

# Cattle health

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### Introduction

As a cattle farmer, it's essential that you take the necessary steps to protect the health of your animals. Maintaining good health is important to ensure acceptable standards of animal welfare, but such measures will also maximise the productivity of your herd.

This guide has information about the main diseases affecting cattle, including notifiable diseases, which must be reported, and zoonoses, which can infect humans. It covers general disease prevention and legal controls to prevent specific risks, as well as describing your legal responsibilities relating to cattle feed, medicines and hormonal treatments.

The guidance provided relates to a particular livestock species. See our guide on [livestock keeping: the basics](#) to find out more about the general requirements to produce safe wholesome food for human consumption, safeguard the health and welfare of your animals and guard against the spread of disease.

For specific advice relating to the animal welfare aspects of good herd management, see our related guide on [cattle welfare](#).

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### Critical illnesses of cattle

Looking after your animals properly and monitoring them regularly for signs of illness are the best ways of preventing disease, and of controlling its spread if there is an outbreak.

If you suspect signs of a notifiable disease, you must immediately notify the duty vet at

your local Animal Health Office (AHO). [See our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

Cattle are vulnerable to many endemic and exotic diseases, some of which might be notified to Animal Health if suspected:

- **Endemic diseases** are diseases which commonly exist within Great Britain, eg common diseases such as Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD), Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR) and Johne's disease. They can be both notifiable - those that the law requires to be reported to the veterinary authorities - and non-notifiable.
- **Notifiable diseases** can be both endemic, such as tuberculosis, and exotic, meaning that they are not normally found in Great Britain, such as foot and mouth and bluetongue. Outbreaks of these diseases are subject to national control policies and international trade rules. They must be reported immediately to the duty vet at your local AHO. [See our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Endemic diseases

The most important endemic diseases to check for in cattle are:

- BVD and BVD2 - bovine viral diarrhoea
- IBR - infectious bovine rhinotracheitis
- Johne's disease
- certain forms of tuberculosis
- salmonella
- mastitis
- other viral, bacterial and mycoplasma pneumonia

### Notifiable diseases

The main notifiable diseases which affect cattle are:

- anthrax
- Aujeszky's disease
- bluetongue
- BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy)
- brucellosis (brucella abortus)
- contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia
- EBL (enzootic bovine leukosis)
- foot and mouth disease
- lumpy-skin disease
- pleuropneumonia
- rabies
- rift-valley fever
- rinderpest
- bovine tuberculosis
- vesicular stomatitis
- warble fly

See the pages in this guide on [disease prevention and control for cattle](#), [prevention and control of brucellosis and TSEs in cattle](#) and [prevention and control of tuberculosis in cattle](#).

To find out how to stop lead poisoning affecting your cattle, see the page in this guide on [protecting cattle from lead poisoning on farms](#).

You can [find factsheets on diseases and how to identify them via the A-Z of diseases on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

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## Disease prevention and control for cattle

Monitoring your livestock and following good

farming practices are the best ways to reduce the risk of disease among your cattle. You can find out more about measures to prevent disease on your farm in our section on [controlling disease](#). For advice on checking your animals, see the page in this guide on [cattle inspections and record keeping](#).

### **Buying, registering, identifying and moving cattle**

There are rules which you must follow for registering cattle, and when moving them. These procedures make it easier to trace and identify infected animals in the event of a disease outbreak. For more information, see our guide on [cattle identification, registration and movement](#).

When restocking your herd, you should:

- consult your vet to help you develop a plan for evaluating prospective purchases
- buy health scheme animals - whenever possible - that have been certified as free of specific diseases
- recognise the risks in buying older animals

### **Biosecurity and hygiene**

Good biosecurity is a vital part of keeping disease away from your animals. This will also protect the health of your workers and any members of the public who may visit your farm.

Your general biosecurity measures should include:

- restricting and controlling movements of people, vehicles and equipment

- into areas where your cattle are kept
- cleaning and disinfecting equipment, vehicles, protective clothing and footwear before and after contact with farm animals

The presence of a disease may not always be apparent - particularly in the early stages - so the measures above need to be part of your routine.

Read more about biosecurity, including special rules for agricultural markets and shows, in our guide on [disease prevention](#).

### **Disposing of carcasses and fallen stock**

Fallen stock can be any animal that has:

- died of natural causes or disease on the farm
- been killed on the farm for reasons other than human consumption

Farmers with fallen stock must use approved means and places for their disposal. The National Fallen Stock Company can help with the disposal of fallen stock and advise on the disease prevention rules, as part of the National Fallen Stock Scheme.

If you suspect that an animal has died of a notifiable disease, you must tell the Animal Health Office immediately.

For more information, see our guide on [fallen stock](#).

### **Health and welfare programmes**

You should seek veterinary and technical advice to create a written health and welfare programme for your cattle. This should be

reviewed and updated annually. As a minimum, it should include your:

- vaccination policy and timing
- parasite control procedures - internal and external

**Drugs** are useful for preventing disease in cattle, but you must use them responsibly and record all usage. See the pages in this guide on [hormonal treatments and antibiotics for cattle](#) and [cattle inspections and record keeping](#).

You can reduce the risk of disease and improve the performance of your livestock by using **farm health planning** techniques. [Find out about farm health planning for cattle on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

One good way to improve health planning is to **benchmark** your cattle's health and business practices against other local farmers.

### Veterinary surveillance

As part of its disease prevention strategy, Defra constantly collects information about incidences of disease in animals. This monitoring enables any important or unusual outbreaks to be detected quickly - so that appropriate action can be taken.

[Read about veterinary surveillance on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

### The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) and farmed animal requirements

If you receive SPS or other direct payments,

you must comply with Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs). SMR 7, for example, sets out the requirements for cattle identification and registration whereas SMRs 10-15 are about disease prevention through the feeding and medicinal treatment restrictions set out in this guide.

You can [find information on SMRs relevant to you on the Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\) website](#).

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### Cattle health and cross compliance

Cross compliance requirements apply to you if you receive direct payments under Common Agricultural Policy support schemes or if you receive payments under certain Rural Development schemes. To receive your full subsidy payment you must comply with the Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and standards of good agricultural and environmental condition requirements that apply to your business.

If you don't carry out your SMR obligations, you may face enforcement action and even prosecution.

