



Guidance for Keepers

on the
Identification and Movement of
Sheep and Goats



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

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Introduction

1.1 This guidance

This guidance explains to keepers the new rules for tagging sheep and goats and recording their movements.

The new rules are laid down in European Law (Council Regulation 21/2004) and national law (The Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2009).

1.2 Date for the change

The new rules came into force across the European Union on 31 December 2009.

1.3 The new rules

Sheep and goats born after 31 December 2009 must be tagged with two identifiers bearing the same number. These will stay with the animal for life, unless one is lost. For sheep, one of the identifiers must carry an electronic identification (or EID) device. An EID device is not compulsory for goats which are staying in the UK.

You must record the full tag number of sheep or goats on your movement document and in your flock register when they move. These recording requirements are being phased-in.

1.4 Purpose of the new rules

The purpose of the new rules is to make it easier to trace animals. This will help to prevent, or to reduce the cost of, an outbreak of a serious disease, such as, Foot and Mouth Disease.

1.5 Purpose of EID

Electronic identification (or EID) means that a small microchip has been inserted in the identifier (tag, bolus or pastern tag). The microchip contains only the animal's tag number. The tag number in the chip can be read by an electronic reader, which can then send the tag number to a computer.

1.6 Electronic readers

Markets and meat plants are expected to have readers, and they will have the option of reading tag numbers on behalf of keepers. You will not have to read or record tag numbers if you send sheep or goats to premises that do this for you.

You will have to record tag numbers if you are sending animals to another farm, but you can record these manually if you want to.

You will therefore only need an electronic reader if you move a large number of animals to another farm, and it is impractical to read and record the tags manually.

1.7 Types of identifier

Most keepers will use an EID tag and matching conventional tag for sheep, and two matching conventional tags for goats. You can also use a range of other identifiers, such as, boluses, pastern tags and electronic pastern tags.

1.8 Old green tags

The old previously authorised green tags cannot be applied to animals after 31 December 2009. As the green movement tags can no longer be used, you must not apply a new green tag when an animal moves.

All sheep or goats born or first tagged after 31 December 2009 must receive a set of the new tags. These tags should stay with the animal for life (unless one is lost).

1.9 No change to flock or herd keeper number

Everyone who keeps sheep or goats must be registered with DAERA and have a holding number. This is a flock number for sheep or a herd number for goats. You must never send animals to a holding that does not have a holding number. If you already have a holding number it will remain the same under the new rules, although the format of the number on the tag will change slightly.

1.10 New holding register and movement documents

You will receive a new flock or herd register from DAERA. This is because the way you must record tag numbers when animals move will change.

1.11 Better Regulation

We have followed the principles of Better Regulation when designing the new system. We will also keep the rules under review in future to ensure that they are as straightforward as possible.

1.12 Further information

You can get more detailed information in the Frequently Asked Questions document on the DAERA website at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/identification-registration-and-movement-sheep-and-goats>

Overview

2.1 Main elements of the new system

If you are a keeper of sheep or goats you must:

- register with DAERA and obtain a holding (flock or herd keeper) number;
- identify all animals before they leave your holding or before they reach-
 - 9 months of age; or
 - 6 months of age if they are normally housed overnight, whichever is the earlier;
- complete a movement document when animals are moved off your holding;
- maintain an up-to-date holding register; and
- complete and return an annual inventory.

2.2 Main changes

The main changes taking place after 31 December 2009 are as follows:

- you must not apply the existing green tags to any sheep or goat, no matter when it was born or moved onto your holding;
- you must use two identifiers with the same number;
- one of the identifiers for sheep must carry an electronic identification (EID) device;
- you must replace lost tags according to the new rules;
- you must use the new movement documents;
- you must use a new flock or herd register;
- you must report moves to common grazing to DAERA unless the common grazing is adjacent to your holding; and
- you do not have to record tag numbers on movement documents for movements into markets, meat plants, slaughter collection centres (lamb groups) or Export Assembly Centres if these premises are approved as Central Points of Recording.

2.3 Elements that have not changed

Several elements of the current system will be retained, for example:

- you must still register your holding with DAERA and receive a flock or herd keeper number before you keep sheep or goats;
- you must notify DAERA of animals moving to your holding from another farm; and
- you must complete and return an Annual Inventory to DAERA each year.

