

The Welfare Assessment – SHEEP & GOAT

The welfare assessment is the second stage of the tag approval process & lasts for 3 months. BCMS ETAS section will inform the applicant if the welfare testing can go ahead after the initial assessment of the tag(s) and applicator.

When a range of tags with the same fixing mechanism are submitted for approval, Defra will give a view on whether it is necessary for each tag to undergo the welfare assessment. The applicant will be responsible for all costs relating to welfare testing.

After the assessment the applicant should send a copy of the welfare report to BCMS ETAS section. ETAS will study the report & decide if the ear tag can be given the go ahead for PAS testing.

A welfare assessment must: -

- Take place on at least **two** farms under veterinary supervision with one batch of sheep being farmed on lowland and the other on upland.
- Include a minimum of 50 sheep per batch on each farm. The animals used for the trial must be under 6 months old.
- Animals included in the welfare assessment should not be moved from the holding on which the assessment is being carried out. If at any time the number of animals participating in a trial falls below the specified minimum, Defra reserves the right to request a further trial.
- The number sequence to be used will be allocated by ETAS¹ following the decision by Defra to agree the start of the welfare assessment. The ear tag manufacturer should access ETAS for a unique number sequence as normal & inform BCMS ETAS section of this. The assessment tag(s) will take the place of the official tag(s) for the duration of the assessment and be allowed to remain in the animal's ear(s) if the tag becomes approved.
- Should an assessment tag fall out of an animal's ear during the trial, this must be noted, together with any damage to the animal's ear. The lost eartag must be replaced according to the law. The replacement tag should be where possible an officially approved tag and not another assessment tag.
- If the tag is not given full approval, the assessment tag may in certain circumstances need to be removed under veterinary supervision and replaced with an approved tag bearing the same unique identification number. Agreement as to which party (the keeper of the sheep or the tag manufacturer) should pay for re-tagging should this prove necessary,

¹ This applies after 14 November 2005. Prior to this, the number sequence will be the responsibility of the keeper.

should be reached before the assessment begins, and should be an explicit part of the contract (between a tag manufacturer and a keeper) to supply tags with only provisional approval. In the end it is the keeper's responsibility to ensure that sheep are permanently marked with fully approved tags. Defra will not be liable for this cost.

The tag undergoing assessment must be inserted under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon (paid for by the applicant) and in accordance with the eartag supplier's instructions. The animals must be examined by the veterinary surgeon who supervised the application of the tags at:

- insertion of eartag
- 3 weeks post insertion
- 3 months post insertion

At the end of the assessment, the Veterinary Surgeon must submit a report providing the information required in annexes A & B. In addition:

- the percentage of the animals still displaying lesions at 3 weeks and 3 months post insertion. It is expected that lesions should not exceed 5% at both inspections.
- a full clinical report should be provided for any cases which required treatment or veterinary intervention post insertion. The report must include photographs. If no cases required veterinary intervention a statement must be included in the report to say so.
- an assessment of ease of application of the eartag and the suitability of the eartag applicator should be included in the report.

A sample of the tag type used for the assessment must be included with the veterinarian's report.

If an eartag is approved in another Member State then Defra will consider whether that tag can be approved in GB on the basis of the assessment carried out, or whether a further assessment is required within GB.

RECORDING INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

ANNEX A

| Farm | Date | Tag number | Sex | Pre-Tag Lesions | Disease status of animal | Breed | Type of Husbandry | Tag Description | Tag Application Record see table |
|------|------|------------|-----|-----------------|--------------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. |
| | | | | | | | | | |

1. **Farm** – insert farm name (or CPH) and type of farm (lowland or upland).
2. **Date** – Date of tagging.
3. **Tag number** – flock mark and individual no.
4. **Sex** – (M or F).
5. **Pre-Tag Lesions** – Is there is any damage to the ear or any lesion (spot/scab/bump/scar, etc.). For any animal showing any signs of lesions, a digital photograph should be taken of both sides of the ear, at the same angle to facilitate comparison during the assessment. A further photo should be taken at the next examination.
6. **Disease status of animal** – is there orf, sheep scab, staph.dermatitis, other or none?
7. **Breed** – Breed of sheep/goat.
8. **Type of Husbandry** – indoors/outdoors/sheep netting in fields.
9. **Tag Description** – Tag name and description – 2 piece flexible, 2 piece rigid, metal loop, plastic loop, button, or other.
10. **Tag Application Record** – Response to tagging. More than one can be selected:
 - No reaction
 - Slight Flinch
 - Head Jerk
 - Head Shaking
 - Head rubbing
 - Vocal Complaint
 - Other (Specify)

RECORDING INDIVIDUAL LESIONS AT 3 WEEKS & 3 MONTHS

ANNEX B

| Date | Tag No. | Tag in Place Y/N | Lesion Assessment | Position in Ear see key | Hole Size (mm) | Fit Quality | Pulling or Deformation of ear | Other information |
|------|---------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. |
| | | | | | | | | |

1. Date - Date of inspection
2. Tag No
3. Tag in place – Is the tag still in the ear?
4. Lesion Assessment: For any animal showing any signs of lesions, a digital photograph should be taken of both sides of the ear, at the same angle to facilitate comparison during the assessment. A further photo should be taken at the next examination.