### SMR 10 - Restrictions on the use of substances having hormonal or thyrostatic action and beta-agonists

The aim of these requirements is to stop the illegal use of substances that have a hormonal or thyrostatic action and beta-agonists in stock farming. They also prevent residues that these substances leave in meat - and other foodstuffs - from entering the human or animal food chain.

**Download information about SMR 10 from the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) website (PDF, 527K) - Opens in a new window.**

For more information, read the page in this guide on **hormonal treatments and antibiotics for cattle**.

### **SMRs 12, 13, 14 and 15 for the prevention and control of animal disease**

The aim of SMRs 12, 13, 14 and 15 is to minimise the risk posed to human and animal health by certain transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), foot and mouth, bluetongue and other animal diseases. These will apply to you if you keep cattle.

For more information, see the pages in this guide on **prevention and control of brucellosis and TSEs in cattle**, **prevention and control of tuberculosis in cattle** and **critical illnesses of cattle**.

**Download information on SMR 12 from the RPA website (PDF, 783K) - Opens in a new window.**

**Download information on SMRs 13, 14 and 15 from the RPA website (PDF, 729K) - Opens in a new window.**

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### Prevention and control of brucellosis and TSEs in cattle

Cattle farmers must take steps to minimise the risk posed to human and animal health by brucellosis and transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs), such as BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and its human variant.

### **Prevention and control of brucellosis**

Brucellosis of cattle, known as contagious abortion, is caused by infection with the bacterium 'Brucella abortus', which can also infect people. Cases have been recorded in this country recently - despite its eradication from the UK - through the movement of infected cattle from other countries. You should therefore work out proper biosecurity with your vet before you bring imported cattle on-farm.

The disease causes abortion - or early calving - of recently infected animals, with large amounts of infectious material produced. The bacterium is also excreted in milk. People can become infected by drinking untreated milk and by contact with infected animals. The bacterium is destroyed when milk is pasteurised.

All abortions in cattle, which occur at a certain stage of pregnancy, should be reported to Animal Health. The law requires cattle keepers to report every abortion or premature calving to Animal Health. An abortion or premature calving takes place less than 271 days after service or 265 days after implantation - or transfer of an embryo - whether the calf is born dead or alive.

Although blood tests for brucellosis are no longer carried out routinely on beef cattle, the following surveillance and risk management measures continue to apply:

- import controls and certification
- exporting country alerts of brucellosis breakdowns in exporting herds
- post-import check testing
- post-calving check testing
- abortion reporting and investigations



If you have any suspicion of this notifiable disease, you must contact your Animal Health Office (AHO) immediately. [See our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

Treatment for brucellosis of cattle is not permitted - all infected cattle as well as cattle that have been exposed to infection must be slaughtered.

If the disease is suspected, Animal Health Officers have the right to serve a notice on the owner or person in charge of the affected bovine animals to ban their movement from their current premises or require their movement to other premises. Where a notice applies, no manure, slurry or other animal waste can be removed from those premises except under a specific licence.

### Prevention and control of TSE

To reduce the risk of TSEs, you must:

- **not** feed animal protein or any feeds containing animal protein to cattle, sheep, goats, camelids, bison, buffalo, deer, antelope and wildebeest - except for milk, milk-based and colostrums, eggs and egg products, gelatine from non-ruminants, hydrolysed proteins derived from non-ruminants or from ruminant hides and skins, and liquid milk replacers for unweaned ruminants containing fishmeal, if registered by Defra.
- **not** use feed products containing prohibited proteins or mix prohibited proteins with feeding stuffs such as bonemeal or poultry meal

- **not** use restricted proteins to produce feed for non-ruminants such as pigs and poultry - unless you have received authorisation from Defra
- **not** use feed products containing restricted proteins on a farm where there are ruminant species present - unless you have received registration from Defra
- notify the duty vet at your local AHO immediately if you know or suspect that an animal or carcass in your possession - or under your charge - is infected with a TSE - [see our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window](#)
- fully comply with any movement restrictions
- fully comply with any order to slaughter and destroy any animal
- fully comply with any other notices served by an inspector

There are specific rules to prevent the spread of BSE and other TSEs through the use of animal by-products in animal feed.

[Read about BSE-related feed controls on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

For further information, see our related guide on [disease notification and restrictions](#).

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### Prevention and control of tuberculosis in cattle



Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is a pressing animal health issue. The incidence rate of bTB in cattle in England and Wales has been rising for 25 years and has worsened since the 2001 Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak. The disease is a largely regional problem, concentrated in England in the South West and West Midlands.

As the disease can spread to humans through contaminated milk and dairy products it is **unlawful** for milk - raw or pasteurised - from any animal testing positive for bTB to be used for human consumption. Milk from the rest of the herd can still be sold for human consumption - as long as it's heat-treated.

### Testing

Cattle with bTB are most often identified through testing using the tuberculin skin test before they develop clinical signs. This is because the disease usually progresses slowly and it can take some time for clinical signs to appear. Clinical signs of advanced bTB include:

- weakness
- emaciation
- difficulty breathing
- enlarged lymph nodes
- coughing

[Read information about bTB on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

You must notify the veterinary manager of your local Animal Health Office (AHO) immediately if you know or suspect that an animal or carcass in your possession - or under your charge - is infected with bTB.

[See our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

For further information, see our related guide on [disease notification and restrictions](#).

All cattle herds in Great Britain - except some beef fattening units - are regularly tested for bTB, as part of four different testing programmes:

- **compulsory regular testing using the tuberculin skin test** - carried out at the Government's expense every one to four years, with the frequency determined by how widespread bTB is in a particular region
- **Gamma interferon blood testing** – in the circumstances outlined below.
- **high health risk testing** - additional annual tests where there is a potentially higher risk to public or animal health, eg producers of raw drinking milk, unpasteurised dairy products, dealers' herds, bull hirers and regular buyers of Irish cattle
- **pre-movement testing** - compulsory tests before cattle aged 42 days or more can be moved from a high risk area
- **post-mortem testing** - inspection carried out by the Meat Hygiene Service on all cattle at slaughterhouses, which enables bTB cases to be traced back to the herd of origin

### Tuberculin skin test

The tuberculin skin test is the primary screening method for bTB in Great Britain. This test is used throughout the world to screen cattle, other animals and people for TB. Testing is carried out by

government-approved testers and supervised by government-approved vets. Each test has three possible outcomes:

- positive - the **reactor** animal is isolated from the rest of the herd and slaughtered
- inconclusive - the animal is re-tested
- negative

### Gamma interferon blood test

The more sensitive gamma interferon (g-IFN) diagnostic blood test is used in prescribed circumstances alongside the tuberculin skin test, to improve the sensitivity of the testing regime and identify more infected animals more quickly. Using both tests in this way can help to speed up the resolution of confirmed TB breakdowns by identifying as many infected cattle as possible at the earliest opportunity.

