiple holdings and common grazing:

- In England and Wales areas of common grazing are not registered and different holdings can be under one CPH number if they are managed within a Sole Occupancy Group (SOG)¹¹. Until these holding are registered it will not be possible to properly identify animals born on these holdings or to register movements to or from these locations. The target is to have all holdings registered during 2007.
- In Scotland, lands used for common grazing are allocated separate holding numbers. However, a holding may be comprised of several unconnected land parcels, even if they are widely dispersed. Rules for the registration of new holdings were introduced in June 2004. These allow a separated land parcel to be considered part of a holding if it is within 8 km of the home location. However, veterinary and traceability reasons must also be taken into account. A review of holdings registered prior to June is planned and should be completed before the end of 2005.

¹¹ ie a group of premises in relation to which an authorisation has been issued by the Secretary of State permitting movements between each of the premises not subject to standstill requirements.

For the time being not all of the information required is available in Vetnet. The CAs still have to gather information concerning the annual inventory, occupation of the keeper and the type of production.

Northern Ireland

A central register of holdings is maintained in accordance with Council Directive 92/102/EEC but is not in compliance with Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 (annual inventory, occupation of the keeper and the type of production).

During 2004 a single holding number was issued for each farm business even if it previously had more than one holding number. Although this approach to the allocation of holding numbers is in line with the national legislation it is neither in line with the definition of holdings in Council Directive 92/102/EEC nor in Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.

As a result not all animal holdings are registered as required in EU legislation. Moreover, regarding the implementation of national rules, evidence was found that a significant number of sheep were moved from a livestock market to unregistered holdings (see above). The CA did not take the appropriate measures to regularise the registration of these holdings.

5.2.2. Means of identification

Great Britain

The present legal requirements oblige already the keepers of sheep and goats:

- To identify the animals born on their holdings with a ‘baseline’ tag (UK tag). This UK tag bears the letters “UK”, followed by a six-digit flock/herd mark, followed by an individual animal number of no more than six digits. Flock/herd marks are allocated regionally by the Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) and differ from the CPH numbers.
- To identify animals before they leave a holding other than holding of birth, with a ‘movement tag’ (S tag) bearing the letter “S” followed by the six-digit flock/herd mark of the holding from which the animals are departing.
- To retain original eartag(s) and identification number for animal born in another Member State.
- To re-identify animals imported from third countries (except for direct slaughter) with an ‘import’ tag (F tag). This is in the same format as the baseline tag but with the addition of the letter F as a postscript, the flock/herd mark being that of the holding of destination. A cross-reference with the original identification mark must be recorded in the holding register.
- To replace lost or illegible individually numbered eartags (UK, F or R tags) and to record this remarking operation in the holding register within 36 hours. Where this happens when the animal is still on its holding of birth (or import), the keeper should replace it as soon as possible with an eartag bearing an identical mark or with a UK tag (or F tag) with the same flock/herd mark but a different and unique animal number. Where the animal is not on its holding of birth (or import), the keeper should replace it as soon as possible with an eartag bearing an identical mark, or with a red replacement tag (R tag) bearing the letters “UK”, followed by the flock/herd

mark of the holding on which the mark is discovered missing or illegible, followed by a unique individual animal number, followed by the letter R.

- To replace lost or illegible S marks, only if the number of the original S mark is known.
- For intra-Community trade or export, animals born on or after 9th July 2005 will have to be identified with a double identification, i.e. a primary eartag and a secondary mark bearing the identical code. Animals born before 9th July 2005 will have to be identified with an ‘export’ tag (X tag) which is in the same format as the baseline tag but with the addition of the letter X as a postscript, the flock/herd mark being that of the holding from which the animal is to be moved to a destination outside GB. Animals bearing a red replacement tag are excluded from these intra-community trade or exports.

No more than 3 tags (combination of UK (or R or F) and S tags) may be applied. A keeper wishing to make subsequent movements must record the full identification number of the animal in the holding registers (of the holding of origin and the holding of destination) and on the movement document.

It was noted that rules are not totally harmonised between England/Wales and Scotland and several exceptions exist:

- In England and Wales animals have to be identified before 12 months of age or before departure from the holding of birth (whichever is sooner). In Scotland, the requirement is ‘as soon as possible’ and certainly before the animal leaves the holding. On one Scottish farm visited several breeding ewes remained unidentified for an indefinite period – the keeper’s intention being to mark them immediately before they are culled.
- Individual identification with UK tag is compulsory in Scotland for animals born after 18th February 2002, in England and Wales for animals born after 1st February 2003.
- The length of the individual animal number for UK or F tags in England and Wales is six digits maximum and in Scotland is six-digits with leading zeros if appropriate¹².
- Numerous movements can take place without S tag. All movements from the holding of birth, movements to slaughter, common grazing, return from temporary grazing and movements within a SOG are exempted. These movements can continue to take place using a temporary paint mark.