2.4 When the new rules apply

- Tagging-** All animals born or first tagged after 31 December 2009 must be tagged with the new type of tags and according to the new rules.
- Flock or herd register-** You must start to keep your holding register in the new format when you receive your new holding register from DAERA. This means that you must record the tag number of each animal born after 31 December 2009 when it is first tagged, moved on or off your holding, when lost tags are replaced, or when it dies. For movement records, you can cross-reference the movement document serial number in your register rather than copying all the information.
- Movement Documents-** You must start to use the new movement document format when you receive your new book from DAERA. However, the requirement to record tag numbers on the documents will be phased-in. If you move sheep to markets and meat plants that are approved as Central Points of Recording, they can record the tag numbers on your behalf.

2.5 Opportunities for keepers to use electronic systems

You can use EID for on-farm management purposes to help you to record and manage your flock or herd.

You can also use a fully electronic form of traceability by recording your flock or herd register and movement information on APHIS-Online. This means you will not need to maintain a paper flock or herd register or use movement documents (unless you are moving animals to another farm holding).

2.6 Retention of documents

All lists of tag numbers provided by Central Points of Recording must be kept with, and cross-referenced to, the relevant movement document. All movement documents for movements on and off your holding must be cross-referenced in your flock or herd register. You must keep all of these documents for at least 3 years.

2.7 Inspections and penalties

The new rules are a Statutory Management Requirement (SMR) as part of the cross-compliance rules. This means that if you are chosen for an inspection, and are not fully in compliance with the rules, you could be subject to a Single Farm Payment penalty.

You must comply with the rules set out in this guidance as they are a legal requirement under The Sheep and Goats (Records, Identification and Movement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2009. If you fail to comply you could be prosecuted. Penalties include fines of up to £5,000 or up to 2 months imprisonment.

Tagging new animals

3.1 The new tagging rules

The new tagging rules apply from 31 December 2009. After this date the old green tags cannot be applied to any sheep or goat here.

All sheep and goats born or first identified after 31 December 2009 (new animals) must be identified with two tags bearing the same number. For sheep, one of the identifiers must carry an electronic device. These tags should stay with the animal for life. If one of the tags is lost, the replacement rules will ensure that the animal is brought up to the double-tagging standard again (see section 5).

Note: When this guidance refers to tags, it also means electronic tags, boluses, pastern tags and electronic pastern tags.

3.2 When to tag

Sheep and goats must be identified:

- within 9 months of birth or before they leave your holding, whichever is sooner; or
- within 6 months of birth, if the animals are “intensively kept”, for example, if they are kept for milk production, or are normally housed overnight, etc.

Animals that die before these deadlines do not have to be identified.

3.3 Types of identifiers for sheep

All new sheep (born or first identified after 31 December 2009) must be tagged with two identifiers bearing the same number, one of which must carry an electronic device.

The identifiers allowed for sheep are:

- an EID tag with a Conventional tag;
- an EID tag with a Pastern tag;
- a Bolus (EID) with a Conventional tag;
- a Bolus (EID) with a Pastern tag; or
- a Conventional tag with an EID pastern tag (not allowed for intra-community trade).

We recommend that EID tags should always be placed in the left ear as this may allow for more effective reading with handheld readers, but this is not compulsory.

3.4 Types of identifiers for goats

All new goats (born or first identified after 31 December 2009) must be identified with two identifiers bearing the same number, but this does not have to include an electronic device unless they will be exported to other Member States, including the Republic of Ireland.

The types of identifiers allowed for goats are:

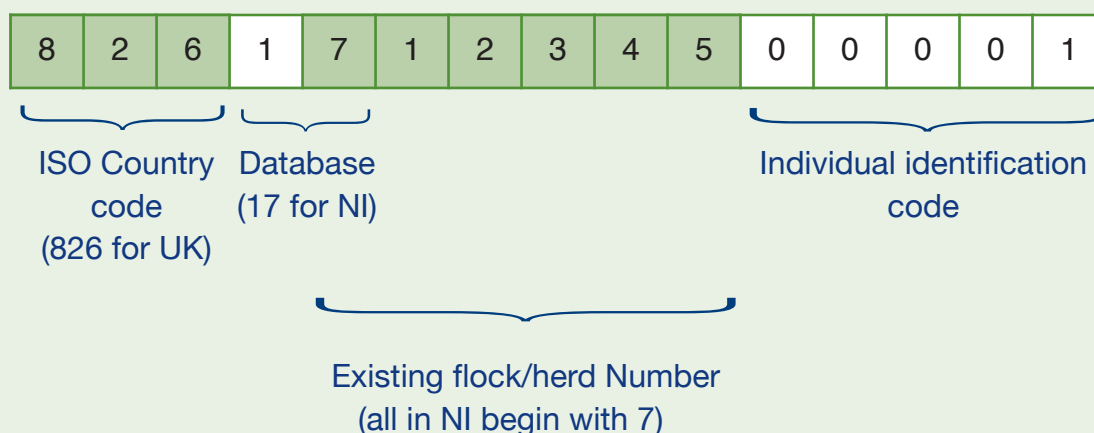
- two Conventional tags bearing the same number (not allowed for intra-community trade);
- an EID tag with a Conventional tag;
- an EID tag with a Pastern tag;
- a Bolus (EID) with a Conventional tag;
- a Bolus (EID) with a Pastern tag;
- a Conventional tag with an EID pastern tag (not for intra-community trade); or
- a Conventional tag with a Pastern tag (not for intra-community trade).

3.5 Structure of tag numbers

Each animal will only have one number, which will be printed on the tag and also programmed into any EID device.

Each sheep or goat tag will begin with the country code, followed by the digit “1”. This is then followed by your current holding (flock or herd) number. As all holding numbers in Northern Ireland begin with the digit “7”, this means that all sheep and goat tags here will begin with the digits “17”. This is finally followed by a five-digit individual identification code, which will be unique to each animal.

The new tag numbers will therefore be structured as follows:



The ISO number “826” can be replaced with the letters “UK” on the printed tag. On all tags in Great Britain the country code will be followed by the digit “0”. All tags in the Republic of Ireland will begin with the country code “372” or IE.

3.6 Colour of tags

The colour of the holding of birth EID tags in Northern Ireland is yellow. We recommend that the matching conventional tag is also yellow, but this can be any colour other than red, pink, light blue or black. Replacement tags are red. The tag matching a bolus (and any replacement tags to match a bolus) is light blue.

Tagging older animals

4.1 Tagging of animals born before 31 December 2009

Animals that were first identified before 31 December 2009 (older animals) should bear at least one green tag, and may bear several green movement tags.

If these animals are moved on or after 1 June 2010 they must be upgraded to the new tagging system. The rules for tagging these older animals are shown below.

4.2 Rules before 1 June 2010

The action to take for older animals before 1 June 2010 is as follows:

- If at least one green tag is in place— no further action is needed. If a sheep or goat leaves your holding before 1 June 2010 it can move with just one green tag.
- If an animal has not yet been identified— you must tag it under the new rules within 9 months of birth (or within 6 months if normally housed overnight) or before it leaves your holding, whichever is sooner. If you have any very old animals that are not yet tagged (as they were born on your holding before 2005), you should identify these within 28 days of discovery, or before they leave your holding, whichever is sooner.
- If an animal had been identified but all tags have been lost— you must follow the new replacing lost tag rules within 28 days of discovery (see section 5). This will mean upgrading to EID for sheep, or to two matching tags for goats.
- If it is being exported before 1 June 2010— the exporter can continue to apply blue export tags, as they do at present.

4.3 Rules on or after 1 June 2010

The action to take for older animals on or after 1 June 2010 is as follows:

- If at least one green tag is in place— no further action is needed unless the animal leaves your holding on or after 1 June 2010. An animal can stay on your holding for life with just one green tag.
- If all tags have been lost (or if the animal was never tagged)— you must follow the new replacing lost tag rules within 28 days (see section 5). This will mean upgrading to EID for sheep, or two matching tags for goats.
- All animals being moved off your holding on or after 1 June 2010— you must upgrade the animal before it moves, to EID for sheep, or to two matching tags for goats (see Section 4.4).

Note: You can choose to upgrade an older animal to EID at any time, even if it is not moving.

4.4 How to upgrade

When upgrading to EID for sheep, or to two matching tags for goats, you should apply your next set of yellow tags in sequence. You can choose to remove some or all of the old tags if you wish, but they can also be left in place. Old tags in animals imported from other Member States should be left in place. You must record the use of the new tag set in your flock or herd register. However, you do not have to record the old tag number on the green tag i.e. no cross-referencing of old and new tag numbers.