The use of g-IFN test is mandatory in the following prescribed circumstances:

- all confirmed new incidents (CNI) in 3 or 4 yearly tested herds, including those that fail to resolve through repeated skin testing or where complete or partial de-population is contemplated
- confirmed TB incidents that have failed to resolve through repeated skin testing, in 1 and 2 yearly tested herds, including those herds where complete or partial de-population is contemplated

Additionally, the test is used occasionally to enhance specificity in the following limited circumstances:

- non-specific reactor procedure for

unconfirmed breakdowns in 2, 3, or 4 yearly tested herds

- suspected fraudulent reactors

### Pre-Movement testing

In addition to the above, Pre-Movement testing is a statutory requirement: cattle 42 days old and over moving from a 1 or 2 yearly tested herd must have tested negative to a bTB test within 60 days prior to movement.

[Download advice on dealing with bTB in your herd from the Animal Health website \(PDF, 267K\) - Opens in a new window.](#)

[Read about bTB screening on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Husbandry advice

[Read advice on protecting your cattle from bTB on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Cattle Compensation

Government compensation is paid to owners of cattle compulsorily slaughtered for bTB control purposes. Compensation in England is determined primarily using table values, which reflect the average sales price of bovine animals in 47 different categories. The categories are based on the animal's age, gender, type (dairy or beef) and status (pedigree or non-pedigree).

[Find the cattle compensation table values on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Vaccination

Vaccination of either cattle or wildlife is a

potential long-term option for reducing the risk of bovine TB in Great Britain. However, vaccines can never represent a single answer to the problem of bovine TB. Vaccination is a risk reduction measure, most likely to be successful in controlling bovine TB when used alongside other disease control.

The first injectable badger vaccine was licensed in March 2010 and is available for use on prescription. Research is continuing into producing a licensed cattle vaccine with differential test and an oral badger vaccine.

### Badgers and bTB

Defra recently concluded a public consultation on bTB.

A large number of responses to the consultation were received, which are being considered carefully. Defra will announce a decision as part of a comprehensive and balanced TB eradication programme for England later this year.

The government's proposal outlined in the consultation is to issue licences to farmers/landowners who wish to cull and/or vaccinate badgers at their own expense. These licences would be subject to strict licence criteria to ensure badger control is done effectively, humanely and with high regard for animal welfare.

A five-year Badger Vaccine Deployment Project (BVDP) is taking place in one area of Gloucestershire, near Stroud. You can [read about the BVDP on the Food and Environment Research Agency \(Fera\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Farmer advice

A number of new measures are being implemented, aimed at helping owners of bTB restricted herds to maintain their businesses and avoid some of the practical problems created by movement controls. Farmers wishing to find out more about bTB should contact their local AHO. You can [find your local AHO on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#) or [refer to any of the 'TB In Your Herd' publications on Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

Government-funded advice (based on the latest scientific evidence) is being developed, covering veterinary, biosecurity, and business issues. Farmers can now [access free business support, on the Farm Crisis Network \(FCN\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

FCN agents will provide practical support, sign-post businesses to sources of other more specialist advice, and for those in greatest financial need a dedicated FCN Business Support Group will advise farmers on their options.

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### Protecting cattle from lead poisoning on farms

Lead poisoning can cost you money and kill your cattle. The highest incidence usually occurs immediately after turn out when animals discover lead-containing materials abandoned on the pasture.

Accumulation of lead beyond legal limits renders meat, offal and milk unsafe and illegal to enter the food chain. Lead poisoning can also result in stunted animal growth, animal deaths, increased birth defects and infertility, decreased productivity, loss of market value and

disposal costs for dead animals and vet fees.

### Causes of lead poisoning on farms

The most frequent causes of lead poisoning in cattle are:

- flaking high lead paint - mainly calves
- vehicle and electric fence batteries - eg battery remains accidentally mixed with animal feed, or batteries fly-tipped on farm land
- high lead soils - usually arising from historic mining and smelting operations, land erosion - especially by water courses but occasionally landslips
- ash from fires in which lead materials were burned such as painted woodwork, leaded building materials, putty, wiring
- lead shot from shooting which can be eaten with soil uptake and can also contaminate certain crops, especially maize and end up in silage

### Withdrawal periods and offal removal

A 16-week withdrawal period before slaughter is usually sufficient but for lead which is retained in the stomach this can extend for several years. Some animals may show no signs of poisoning but have lead residues in milk, offal and meat. Offal tends to have higher levels of lead for longer periods than meat or milk.

Animals and/or their produce may need to be tested to investigate whether lead residues are present and also to monitor whether a withdrawal period has been adequate or whether offal should be removed after slaughter.

### How to avoid lead contamination on your farm

There are several steps you can take to protect your cattle and the human food chain from lead contamination. You should:

- check your fields and barns for vehicle batteries, building materials, flaking lead paint, putty, lead flashing
- remove or fence off fly-tipped material
- prevent access to burnt out cars and old machinery that might contain lead
- prevent cattle access to bonfire ash

On farms with high lead soils, you should:

- keep your cows' soil consumption as low as possible
- avoid waterlogged land and poached land for grazing
- avoid overgrazing and maintain adequate sward height
- fence off bare areas of soil
- calibrate cutters when making silage to minimise soil uptake
- flatten any molehills prior to cutting grass for silage
- provide salt licks and mineral supplements
- use mains water or tested borehole water rather than natural run-off water from high lead soils

### What to do if you suspect lead poisoning in your cattle

If you suspect some of your cows are contaminated with lead, you must:

- remove your cattle from the affected area (pasture, pen or yard) immediately
- consult your vet

- confirm the cause of disease and if it is lead poisoning then investigate the source

### Testing for lead in cattle

Advice and testing for lead in cattle, produce or soil is available via your vet and from your regional Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA).