Moreover, in response to Regulation (EC) No 21/2004, a Publicly Available Specification (PAS) is in preparation to provide specifications for identification eartags for sheep and goats. This will be part of the approval procedure the CA intends to establish for numbered eartags. This procedure will specify the requirements for the performance and testing of eartags (i.e. that they are made of non-degradable material, tamper-proof, easy to read etc.). All official eartags will have to be approved by the CA, to ensure they reach the minimum standards. The

¹² *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "This is due to traditional differences between Scottish practices on the one hand and English and Welsh practices on the other. The industry in each country supports the status quo. However, when EID is introduced in 2008, these differences are likely to disappear."*

target is to have the approval procedure established for July 2005. However, the implementation strategy for the approval system has not been elaborated:

- The CAs do not know yet whether applicants will be required to carry out a welfare assessment to run alongside the PAS to support their request for tag approval. This assessment would increase significantly the time necessary for testing before approval¹³.
- It has not yet been decided whether the currently supplied eartags will be subject to PAS testing from the beginning or whether only new eartags will have to be tested before being put on the market¹⁴.
- Eartags from multiple manufacturers/suppliers are available on the UK market, the origin of some of these tags is not known to the CA.

For the time being, the keeper continues to be responsible for ensuring that the individual identification number for each animal is unique within each holding. A keeper can ask a manufacturer to produce any number of eartags bearing the number of any holding. In late 2005, the CA intends to implement a computerised Eartag Allocation System (ETAS), which will centrally allocate to eartag manufacturers a unique number within the UK, thereby taking this responsibility away from the keeper. Until the system is in place no absolute assurance can be given that animals are uniquely identified.

In general, and with few exceptions (animals with lost ear tag not replaced, one animal bearing 2 different UK tags), animals inspected during the mission were in accordance with the rules pertaining in the regions visited. From the monthly report produced in November 2004 by ELU it appears that non compliant sheep identification was recorded in 4 % of inspections, although one region showed a significantly higher proportion (14 %).

Northern Ireland

NISGIMS includes a system for the allocation of unique animal individual identification numbers. Ear-tags are approved by DARD and the allocation of tag numbers is controlled centrally. The system involves the use of three different types of tags all of which bear a unique individual number allocated to a specific holding.

These are:

- Standard tags, which are green
- Total replacement tags, which are orange
- Export tags, which are blue.

Keepers of sheep and goats (other than keepers of markets, dealer collection centres, fairs, shows or sales, abattoirs or veterinary clinics) are required:

¹³ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "Tags new to the market will require a welfare assessment. Tags that are already on the market (except metal tags) will not be subject to a welfare assessment if the manufacturer can provide evidence that there have been no welfare issues with the tags in the past."*

¹⁴ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "All eartags will be subject to PAS testing."*

- To identify the animals born on their holding with a ‘standard’ tag allocated to the natal holding and applied to the left ear. This tag must be applied by 9 months of age, or on movement off their farm, or before the expiry of the reconciliation period¹⁵ for the year in which the sheep was born, whichever is the soonest.
- To immediately identify animals when they move onto their holding (including animals originating in Great Britain, another Member State or a Third Country) with a standard tag allocated to the holding of destination and applied to the right ear. If a keeper receives an animal that already has 2 tags in its right ear he must record the details of any one of the animal’s eartags in the record but must not attach a further tag.
- To replace lost or illegible tags (ie whether applied in the natal holding or following movement) within 24 hours with a standard tag allocated to the holding in which the loss was discovered. Where an animal has lost all its approved tags from both ears the keeper must attach a total replacement tag. Animals tagged with a total replacement tag are not eligible for export to other EU Member States.
- To attach an export tag allocated to the consigning holding to the left ear of any animal entering intra-community trade. This is not in accordance with the requirements of Article 4 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 21/2004.
- To record the identification of animals within 7 days in the holding register. Whenever a standard tag is applied to replace a lost tag the keeper must keep a record correlating the original and replacement individual tag numbers.

As the NISGIMS was introduced recently limited evidence of its implementation was seen both at market and at farm level. However, it was noted that:

- Some lambs inspected at a livestock market that had been born before the legislation came into force had already been identified with the new tags.
- A keeper of a large flock of fat lambs who regularly bought sheep at markets did not yet have a supply of standard tags and was unaware of the requirements to identify sheep immediately upon arrival.