4.5 Lost tags in older animals

When an older animal has been upgraded to EID or two matching tags, and one of the new tags is then lost, you must comply with new replacing lost tag rules (see section 5).

If you did not remove the old tags and one of these is later lost, no further action is needed.

4.6 Scrapie boluses

Sheep which already have a bolus applied under the Northern Ireland Scrapie Plan also need to be upgraded as scrapie boluses are not official identification devices.

Replacing lost tags

5.1 Lost tags

You must replace any tags that have been lost, or that cannot be read, within 28 days of discovery and before the animal leaves your holding.

If one tag is lost, or cannot be read, you have two options

Option 1: you can order and apply a tag with the same number, or

Option 2: you can apply a new set with a different number and remove the remaining tag.

If both tags are lost, or cannot be read, you must apply a new set of tags with a different number.

5.2 Colour of replacement tags

You have two colour options if you are applying a new set of replacement tags—

1. you must use your yellow holding of birth tags if the animal was born on your holding, but
2. you must use red replacements tags if the animal was not born on your holding (an exception to this is outlined below).

If you notify your replacement tag information to APHIS-Online you can apply yellow tags even if the animal was not born on your holding (see section 7.4). This means that you will not need red tags.

If you are replacing the tag matching a bolus you will have to order this from your tag supplier (as the bolus cannot be removed and the replacement must bear the same number). The replacement tag supplied will be light blue.

5.3 Cross-referencing old and new tag numbers

If you apply your next tag set from your stock of tags they will have a different number from the original tag and so you may have to cross-reference the old and new tag number in your register, as shown on next page.

Cross-referencing is always required except where:

1. both tags are lost (and you don't know the number of the lost tags);
2. an older animal is being upgraded for the first time, to EID for sheep or double-tagging for goats (according to Section 4); and
3. an older animal, which is still on its holding of birth, and has previously been upgraded but has lost a tag and is now being retagged.

Even if you do not have to cross-reference you must always record the use of the new tag as a replacement.

The following tables show the colour of tag that must be used and when you must cross-reference old and new tag numbers in your flock or herd register.

Replacing lost tags in animals identified under the new tagging rules

Still on holding of birth?	Replace with -	Cross-reference in Holding Register?
Yes	Yellow EID tag with matching conventional tag - cut out any remaining tag	Born after EID comes in Yes
		Born before EID comes in No – but record new tags
No	Red EID tag with matching red conventional tag - cut out any remaining tag	Yes

Upgrading older sheep to EID, or older goats to double-tagging

Still on holding of birth?	Replace with -	Cross-reference in Holding Register?
Yes or No	Yellow EID tag with matching conventional tag - remaining tag or tags can be cut out, but this is optional. If the animal was imported the old tags should be left in place.	No – but record new tags

Recording Movement

6.1 New movement documents

You must start to use the new movement document format when you receive your new book from DAERA. The book will contain detailed guidance on how to complete each document.

6.2 When to use a movement document

You must complete a movement document each time you move animals, including to common grazing that is not adjacent to your holding.

A copy of the movement document must accompany the animals as they move.

The buyer must send a copy to DAERA within 7 days, unless the movement is to, or from, an approved Central Point of Recording.

6.3 Completing movement documents

You must always complete the general information on the movement document (for example, the date, the number of animals moved, your name/address and flock/herd number, and the destination name/address).

If you are moving animals to a market or meat plant approved as a Central Point of Recording you do not need to record tag numbers (see section 6.4).

If you are moving animals to a farm, or premises **not** approved as a Central Point of Recording you must—

- record the full tag numbers of all sheep born after 31 December 2009, and
- from 1 January 2012, record tag numbers of older sheep (born before 31 December 2009), unless they are moving to slaughter.

You can read and record the tag numbers manually or with an EID reader. If you identify lambs just before you move them off your holding, you can record the first and last tag numbers applied, instead of listing all of the tag numbers.

For a movement to common grazing, which is not adjacent to your holding, you must complete and send a movement document to DAERA within 7 days, but you do not have to record the tag numbers.

6.4 Central Points of Recording (CPRs)

Markets, meat plants, slaughter collection centres (lamb groups) and Export Assembly Centres (EACs) have the option of becoming approved as Central Points of Recording. This means that they have equipment to read EID tags and they will send movement information directly to APHIS.