VLA can be contacted via the Laboratory Services Department on Tel 01932 357 335.

You can also [find contact details for your regional VLA on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

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### Cattle feed

Safe, good-quality foodstuffs are essential to maintain both human and animal health.

Feed contaminants such as lead or antimicrobial residues - or biological agents such as botulism - may cause disease in cattle and make their produce unsuitable for human consumption.

You must ensure you do not give unsafe feed to food-producing animals. See our guide on [farmed animal food and feed law](#).

### Animal by-products as foodstuffs

You can use some former foodstuffs - food previously intended for human consumption - as livestock feed, subject to the animal by-products regulations.

Former foodstuffs that can be fed to cattle include:

- milk and milk-based products
- biscuits
- bakery waste
- pasta
- chocolate
- sweets and similar products

Such products can contain rennet, melted fat, milk or eggs, as long as they are not the main ingredients. You must ensure that the products are not contaminated by meat or other animal products before feeding them to cattle.

You must not feed meat, fish and most other products of animal origin to ruminants, pigs or poultry, or allow them access to such material. Cattle should not be fed any processed or unprocessed catering waste, even if it comes from vegetarian restaurants and kitchens.

For more information about animal by-products and foodstuffs that can be fed to your livestock, see our guide on [dealing with animal by-products](#).

For more information, you can [read about the use of former foodstuffs for animal feed on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website - Opens in a new window.](#)

Farms and milk processing plants can process milk and milk products for use as animal feed, as long as they register with the Animal Health central operations delivery team. To register, you can call the Animal Health Helpline on Tel 01905 763 355 or send your details to:

Animal Health Specialist Service Centre – Worcester

Block C

Government Buildings

Worcester

WR5 2LQ

**Find out more about use of milk products for animal feed on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.**

### **Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies (TSEs)**

There are specific rules to prevent the spread of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and other TSEs through the use of animal by-products in animal feed.

**Read about BSE-related feed controls on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.**

You can also **find information on the safe use of animal products to feed livestock on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website - Opens in a new window.**

### **Zoonoses**

Zoonoses are defined diseases and infections that can be transmitted between vertebrate animals and man. Infection may occur through a bacterium, virus, fungus, parasite, or other communicable agent. Many of these can occur in cattle feed or milk and beef products from infected animals.

Notifiable zoonoses include:

- anthrax
- BSE

- brucellosis
- Rift Valley Fever
- bovine tuberculosis

For more information, see our guides on **disease notification and restrictions** and **disease prevention**.

**Read about zoonoses and foodborne animal pathogens on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.**

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### **Hormonal treatments and antibiotics for cattle**

Due to concerns about the potential risk to humans, the use of hormonal growth promoters for livestock is banned in the UK. Antibiotic growth-promoting feed additives have also been phased out - because of concerns about the potential spread of antibiotic resistance.

As a result, if you keep farmed animals there are restrictions on the use of treatments that:

- act as beta-agonists
- have hormonal actions
- reduce production of thyroid hormones

You must prevent meat containing these substances from entering the human - or animal - food chain.

Restricted treatments include:

- phenylbutazone
- tetracyclines
- sulphonamides
- nalidixic acid
- fusidic acid



- florphenicol
- ceftriaxone

Restricted antibiotic substances include:

- chloramphenicol
- ampicillin
- amoxycillin/clavulanate
- neomycin
- gentamicin
- enrofloxacin
- tiamulin

You must not:

- give food-producing animals restricted substances unless with any permitted exceptions
- use substances containing oestradiol 17 $\beta$  or its ester-like derivatives
- use substances that contain beta-agonists to slow a labour - tocolysis - in cows when calving
- use substances containing hormones or thyroid hormone-reducing actions unless prescribed by your veterinary surgeon
- have food-producing animals on your farm that have been given any restricted substance, unless there are permitted exceptions
- send animals to slaughter that have been given any restricted substances, unless there are permitted exceptions
- sell meat or any other animal product that has been given a restricted substance

You must:

- observe the relevant withdrawal period - ie the period between the end of treatment and the slaughter of

the animal - if your food-producing animals have been given any of the restricted substances - see our guide on [managing livestock veterinary medicines](#)

- keep veterinary medicinal records relating to restricted substances available to the competent authority on request

**[Read advice on controlling antimicrobial resistance in bacteria associated with animals on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)**

**[Download a guide to the responsible use of veterinary medicines from the Veterinary Medicines Directorate \(VMD\) website \(PDF, 386K\) - Opens in a new window.](#)**

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### Cattle inspections and record keeping

In taking responsibility for your herd, you must have the skills needed to safeguard the animals' health and welfare. This includes being familiar with the welfare code for that species. For stock management advice relating to welfare, see our guide on [cattle welfare](#).

Regular inspection of your herd is essential to maintain good health. You should be familiar with the normal behaviour of cattle and be alert for any signs of illness or distress.

#### Monitoring cattle

Signs of ill health in your cattle include:

- listlessness



- separation from the group
- unusual behaviour
- loss of body condition
- loss of appetite
- a sudden fall in milk yield
- constipation
- scouring (diarrhoea)
- not cudding
- discharge from the nostrils or eyes
- increased saliva production
- persistent coughing
- rapid or irregular breathing
- abnormal resting behaviour
- swollen joints
- lameness
- mastitis

You should aim to recognise problems in their earliest stages - so that you can identify the cause and take immediate action to resolve the issue. If the cause isn't apparent - or if your remedy proves ineffective - you should seek urgent advice from a vet or other expert.

If you have any suspicion of a **notifiable disease**, you must contact your local Animal Health Office immediately. See the page in this guide on **critical illnesses of cattle**.

### Record-keeping

You must keep a record of all mortalities that occur among your herd, as well as any medicinal treatment given to your animals. These records need to be kept for at least three years.

You should only use authorised animal medicines. Your records should include:

- the name and address of the medicine supplier
- the date you treated the animals
- which animal or group of animals you

- treated
- how much medicine you used

Although it's not a legal requirement, you may also find it useful to keep a record of specific cases of - and treatment given for - certain disorders. For example:

- mastitis
- lameness
- milk fever

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### Further information on cattle health

Several organisations offer help and support to cattle farmers.