5.2.3. *Holding register*

Great Britain

In England and Wales the current model farm register, which is in use, will not meet the EC requirements from July 2005. Some information will have to be added (e.g. geographical co-ordinates, name of the transporter and registration number of the part of the means of transport for animals leaving the holding). The notes for guidance provided with the model in use at present specify that “this flock record document is an interim one. New sheep and goat legislation is anticipated to come into effect on 9 July 2005. It may change some of the record keeping requirements”. However, there has been no communication so far to announce the changes to be made in the near future and to present the new model in preparation¹⁶.

¹⁵ meaning the period between 1 September and 15 December in a calendar year.

¹⁶ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "we want to publicise the new rules once and only once, at a suitable time prior to implementation."*

The layout of the holding register currently used in Scotland is different from the English and Welsh model but contains equivalent information with the exception of “type of production”, which is not recorded. It is designed to provide the information required for checking Sheep Annual Premium claims and no reference is made to the current requirements in national legislation or the new requirements coming into force in July 2005. The notes for guidance do not instruct the keeper how to identify animals on the holding or how to record their official marks in the register.

During visits of farms some shortcomings were noted:

- in England in one farm visited the keeper was not aware and did not implement the requirement to record the re-marking of sheep in the register.
- in Scotland discrepancies were found between the information recorded on the movement documents, in the farm register and in the movement database.

Northern Ireland

The new legislation revokes the requirement to maintain a holding register in the old format and introduces a new format. However, this new holding register is not yet available and CA’s plans to issue it to all keepers have been delayed (not expected before the end of March 2005).

Up to now the keepers haven’t received any communication on the new format and furthermore the model provided in annex to the new IMSGO do not comply with the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 as some information are missing: geographical coordinates or equivalent, type of production, identification code of the holding from which the animal was transferred (animals arriving), transporters details.

During visits to farms some shortcomings were noted:

- Discrepancies were found between licences issued - farm register and records of movement in the database.
- Animals arrived at the holding were not recorded in the farm register nor in the database and the licence issued for this lot was referring to a move from a market to a slaughterhouse.

5.2.4. Movement documents and movement controls

Great Britain

In England and Wales movements of sheep and goats are carried out under the provisions of Animal Movement Licensing System (AMLS) which was introduced in September 2001. The animals must be accompanied by an Animal Movement Licence (AML) form which is considered to be a movement document as required by Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.

Basic movement information (holding of origin, holding of destination, number of animals moved, transporter details, etc.) must be recorded on the movement document. From July 2005 this movement document will be the same as the existing document, except that it will be mandatory to record transporter details.

In Scotland, SEERAD requires farmers to use an official, two-part movement document, which is available from local SEERAD. This form enables keepers to

record the information required by EU legislation. As in England and Wales the completion of the transport details (i.e. haulier name, address and vehicle registration) optional for the time being.

Market operators are permitted to produce their own version of the movement document including the basic information except for details of animal categories, identification marks or the transport details. In addition, for traceability purposes, the market movement document must record the lot number (or the batch number if the lot had been split into smaller batches) attributed at the market level.

Due to numerous derogations still applicable and the fact that not all holdings are registered a significant number of movements are not notified to the CA:

- In England it concerns mainly those to and from common grazing and those within a SOA.
- In Scotland, movements between the home croft and apportioned grazing land are neither registered nor notified.

The keeper at the holding of destination must return movement documents to the LA or the SAMU within three days of the movement. However, the data provided for December 2004 for England and Wales shows a significant number of notifications more than 3 days after the movement (17% being over 7 days)¹⁷. In Scotland the majority (>85%) of sheep movements pass through markets. All Scottish market operators report movements to and from their premises direct to SAMU electronically. The CA reported that during October 2004 notifications from markets were received within the 3-day limit in 30% of cases, although 60% of the notifications were received within 5 days.

In relation to the traceability of movements it was noted that:

- When an animal loses its unique UK tag and this original mark cannot be found, the use of the R tag will allow traceability for further movements but does not allow the identification of the holding of birth¹⁸.
- Since animals may be moved from their holding of birth on their UK tag without S tag, it is not possible to distinguish animal born in the holding and those received directly from other holdings of birth if the unique UK tag is lost.
- Since lost or illegible S marks has to be replaced with an identical S tag only if the number of the original mark is known, not all movements will not be traceable in case the original S mark is not found¹⁹.

Furthermore, during the visits carried out in different locations it was noted that:

¹⁷ Holidays and intense activity of mail services in December could explain some of the delays.