If they do this, you do not have to record tag numbers on your movement document for movements to those premises.

Therefore, for a movement of animals to a Central Point of Recording, you only need to complete the general information on your movement document, for example, your flock/herd number, the number of animals moved and the date etc.

You will be given a list of tag numbers by the Central Point of Recording which you must keep with your copy of the movement document.

6.5 Older animals (born before 31 December 2009)

You do not have to record the tag numbers of older animals on movement documents until 1 January 2012, and you will never have to record the tag numbers of older animals if they are moving to slaughter. However, from 1 June 2010, if you are moving older sheep that have been upgraded to EID to a Central Point of Recording, you will be provided with a list of tag numbers, which you should keep and cross-reference in your flock register.

6.6 Retention of movement documents

All lists of tag numbers provided by Central Points of Recording must be kept with, and cross-referenced to, the relevant movement document.

All movement documents for movements both on and off your holding must be cross-referenced in your flock or herd register and you must keep all of these documents for at least 3 years.

Holding registers

7.1 Your new holding register

You must begin to complete your new flock or herd register from the date you receive it. You must also retain your old register for a period of 3 years.

7.2 Completing your holding register

You must record the tag number of each new animal (born after 31 December 2009) when it is first tagged. You must also record the tag number of each new animal when it is moved onto or off your holding; when lost tags are replaced; or when a tagged animal dies. You must also make a record of the date and result of your annual inventory.

For records of movements on and off your holding, you can retain the movement document and cross-reference its serial number in your register rather than copying all the information into the register. This means that if you move animals through Central Points of Recording, you will never have to make a list of tag numbers for animal movements (either in your movement documents or your holding register).

7.3 When to complete your holding register

You must record births within 7 days of identifying the animals. You must record movements on and off your holding and deaths within 7 days, but for movements to a Central Point of Recording (for example, an approved market, meat plant or collection centre) - within 48 hours. You must record each event (e.g. births, movements, replacement tags and deaths) in the order they happen.

7.4 Paperless system of traceability

The new rules provide a way for you to move to a paperless system of sheep or goat traceability. To do this you must provide your flock or herd information to APHIS-Online. You need to be authorised by DAERA to use APHIS-Online for this purpose.

For movements — if you, or your agent, have notified the move to APHIS-Online you do not need to complete a movement document for sheep traceability purposes (however, please note that the welfare in transport documentation and food chain information requirements continue to apply). The same movement information must be supplied as would be recorded on a paper movement document. Therefore tag numbers are not needed if the animals are moving to a Central Point of Recording. The full information must be sent to APHIS before the animals move.

For on-farm flock — instead of keeping paper or electronic records on your or herd registers farm, you can enter your information directly to APHIS-Online. The information recorded must be the same as for an on-farm register and the information must be recorded within the same timescales.

7.5 Retention of holding registers

You must keep your flock or herd register fully up-to-date. You must retain your flock or herd register until at least 3 years have passed since every animal referred to in it, has either died or left your holding.

Trade

8.1 Import to, or export from, Northern Ireland

All new sheep or goats must bear two matching means of identification including an EID device if they are being sent to other Member States, including the Republic of Ireland.

As all new sheep in Northern Ireland bear an EID device, new sheep coming here from Great Britain (GB) must be identified to the same standard.

Older sheep and goats can be imported to Northern Ireland provided they were identified correctly in either GB or the Republic of Ireland.

Further detail on the trade rules is provided below.

8.2 To GB

New animals — All animals born or first tagged after 31 December 2009 will have two matching tags. For sheep, one identifier will carry an EID device. This is acceptable for export to GB.

Older animals — If sent to GB on or after 1 June 2010 all older animals will have been upgraded to the new tags before leaving the holding. For goats, two conventional tags are acceptable for export to GB.

If exported between 31 December 2009 and 31 May 2010 the current rules will apply (e.g. two identical blue export tags applied by the exporter at the point of export). A single green natal tag is acceptable for animals leaving holdings to go to an Export Assembly Centre during this period.

8.3 From GB

New animals — Lambs identified with GB slaughter tags cannot be imported from GB. They must be upgraded to a matching GB set of identifiers, which includes an EID device for sheep, in GB.

Older animals — Older animals can be imported from GB provided they were tagged correctly according to the rules in place in GB at that time. If they are later moved off a holding in Northern Ireland after 1 June 2010, they must be upgraded to EID before moving onward.