One of the major roles of the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** (Defra) is to help the farming industry operate as efficiently as possible. Defra administers European support policies that provide around £3 billion to UK agriculture. They also oversee a number of agencies that work with arable farmers, imports and exports of crops and implement pest and disease controls. You can call the Defra Helpline on Tel 08459 33 55 77.

**Animal Health** is an executive agency of Defra and is responsible for ensuring that farmed animals in Great Britain are healthy, disease-free and well looked after. It uses government policies to prevent and manage outbreaks of serious animal diseases, and safeguards public health from animal disease. You can call the Animal Health Information Line on Tel 0844 88 44 600.

Animal Health is also responsible for monitoring the UK 's protection of animals and plants under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

There are 23 Animal Health Offices (AHOs). You should contact them if you have any suspicions of disease in your farm animals. [See our table of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

For news on animal disease outbreaks, you can call the Animal Health Helpline on Tel 01245 454 860.

In England, the **Farm Advisory System** advises farmers about cross compliance. For further information, call the Cross Compliance Helpline on Tel 0845 345 1302. Alternatively, [find information on cross compliance requirements on the Cross Compliance website - Opens in a new window.](#)

[Find information about animal welfare on the Cross Compliance website - Opens in a new window.](#)

The **Rural Payments Agency** (RPA) is responsible for licences and schemes for growers as well as for running the Single Payment Scheme (SPS). For more information about the SPS and how it can help your farming business, you can call the RPA Helpline on Tel 0845 603 7777.

For more information, see our guide on [the Single Payment Scheme \(SPS\)](#).

If you receive payments under the SPS, you must comply with Statutory Management Requirement (SMR) 7, which sets out the requirements on the identification and registration of cattle to facilitate their traceability, particularly if there is an outbreak of disease. You can [find SMR 7 on the RPA website - Opens in a new window.](#)

The agency also administers and regulates agricultural subsidy, rural development, trade and livestock schemes.

The **National Farmers' Union** (NFU) represents the farmers and growers of England and Wales. It aims to promote successful and socially responsible agriculture and horticulture, while ensuring the long-term viability of rural communities.

You can [read about the work of the NFU on the NFU website - Opens in a new window.](#)

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### Helplines

#### Defra Helpline

08459 33 55 77

#### Cross Compliance Helpline

0845 345 1302

#### RPA Customer Service Centre

0845 603 7777

#### Food Standards Agency Incident Prevention Coordination Team

020 7276 8735

#### Food Standards Agency Helpline

020 7276 8829

#### Natural England Enquiry Service

0845 600 3078

### **Veterinary Medicines Directorate Helpline**

01932 336 911

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Related guides on  
[businesslink.gov.uk](http://businesslink.gov.uk)

[Use Cattle Tracing System \(CTS\) Online from BCMS](#) | [Use the Cross Compliance Self Assessment Tool from Defra](#) | [Use the Food Standards Agency \(FSA\) Guidance Tool from Defra](#) | [Cattle identification, registration and movement](#) | [Cattle welfare](#) | [Disease prevention](#) | [Disease notification and restrictions](#) | [Dealing with animal by-products](#) | [Summary of Products of Animal Origin \(Disease Control\) Regulations 2008](#) | [Summary of Bluetongue Regulations 2008](#) | [Summary of Specified Disease Order SI 1992/3159 and SI 1996/2628](#) | [Fallen stock](#) | [Managing and conserving wildlife](#) | [Wild mammals](#) | [Summary of Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#) | [Farmed animal food and feed law](#) | [Managing livestock veterinary medicines](#) | [Animal Health contact details in England](#) - Opens in a new window |

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Related web sites you might find useful

[Keeping Animals guidance on the Animal Health website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Animal health information on the Veterinary Laboratories Agency \(VLA\) website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Cattle Disease Surveillance Reports on the VLA website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Cattle health and welfare guidance on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Farm livestock news on the National Farmers' Union website](#) - Opens in a new window

[UK dairy industry information on the Dairy UK website](#) - Opens in a new window

[English beef and sheep industry information on the Eblex website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Managing Disease guidance on the Animal Health website](#) - Opens in a new window

[A-Z of animal diseases on the Defra website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Animal diseases guidance on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Farm livestock health information on the Animal Health agency website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Badger control policy review information on the Defra website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Registering your animals guidance on the Animal Health website](#) - Opens in a new window

[Cattle identification and movement](#)

[guidance on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Cattle herd health planning advice on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Veterinary surveillance information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[TB information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download information about SMR 10 from the RPA website \(PDF, 527K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download information on SMR 12 - prevention and control of TSEs from the RPA website \(PDF, 783K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download information on SMRs 13, 14 and 15 - control of foot and mouth disease, certain animal diseases and bluetongue from the RPA website \(PDF, 729K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

[BSE-related feed ban guidance on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download guidance on brucellosis in cattle from the Defra website \(PDF, 43K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

[Bovine Tuberculosis information on the Animal Health website - Opens in a new window](#)

[bTB advice booklets on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download bTB guidance from the Defra website \(PDF, 266K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

[bTB screening information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[bTB prevention advice on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[bTB vaccines information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[BVDP information on the Fera website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Lead poisoning information on the Food Standards Agency website - Opens in a new window](#)

[VLA contact details on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Zoonoses diseases explained on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Former foodstuffs use as animal feed guidance on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Milk products as animal feed explained on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Antimicrobial resistance information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#)

[Download guidance on the responsible use of veterinary medicines from the VMD website \(PDF, 386K\) - Opens in a new window](#)

**Biosecurity measures for disease control explained on the Defra website - Opens in a new window**

**Download cattle vaccination guidance from the Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture Alliance website (PDF, 112K) - Opens in a new window**

**Veterinary medicines for livestock explained on the Veterinary Medicines Directorate website - Opens in a new window**

**Cross compliance guidance index on the RPA website - Opens in a new window**

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# Cattle identification, registration and movement

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## Subjects covered in this guide

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[Introduction](#)

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[Cattle identification and cross compliance](#)

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[Tagging your cattle](#)

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[Cattle passports and registration](#)

---

[Notification of cattle movements and deaths](#)

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[Cattle welfare in transport](#)

---

[Keeping on-farm records for cattle](#)

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[Cattle farm inspections](#)

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[Further information on cattle identification, registration and movement](#)

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[Helplines](#)

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[Related guides on \[businesslink.gov.uk\]\(http://businesslink.gov.uk\)](#)

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[Related web sites you might find useful](#)

*You can find this guide by navigating to:*

*Home > Your business sector > Farming > Identification, movement and tracing > Cattle identification, registration and movement*

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## Introduction

Cattle identification and traceability are important for disease control and also for maintaining consumer confidence in farm produce. There are standards and rules for identifying and controlling cattle movement to prevent and trace the spread of disease.