¹⁸ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities indicated that for them, "because the priority is animal health, the UK national system places greater emphasis on traceability between holdings (using S tags) rather than concentrating solely on a very dependable means of identifying the birth holding."*

¹⁹ *In their comments on the draft report, the competent authorities stated that: "It has been agreed that 20 days is the critical period for tracing animals in the event of a disease outbreak. S tags are unlikely to be lost within this time. Also, batch movements are recorded on AMLS2."*

- In England and Wales, the monthly report produced in November 2004 by the ELU showed that non compliant sheep movements remain high (23 % of 2832). Data concerning breaches in movement notification requirements detected by the CA in Scotland were requested but not provided.
- In England, movements to slaughter are notified to the CA but are not entered on the movement database (AMLS2) due to technical problems encountered with the database.
- In England, serious irregularities concerning movements to and from one holding were found during a visit to an abattoir. The movements reported on the movement documents, in the farm register and in the movement database did not match. The CA informed the mission team that the LA had launched an investigation and that further action would be taken if necessary.
- In Scotland, several cases were found where movements to farms, a market and an AI centre had not been notified to the CA. In one case an operator failed to report the movement of sheep from Scotland to a market holding in England.
- On one farm in Scotland discrepancies were found between the farm register, movement documents and the data available in the movement database. Some movements were not properly recorded in the farm register or not properly notified to the CA.
- Several keepers who received animals from the above mentioned holding did not notify the movements to the CA.
- Some markets were found not reporting the movement of lambs at foot but only the ewes.
- At abattoir level as well as at livestock market level movement documents were frequently found to be incomplete, failing to provide any information on the destination. There was no evidence that action had been taken by either the operator or the CA to correct the situation.

Northern Ireland

Although change from pre-movement licensing system to notification document (movement document) and post-movement reporting should have started to be implemented since 1/01/05, the movement licensing system established in 2001 was still the only one in place during the mission.

As for the holding register, the model of the “notification” document is not yet available and the model drawn up by the CA and which was ready to be printed does not contain all the required data concerning the means of transport and the transporter (transporter's permit number). Moreover, concerns had been expressed on the feasibility to complete notification document with the individual animal identification number of each animal moving off the holding.

During the visits it was noted that:

- Movement licences are issued by official inspector for each movement following an application by the seller, the buyer or somebody acting on his/her behalf. However, this system does not provide detailed information on the real movement of animals as licences can be issued but not used or issued for a number of animals significantly different than the number moved (normally inferior).

- Licences were used to accompany animals which did not match the real movement: Animals coming from a livestock market were delivered to a slaughterhouse accompanied by licences issued for movements holding – slaughterhouse. Other licences were issued for a movement market – holding when in fact the animals were sent directly to the slaughterhouse.
- The CA explained that for technical reason a licence for a movement market – slaughterhouse could only be issued by hand-written form and could not be registered in the computerised movement database.
- Serious shortcomings were noted in the official supervision of this licensing system at livestock market level. Although an official supervisor was present during operational hours, the mission team detected serious deficiencies in the movement controls and serious discrepancies were found between the number of animals received at the market and the number leaving the market under proper licence: some days more than 25% of the animals left without a licence. These serious shortcomings had not been detected by the CET during its supervision of the market.
- Licences were issued not mentioning reporting lambs at foot but only ewes.

5.2.5. *Computer database*

Great Britain

Separate holding and movement databases are in place. Although Vetnet is a common holding register database shared between Scotland, England and Wales, two separate movement databases still co-exist: in England and Wales (AMLS 2), in Scotland (SAMS). For the time being movements between England/Wales and Scotland are reported from one database to the other via a cross border report.

It was noted that:

- AMLS 2 is the last updated and second version of the movement database. This version, in use since November 2004, is still facing technical problems and performance issues. Thus some delays occurred in the full use of AMLS 2. For example the LAs received in December, notice that movements of sheep to slaughterhouse could be put aside until the performances issues have been resolved. These issues were not yet resolved at the time of the mission.
- AMLS 2 provides a list of automatically detected errors but best practices are still to be put in place when entering data in AMLS 2 (e.g. to ensure that the address given on the AML form is consistent with the address displayed on the database).
- For the animals brought into GB (or leaving GB), the database do not record the information on the holding of origin (or of destination) but only the port.
- SAMS the movement database in use in Scotland does not have the same automatic detection of errors and visual checks are still significantly important to detect obvious missing data or data that looks out of ordinary.
- While cross-checking information held in farm registers, movement document and the movement database some discrepancies were found that were apparently due to an IT fault within SAMS.
- It is plan to have SAMS replaced by AMLS 2 in Scotland but no deadline could be provided since the above mentioned technical problems must be fixed before transfer of the data.