8.4 To the Republic of Ireland

New animals — All sheep born or first tagged after 31 December 2009 will have two matching tags, one of which will carry an EID device. These tags are acceptable for export to the Republic of Ireland. Any goats that do not have an EID device must be upgraded to an EID set before export.

Older animals — If sent to the Republic of Ireland on or after 1 June 2010 all older sheep will have been upgraded to EID on the holding, and all goats will have been upgraded to two matching conventional tags or an EID set. These tags are acceptable in the Republic of Ireland.

If exported between 31 December 2009 and 31 May 2010 the current rules will apply (i.e. one blue export tag applied by the exporter at the point of export). A single green natal tag is acceptable for sheep leaving holdings to go to an Export Assembly Centre during this period.

8.5 From the Republic of Ireland

New animals — Sheep and goats born or first tagged after 31 December 2009 must have two matching identifiers, one of which must carry an EID device.

Older animals — Older sheep can be imported from the Republic of Ireland provided they were tagged correctly according to the rules in place in the Republic of Ireland at that time. If they are later moved off a holding in Northern Ireland after 1 June 2010 they must be upgraded to EID before moving onward.

Annual Inventory

9.1 Return of annual inventory

You must continue to complete your annual inventory on a date between 1 and 5 December each year and either return the card to DAERA, or enter your details on APHIS-Online, by 5 January. An agent can also do this for you via the Government Gateway. If you have not returned your inventory by the end of January each year, your flock or herd will be deemed to be no longer operational and you will not be able to buy EID tags, or record movements into markets or meat plants.

Inspections

10.1 Cross-compliance inspections

The sheep identification and movement rules form a Statutory Management Requirement (SMR) within the Cross-Compliance rules. A percentage of flocks are inspected each year to ensure compliance with the rules.

Any discrepancies detected can count towards a penalty reduction in your Single Farm Payment.

Glossary of terms

- **Annual Inventory** - The exercise conducted once per year (between 1 and 5 December) whereby keepers make a record of the number of sheep or goats on their holding, and return this figure to DAERA by 5 January.
- **APHIS** - The Animal and Public Health Information System. This is the database which contains the details of all flocks and herds, and sheep and goats in Northern Ireland.
- **APHIS-Online** - The online facility that allows you to provide information electronically to, and access your information on, the APHIS database.
- **Bolus** - Also called a ruminal bolus. This is an electronic micro-chip enclosed in a container (usually ceramic) which the animal swallows. It then remains in the rumen (stomach) due to its size and shape.
- **Central Point of Recording or CPR** - This is a premises approved by DAERA to read and record tag numbers on behalf of keepers. If they do this, keepers do not have to record tag numbers on movement documents. Markets, abattoirs, lamb group collection centres and export assembly centres can be approved.
- **Conventional tag** - A plastic identifier attached to an animal's ear to identify it. It does not contain an electronic micro-chip.
- **EID** - Electronic identification
- **Flock number** - The unique 6-digit number allocated to each sheep flock.
- **Herd number** - The unique 6-digit number allocated to each goat herd.
- **Holding number** - The unique 6-digit number allocated to each holding (e.g. farm, market, abattoir). Holding numbers for farms are also known as flock or herd numbers.
- **Holding Register** - This is the record that must be kept on a holding listing the birth, movement, replacement tag details and death of animals on that holding. It must be kept by all premises with sheep or goats, including markets and meat plants. It is also known as a flock or herd register (or book). It can also be kept in electronic form.

Glossary of terms (cont)

- **ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation)** - A non-governmental organisation with a Central Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland. It is the world's largest developer and publisher of International Standards to meet both the requirements of business and the broader needs of society.
- **Movement document** - This is the document that must be completed by the seller of animals, and must accompany them during movement.
- **New animal** - An animal born after 31 December 2009, when the new rules took effect.
- **Older animal** - An animal born before 31 December 2009, when the new rules took effect.
- **Pastern tag** - A band placed around an animal's lower leg for identification purposes.
- **Trade** - The movement of sheep or goats into or out of Northern Ireland.

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Copies of this leaflet can be made available on request in alternative formats including:
Large Print, Easy Read, Audio Cassette, Braille, Computer Disk, Other languages.
Please telephone (028) 9052 4917.