This guide gives you information about what to do after you have moved cattle on to your holding. It explains tagging, passports and registration, notification of new movements and deaths. It also covers on-farm records and inspections as well as cattle welfare during transport and while at market. You will also find information on where to get further advice and support.

This guide contains detailed information for a particular livestock species. See our guide on [livestock keeping: the basics](#) and find out more about the general requirements to:

- produce safe wholesome food for human consumption
- safeguard the health and welfare of your animals
- guard against the spread of disease

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## Cattle identification and cross compliance

Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) are agricultural management standards set out in European Union and UK law. Conformity to these - and with the good agricultural and environmental condition land management standards - is called 'cross compliance'.

SMRs require farmers to protect habitats

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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and wildlife, manage their soil and water, control chemical use and prevent animal disease. They also specify rules on animal health, welfare and identification.

### SMR 7 - Cattle identification and registration

The aim of this SMR is to maintain a system for the identification and registration of cattle to help with their traceability, in particular in the event of a disease outbreak. They apply to you if you keep cattle.

For more information about the issues covered by SMR 7, see the pages in this guide on:

- [tagging your cattle](#)
- [cattle passports and registration](#)
- [notification of cattle movements and deaths](#)
- [keeping on-farm records for cattle](#)

You must not remove or replace ear tags without permission from the British Cattle Movement Service unless they are lost or illegible. You must replace lost or illegible tags, and you must not alter, obliterate or deface an ear tag or alter or deface a cattle passport.

[Download information about SMR 7 - Cattle identification and registration from the Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\) website \(PDF, 1.12MB\) - Opens in a new window.](#)

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### Tagging your cattle

You must ensure that all cattle born on or after 1 January 1998 have an ear tag in each ear, as approved by Department for

Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). This is known as 'double tagging'. Each tag must show the same unique number for that animal.

There are two types of ear tag - primary and secondary. The main ear tag, known as the **primary ear tag**, is a yellow, plastic, two-piece ear tag which meets the conditions set by Article 3 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 262/97.

Since 1 January 2000, ear tags must have a specific numeric format. They contain the crown logo, country code, herdmark, individual animal number and check digit. They can also be used as a secondary ear tag.

When used, the large plastic **secondary ear tag** can be printed to allow space for management information. This information can include details relevant to a particular animal, such as visual identification, its name or a different unique number. This is useful so you don't need to check that the herd mark and single number check digit match the animal's number, eg for medication. There is no minimum size requirement for secondary tags, so button or metal tags may be used.

When you apply for your cattle's tags, the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) will automatically post your passport application forms. If you use electronic methods to apply for cattle passports you may opt not to receive paper forms.

You must fit ear tags within 20 days of an animal's birth, with the exception of dairy cattle, which must have at least one tag fitted within 36 hours of birth.



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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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### Tagging imported cattle

You must handle imported cattle as follows:

- if they are from another European Union (EU) member state, they will already be double tagged so you do not need to retag them unless they lose an ear tag
- if they are from outside the EU, you must retag each animal within 20 days of it passing the veterinary checks

All your cattle must be tagged before they leave the holding where they were born. You may also add electronic tagging in the form of a barcode, but this isn't required in the UK. Some European Union member states have made a bar code mandatory but you can still export cattle without the barcode.

You can order ear tags from local agricultural merchants, some veterinary surgeons or Defra-approved suppliers. [Read a list of Defra-approved ear tag suppliers on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

Although a microchip is not part of the official requirements, you can use a microchip in the secondary tag to allow electronic identification of the animal.

You can [find out about model ear tags on the Defra website - Opens in a new window.](#)

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### Cattle passports and registration

Cattle born in or imported into Great Britain since 1 July 1996 must have a cattle

passport. This identifies them and their movements and must remain with them throughout their lives.

Chequebook-style cattle passports (CPP13) are issued by the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS). The BCMS also runs the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) database, and is responsible for:

- maintaining a register of births, deaths and imports of cattle used for animal health and subsidy control purposes
- issuing cattle passports
- recording individual cattle whereabouts
- operating a dedicated helpline
- providing online services

The cattle passports include:

- details of the animal on the front cover
- details of where it has been throughout its life
- movement cards you send in when the animal moves on or off a holding if the movement is not notified electronically
- details of the animal's death

The old style green cattle passport continues for animals registered between 1 July 1996 and 28 September 1998. These cattle were also issued with Certificates of CTS Registration (CHR3) and their passports should accompany them whenever they move. Cattle born before 1 July 1996 were issued with a Certificate of Registration which should accompany the animal when it moves.

You can [see examples of the cattle](#)

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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**passports on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) website - Opens in a new window.**

### Calf passports

You will need to get a full chequebook-style passport before moving a calf. Calves may not be transported until the navel has healed - ie the umbilicus has shrivelled, fallen off and the skin healed over. However, where a passport has not been received, a movement licence may be granted in exceptional welfare circumstances - for example, if the animal needs fostering or if dangerous events happen where movement is necessary, such as a fire or a flood.

### How to apply for cattle passports

You must make passport applications within 27 days from birth. Any application received at BCMS more than 27 days after the birth of a calf will be refused and a Notice of Registration document issued. You may be able to appeal against refusal of a passport under certain exceptional circumstances.

Applications received with missing or invalid information will be issued with a Notice of Registration document 56 days after receipt of the application. If subsequent valid information is provided a passport may be issued if the Notice of Registration is returned.

You can apply to the BCMS for your cattle passports using the following methods:

- CTS Online - this is a free, interactive website that is available to all registered cattle keepers in Great Britain.
- CTS Web Services is a facility that is used by a range of farm software

packages to feed data directly into CTS. CTS Online and CTS Web Services are two distinct options - one is free, the other requires the user to purchase software from a third party supplier. Both are more reliable than email, as information is sent more securely - with fewer mistakes - due to the early detection feature. Successful transactions will always receive a receipt which will be needed for any helpline queries. There is a list of suppliers and software packages on the BCMS pages of the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) website.