Some movements in both direction between Scotland and Northern Ireland are not recorded in the movement database.

Northern Ireland

Computerised central register of holdings combined with movement database, Animal and Public Health Information System (APHIS) is in operation and run by DARD.

However, this database is not yet fully in operation in particular concerning the notification of movements as only licences issued is recorded for the time being. There is no link with the databases in use in Great Britain.

6. OVERVIEW / GENERAL CONCLUSION

In Great Britain the systems in place and proposed are generally speaking, capable of ensuring compliance with most of the objectives laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004. However, a number of weaknesses were highlighted by the inspection team during the mission. Notably, the registration of holdings does not meet the EU requirements and the legal basis is not yet in place for the implementation of complementary requirements in July 2005. Concerns were also raised about the staff available to carry out the controls in certain areas.

In Northern Ireland numerous and serious weaknesses were detected in the system currently in place. Although the proposed system could achieve compliance with most of the objectives laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004, its implementation would demand a high level of awareness and commitment from all parties involved. Little evidence was found during this mission that these demands could be met in July 2005.

It should also be noted that the Great Britain and Northern Ireland databases are for the time being not compatible.

Situation in Great Britain:

The system proposed for GB requires the identification of animals both by holding and individually and provides for a replacement procedure where a means of identification has become illegible or has been lost.

The main part of the system (tagging of the animals, movements documents, movement database) has been in place for several years and has been accepted by the farming industry.

However, some deficiencies still persist in its implementation. Many holdings are unregistered and the CA does not expect to have addressed this shortcoming until 2007 at the earliest. Until then some movements will stay unnotified. In some cases not all movements are traceable.

Moreover, for more stringent requirements which will have to be applied from July 2005, the legal instruments are not yet signed and delays could occur in their implementation. The awareness of this new requirements and the preparedness of the competent authorities for their enforcement was not always satisfactory.

Situation in Northern Ireland:

A new identification and movement system has just been introduced for sheep and goat (1 January 2005) which is very different from that in GB.

There is a fundamental problem with the new legislation concerning the registration of holdings which does not meet EU requirements.

Together, the serious deficiencies detected in relation to the implementation, operation and supervision of a far simpler licensing system, the difficulties already encountered with the new legal requirements and the fact that support of the farming industry is in doubt, make it unrealistic to have a proper traceability of animals by July 2005. The implementation of the new system would demand a high level of awareness and commitment from all parties involved to achieve compliance with the objectives laid down in Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004. Little evidence was found during this mission that these demands could be met in July 2005.

7. CLOSING MEETING

A closing meeting was held on 28 January 2005 with the CA. At this meeting, the main findings and conclusions of the mission were presented by the inspection team.

The representatives of the CA took note of the main findings and conclusions and offered to submit their comments and information on action taken, or to be taken, to correct deficiencies identified.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

To the competent authorities of the United Kingdom

The competent authorities are invited to provide details of the actions taken and planned to address the conclusions and recommendations made in the report, including deadlines for their completion within 25 working days following the receipt of the draft report.

8.1. GREAT BRITAIN

- 8.1.1. To take all the necessary measures (including legislative) to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.
- 8.1.2. To complete the registration of all holdings as required by EU legislation.
- 8.1.3. To take action to ensure sufficient official staff in order to ensure appropriate level of supervision of identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals.
- 8.1.4. To ensure a common and effective movement database and a proper record of all movement within Great Britain.
- 8.1.5. To ensure that the other shortcomings observed by the inspection team are rectified.

8.2. NORTHERN IRELAND

- 8.2.1. To take all the necessary measures to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004.
- 8.2.2. To bring the current national legislation in accordance with EU legislation.
- 8.2.3. To ensure the registration of all holding as required by EU legislation.
- 8.2.4. To ensure a proper supervision of sheep and goat identification.
- 8.2.5. To ensure a proper supervision of movement of sheep and goat and to take further steps to improve the traceability/tracing of these movements.
- 8.2.6. To ensure that the other shortcomings observed by the inspection team are rectified.

ADDENDUM

Response of the UK Authorities to the draft mission report

The UK Authorities provided a detailed response and an action plan by means of e-mails sent on Friday, 8 April 2005. Where appropriate, comments and clarifications have been incorporated in the final report.

Details of action already taken or to be taken to correct deficiencies have been provided. The action taken or planned refers to, in particular :

- legislative projects;
- improvements in holding registration;
- controls over sheep/goat movements;
- identification of sheep/goats;
- operation of the movement database;
- staff-related issues.