

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

# **Proposal to remove the requirement to include some information in the holding register of keepers of bovine animals in England**

## **Summary of responses to the public consultation and government response**

**January 2015**

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides a summary of responses to Defra's public consultation on the proposal to remove in England the requirement for keepers of bovine animals to include in their holding register details of the identification of the mother (dam) for bovine animals moved on to their holding. The requirement would remain in force for bovine animals born on the holding.
- 1.2 This proposal is part of the Government's Red Tape Challenge to reduce the regulatory burden on the farming industry.
- 1.3 The consultation ran from 20 August to 31 October 2014. Defra received 30 responses to the consultation, of which 15 were from individuals, including farmers and veterinarians, and 15 were from organisations. The organisations are listed in Annex A.

## 2. The proposals

- 2.1 EU Regulation 1760/2000<sup>1</sup> sets out the requirements for the identification and registration of bovine animals (cattle, bison and buffalo). This Regulation imposes a number of obligations on keepers of bovine animals, including the requirement to keep an up-to-date holding register. The holding register must include, for each bovine animal on the holding, its identification code, its date of birth, its sex and either its breed or colour of coat.
- 2.2 In addition, in England the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 include a requirement for the holding register to include the mother's (dam) identification of each bovine animal, due to the high incidence of BSE at the time the original EU legislation was implemented.
- 2.3 As part of the Red Tape Challenge exercise, the National Farmers Union (NFU) proposed that the requirement to include the dam identification details in the holding register should be removed, as it gold plated EU requirements.
- 2.4 The consultation invited views on a proposal to amend the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 to remove in England the requirement for holding registers to include the dam's identification for bovine animals that are moved on to the holding. This information is already recorded in the central database at the time a calf's birth is registered and in the holding register of the holding of birth. The consultation did not propose to remove the requirement for dam information to be recorded in the

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<sup>1</sup> References to legislation in this document are references to the legislation as amended from time to time.

holding register for animals born on the holding, to maintain the robustness of the animal identification and tracing system.

2.5 The proposal is expected to reduce the regulatory burden on keepers of bovine animals by reducing the time required to maintain their holding register. The time saved is estimated at an average of 15 seconds for each bovine animal that moves on to a holding. The consultation invited views on this estimate and on other potential costs and benefits that should be considered.

### **3. Summary of responses and government response to these**

3.1 The consultation received thirty responses via Citizen Space, post and email, which are summarised below.

**Question 1. Do you agree with the proposal to remove the requirement for keepers of bovine animals to include in their holding register details on the identification of the dam for bovine animals brought on to the holding?**

3.2 The majority of respondents (27, representing 90% of respondents) supported the proposal. One respondent (3.3%) expressed no interest. Two respondents (6.7%) did not support the proposal due to concerns that the proposal would impact the availability of this information in case of a disease outbreak, potentially having a negative impact on consumer confidence and on trade.

3.3 We agree that this information is necessary for traceability purposes in the event of a disease outbreak. However, the information will be recorded in the holding register of the holding of birth of any bovine animal as well as being held on the Cattle Tracing System database. The proposed change would not affect the availability of the information, but remove a requirement that duplicates information available in the database. Therefore, we will amend the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 to implement the proposed change.

**Question 2. Are there other potential costs and benefits (apart from time saved by livestock keepers) we should consider?**

3.4 The majority of respondents (17 or 56.7%) acknowledged that there were no other potential costs or benefits. Seven respondents (23.3%) did not know and one respondent (3.3%) expressed no interest. Five respondents (16.7%) indicated that there were other potential costs and benefits; but only one of these respondents provided further detail, stating that there was a cost from understanding the new requirements and potential confusion.

3.5 We estimate the familiarisation costs with the new requirements to be negligible because the new requirement will be simple for livestock keepers to understand and implement. We will therefore not include other potential costs and benefits in the Impact Assessment for this proposal.

3.6 In addition, one respondent proposed that cattle passports should be simplified so they are easier to read and process by cattle keepers and auctioneers; and another respondent suggested reducing the number of cattle identification inspections. These proposals are out of scope of this consultation. Cattle passports were simplified in 2011 and include a barcode that can be read electronically. A new EU Regulation<sup>2</sup> adopted last July removes the requirement for cattle passports for domestic use and we will be consulting in due course on removal of passports as part of the implementation of bovine electronic identification in England. In relation to cattle identification inspections, the number of inspections is set out in EU legislation.

### **Question 3. Do you agree with the estimate of 15 seconds saved for each bovine animal that moves on to a holding?**

3.7 Eighteen respondents (60%) supported the estimate and four respondents (13.3%) did not agree. Seven respondents (23.3%) did not know and one respondent (3.3%) expressed no interest. Of the four respondents who did not agree with the estimate, one believed that the time saved would be shorter and three believed it would be longer. Estimates of twenty seconds, thirty seconds and over thirty seconds were suggested.

3.8 The Impact Assessment for this proposal will use the estimate of an average of fifteen seconds saved per bovine animal moved on to a holding.

## **4. Next steps**

4.1 The majority of the respondents to the consultation and the NFU support the proposal. We intend to lay in Parliament a Regulation amending the Cattle Identification Regulations 2007 so that, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposed amendment comes into effect on 6 April 2015.

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<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) No 653/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 as regards electronic identification of bovine animals and labelling of beef

## **Annex A: List of organisations that responded to our consultation**

Association of Show and Agricultural Organisation (ASAO)

British Cattle Veterinary Association (BCVA)

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

Country and Land Association (CLA)

Devon County Council

East of England Trading Standards Association (EETSA)

Farmplan

Holstein UK

Holstein-UK Cattle Society/Centre for Dairy Information

National Animal Health and Welfare Panel – Local Authorities

National Cattle Association (Dairy)

National Consumer Federation

Northumberland County Council

Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF)

UK Jerseys

Individual responses were also received from:

Livestock keepers

Private veterinary surgeons



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