- The pre-printed application form sent automatically when an order for ear tags is confirmed.

**Read information about how to apply for cattle passports on the BCMS CTS Online website - Opens in a new window.**

**Read a list of third party software suppliers that offer software packages compatible with CTS Web Services - Opens in a new window.**

### Passports for imported cattle

For imports from other European Union (EU) member states, you must send the animal's EU passport, Export Health Certificate and application form CPP16 to BCMS within 15 days of the animal's arrival at your holding.

For imports from outside the EU - ie from third countries - you must use form CPP16 to apply for a passport within 15 days of having retagged the animal. You must have retagged it within 20 days of its passing the veterinary checks, or before the animal leaves the holding.

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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You can [download form CPP16 from the Defra website \(PDF, 98K\) - Opens in a new window](#).

### When an animal dies on your holding

If an animal dies on your farm, you will need to return the animal's passport to the BCMS within seven days. You must complete the back page of the passport with the death details.

You are not allowed to bury or burn carcasses (other than using an approved incinerator) on your holding. In Great Britain, the only exceptions to the ban are for remote areas in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the Scilly Isles and Lundy Isla.

If the animal is over 48 months old you must send it to an approved sampling site so that a brainstem sample can be taken for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) testing. [Find details of the BSE UK testing programme on the Defra website - Opens in a new window](#), or request a list of testing sites from your Animal Health Office (AHO). [See our list of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window](#).

If for any reason the animal has not been registered, it must still be sent for BSE testing. You can use your local fallen stock collector, or join the National Fallen Stock Scheme run by the National Fallen Stock Company (NFSCo). For more information, call the NFSCo Helpline on Tel 0845 054 8888.

### Passport replacements

Cattle passports are valuable documents and should be kept securely. If a passport has been lost, damaged or stolen, you must apply for a replacement from the BCMS

within 14 days of becoming aware that the passport is missing. A replacement will be issued providing the animal's movement history can be traced. There is a charge for this service.

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### Notification of cattle movements and deaths

If you keep cattle, you will need to follow certain rules on identifying and moving your animals. European and UK law requires notification of when cattle are moved both on and off your farm - known as 'on' and 'off' movements.

### Notification of cattle movement

Whenever you move cattle, you must follow the conditions of the general licence for the movement of cattle. [Download the general licence for the movement of cattle from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website \(PDF, 32K\) - Opens in a new window](#).

Once you move cattle or other animals on to your holding, no other animals are allowed to move off it for six days. This standstill period applies to all sheep, cattle, pigs or goats. However, you can apply for an exemption to the standstill rule if your animals have been attending a show.

When an animal goes to a show, you need to report its movements when it leaves and returns to the farm after the show. The show secretary should report the on and off movements for the showground.

You're legally obliged to notify the British Cattle Movement Service (BCMS) of movements of cattle on or off your holding

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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within three days of the event and within seven days for the death of an animal. You can do this by:

- using Cattle Tracing System (CTS) Online
- using a farm software package linked to CTS Web Services
- using the tear-out movement cards in the animal's passport
- using an agent

The details must also be recorded in the passport.

Before any movement, you will need to inspect cattle for signs of foot and mouth disease. If you find any evidence of the disease, you must immediately notify the Divisional Veterinary Manager of your Animal Health Office (AHO). [See our list of AHO contact details in England - Opens in a new window.](#)

If you find any evidence of disease, your licence will be cancelled, and you will not be allowed to move any animals on or off the premises.

### Notification of cattle deaths

You must notify the BCMS of any cattle deaths on your holding within seven days by returning the passport to BCMS. Animals over 48 months old, which die on your farm, must be sent for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) testing. A movement card from the passport should be attached to the carcass. For further information on the rules and regulations for the death of farm animals, see our guide on [fallen stock](#).

The occupier of a slaughterhouse must notify the death of animals slaughtered on

their premises by completing the death details in the passport and giving it to the official veterinarian or their representative at the time of slaughter.

If an animal is slaughtered outside a slaughterhouse, but sent to one for dressing, the keeper must complete the death details in the passport and send it with the animal to the slaughterhouse. The occupier of the slaughterhouse must notify the death by giving the passport to the official veterinarian or their representative when the animal arrives at the slaughterhouse. For more information, see our guide on [farmed animal welfare at slaughter](#).

If an animal does not have a cattle passport, the keeper must notify its death to BCMS in writing within seven days, and include the ear tag number, the date of death, and the holding on which it died.

For more information on dealing with fallen stock, see our guide on [fallen stock](#).

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### Cattle welfare in transport

When moving animals, you must transport them in a way that won't cause them injury or unnecessary suffering.

Whilst European Union rules apply to all live, vertebrate animals transported for economic reasons, more stringent elements apply to the transport of farm livestock, such as cattle.

When transporting livestock, you should:

- plan journeys thoroughly and keep the duration to a minimum

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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- ensure the animals are fit to travel and check them regularly
- ensure vehicle loading and unloading facilities are constructed and maintained to avoid injury and suffering
- ensure those handling animals are competent and don't use violence or any methods likely to cause fear, injury or suffering
- provide sufficient floor space and height allowance
- provide water, feed and rest as needed

For more information, see our guide on [farmed animal welfare during transportation](#).

### Fitness for travel

It's illegal to transport an animal that's considered unfit for travel. This includes:

- new-born mammals where the navel has not completely healed
- heavily pregnant females - where more than 90 per cent of the expected gestation period has passed
- females who have given birth during the previous seven days
- sick or injured animals where moving them would cause additional suffering - unless instructed by a vet

[Download guidance on whether animals are fit to travel from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\) website \(PDF, 246K\) - Opens in a new window.](#)

### Enforcement

Local authorities have primary responsibility

for enforcing the rules to protect animals during transportation. Veterinary inspectors from Animal Health also have powers to ensure transporters are following the rules.

Defra collects information about any transporters caught breaking the law from local authorities, Animal Health and authorities abroad. This information is used when deciding whether to grant, suspend or cancel transporter authorisation.

### Welfare at market and shows

There is general and specific legislation covering the welfare of animals at markets and shows - in particular Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990.

These specify that owners and keepers must provide animals with a suitable environment, good diet, the opportunity to 'act normally', sufficient housing, and protection from pain, injury, suffering and disease.