| | |
|---|--|
| 0 | NO LESION. |
| 1 | SMALL NON REACTIVE SCAB. NO BLOOD OR DISCHARGE WHEN TOUCHED |
| 2 | A BAND OF RED, ULCERATED SKIN, WITH OR WITHOUT SCAB. NO PURULENT EXUDATE |
| 3 | A BAND OF RED, ULCERATED SKIN, WITH OR WITHOUT SCAB. WITH PURULENT EXUDATE. NO SWELLING OF SURROUNDING TISSUES |
| 4 | A BAND OF RED, ULCERATED SKIN, WITH OR WITHOUT SCAB. WITH PURELENT EXUDATE. WITH SWELLING OF SURROUNDING TISSUE |

5. Position in Ear – (See Annex C) CrB, CrM, CrT, MB, MM, MT, CdB, CdM, CdT
6. Hole Diameter – measure in millimetres
7. Fit Quality – is it loose, tight, neither?
8. Is it pulling on the ear or causing deformation of the ear margin?
9. Other information.

DESCRIPTION OF EAR TAG POSITIONING

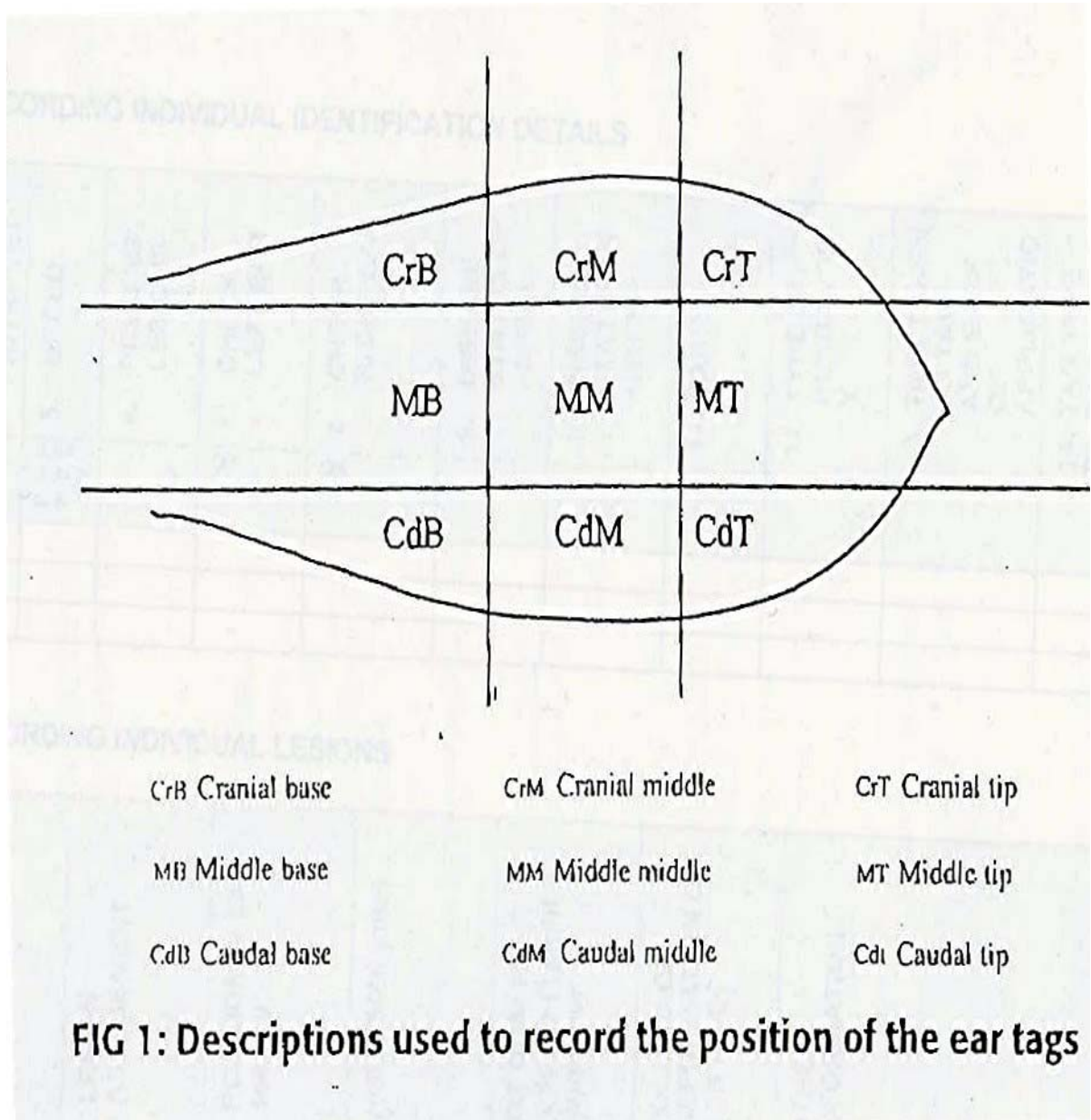


FIG 1: Descriptions used to record the position of the ear tags

[Adapted from Edwards & Johnston, Vet Rec (1999) 144, 603-606