All animal owners are also responsible for the health and welfare of their animals and therefore need to understand and provide for their physical and welfare needs. They have a duty of care towards the animal and must recognise the signs of illness or disease. They also have a responsibility to be vigilant, report any suspicion of disease and maintain good disease prevention and control practice, including compliance with regulations.

For more information, see our guide on [farmed animal welfare at shows and markets](#).

[Download Defra's cattle welfare guidance from the Agricultural Document Library](#)

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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**(ADLib) website (PDF, 131K) - Opens in a new window.**

**Download the general licence for the movement of cattle from the Defra website (PDF, 32K). - Opens in a new window**

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### Keeping on-farm records for cattle

According to European law, you must keep detailed herd records. These records should contain the following for every animal:

- ear tag number
- date of birth
- breed and sex
- dam ear tag number
- movements on and off your holding
- details of where it's moved from and to
- date of death

Animals born since 1 January 1998 must retain the same number throughout their lives.

You will also need to update these records within the following deadlines:

- 36 hours for movement on or off a holding
- seven days for the birth of a dairy animal
- thirty days for the birth of a non dairy animal
- seven days for recording death
- 36 hours for replacing ear tags (only if the ear tag number has been changed)

These records can be paper-based or electronic. **Download the Department for**

**Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (Defra's) mandatory herd record for bovine animals guidance from the Agricultural Document Library (ADLib) website (PDF, 15K) - Opens in a new window.**

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### Cattle farm inspections

On-the-spot checks are referred to as 'Cattle Identification Inspections' (CIIs). CIIs are carried out to ensure compliance with all cattle identification and registration requirements.

In each European Union member state, 10 per cent of registered holdings are inspected annually. This becomes 5 per cent if the member state has a fully operational computer database. The holdings are selected randomly by risk analysis, and the inspections may be unannounced, though you may get up to 48 hours' notice.

You will be responsible for presenting all your animals, their passports and records on the holding for physical inspection. You will also need to provide suitable handling facilities and to assist with herding animals for inspection. Refusing or obstructing an inspection is an offence. At the end of your inspection, the inspector will ask you to sign a report form and offer you the opportunity to comment. A copy of this form will then be handed to you.

The inspector will specifically check that:

- your farm records show which animals are present on the holding or have been on the holding
- births, movements and deaths have been correctly recorded
- all animals are correctly tagged, and



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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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match the animal's passport

- all passports are present and correct
- deadlines for identifying cattle and keeping records have been met
- all passports for animals no longer on the holding have been passed on to the new keeper or returned to the British Cattle Movement Service

### How long does the inspection take?

This depends on the size of your holding, the number of cattle involved and the quality of your record keeping. Records that are set out clearly and accurately will significantly reduce inspection time.

If errors are found during the inspection a movement restriction may be imposed on some or all of the cattle.

### Penalties

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) may prosecute keepers who they believe are deliberately breaking the cattle identification rules.

This may also affect claims made under the Single Payment Scheme.

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### Further information on cattle identification, registration and movement

There are several organisations offering help and support on cattle registration, identification and movement.

The **British Cattle Movement Service** (BCMS) is a specialised cattle tracing organisation for Great Britain which operates the online Cattle Tracing System (CTS) on behalf of Scottish, English and

Welsh Ministers. Their role is to:

- maintain the CTS database - a register of the births, deaths and movements of all cattle born or imported into Great Britain
- issue cattle passports
- process information about cattle movements
- respond to customer enquiries

One of the major roles of the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs** (Defra) is to help the farming industry operate as efficiently as possible. Defra administers European support policies that provide around £3 billion to UK agriculture. They also oversee a number of agencies that work with arable farmers, imports and exports of crops and implement pest and disease controls. You can call the Defra Helpline on Tel 08459 33 55 77.

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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**Compliance website - Opens in a new window.**

**Find information about animal welfare on the Cross Compliance website - Opens in a new window.**

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For more information, see our guide on **the Single Payment Scheme (SPS)**.

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You can **read about the work of the NFU on the NFU website - Opens in a new window.**

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### Helplines

#### Defra Helpline

08459 33 55 77

#### BCMS Helpline

0845 050 1234

#### Cross Compliance Helpline

0845 345 1302

#### Defra Livestock Identification Helpline

0845 050 9876

#### RPA Customer Service Centre

0845 603 7777

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Related guides on  
[businesslink.gov.uk](http://businesslink.gov.uk)

**Use Cattle Tracing System (CTS) Online from BCMS** | **Use the Cross Compliance Self Assessment Tool from Defra** | **Cattle health** | **Cattle welfare** | **Disease prevention** | **Disease notification and restrictions** | **Summary of Disease Control Order 2003** | **Summary of Cattle Identification Regulations 2007** | **AHO contact details - Opens in a new window** | **Farmed animal welfare during transportation** | **Farmed animal welfare at shows and markets** | **Registering cattle (all UK)** | **Fallen stock** | **Farmed animal welfare at slaughter** | **Summary of Tuberculosis Order 2007** | **The Single Payment Scheme (SPS)** | **Cross compliance: the basics** | **Statutory Management Requirements (SMR)** | **Standards of Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC)** | **Farmed animal food and feed law** |

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Related web sites you might find useful

**Cattle identification regulations on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs website - Opens in a new window**

**Cattle passport application guidance on**

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## Cattle identification, registration and movement

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**the British Cattle Movement Service's Cattle Tracing System Online website - Opens in a new window**

**Cattle passport application guidance on the BCMS/CTS Online website - Opens in a new window**

**Cattle keeper's handbook on the Rural Payments Agency website - Opens in a new window**

**Download information about SMR 7 - Cattle identification and registration from the RPA website (PDF, 1.12MB) - Opens in a new window**

**Model ear tag information on the Defra website - Opens in a new window**

**Download passport application form CPP16 for imported cattle from the Defra website (PDF, 98K) - Opens in a new window**

**Third party CTS Web Services-compatible software suppliers on the RPA website - Opens in a new window**

**Download the general licence for the movement of cattle from the Defra website (PDF, 32K) - Opens in a new window**

**Download Defra's mandatory herd record for bovine animals guidance from the Agricultural Document Library website (PDF, 15K) - Opens in a new window**

**Download Defra's cattle welfare guidance from the ADLib website (PDF, 131K) - Opens in a new window**

**Cattle Identification Inspections FAQs on the Defra website - Opens in a new window**