

Exporting animals

In the guide

[Document requirements](#)

[Identification requirements for livestock destined for export](#)

[Sheep and goats](#)

[Cattle](#)

[Pigs](#)

[Horses](#)

[Assembly centres](#)

[Pets and non-native species, including zoo residents](#)

[Further information](#)

[Trading standards](#)

[In this update](#)

[Key legislation](#)

Although the United Kingdom has left the European Union (EU), certain pieces of legislation (formally known as 'retained EU law') will still apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation; this means that you will still see references to EU regulations in our guidance.

To fully understand this guidance, it is important to note the difference between the United Kingdom and Great Britain:

- UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- GB: England, Scotland and Wales

This guidance is for England

When animals are to be exported, all relevant persons must ensure that they are correctly identified, in good health and accompanied by the correct documentation. There are also documentation requirements for germplasm and germinal products.

Document requirements

An export health certificate (EHC) is required for germplasm / germinal products (semen, ova and embryos), live animals and products of animal origin (POAO) when undertaking the following activities:

- moving them through the EU and Northern Ireland (NI)
- exporting them from GB to EU
- moving them from GB to NI

An EHC is an official document that is signed by either an official veterinary surgeon or an authorised local authority officer. It confirms that the export meets the destination country's health requirements. Each different type of product will require a separate EHC. Additional transit EHCs may be required by each country the export moves through. An EHC is needed to move animals from GB to NI because of the Northern Ireland Protocol, which came into force on 1 January 2021.

See the GOV.UK website for more details on [applying for an export health certificate](#).

Customs declarations will also be required, and there are three main systems:

- **[Customs Handling of Imports and Exports Freight \(CHIEF\) / National Export System \(NES\)](#)**. Together, CHIEF and NES form a database reporting system that enables records to be kept of the movement of goods by sea, air and land. It automatically checks for entry errors on inputs made as part of customs declarations by importers, exporters and other relevant parties. It is planned that CHIEF / NES will be phased out and replaced by the Customs Declaration Service
- **[Customs Declaration Service \(CDS\)](#)**. Similar to CHIEF / NES, this database will be the long-term replacement for the CHIEF / NES database. It is already in use for products moving between NI and GB

Two switchover phases are planned, one for export and one for import. From the dates given below declarations must be made using CDS instead of CHIEF / NES:

- import: 30 September 2022
- export: 31 March 2023

As the import date has passed, CDS must now be used for import declarations.

A journey log is a separate document that must accompany the consignment of farm livestock and unregistered horses (see below for more information on horses). This is in addition to all the other required documentation. Journey logs contain details such as the plan for the journey, place of departure, destination and transporter declaration.

Poultry export can only be undertaken by members of the [Poultry Health Scheme \(PHS\)](#), unless exporting fewer than 20 birds or hatching eggs to the EU or NI. Some non-EU countries require PHS membership; exporters should check the EHC for details.

Identification requirements for livestock destined for export

Sheep and goats

Sheep and goats are subject to the same rules.

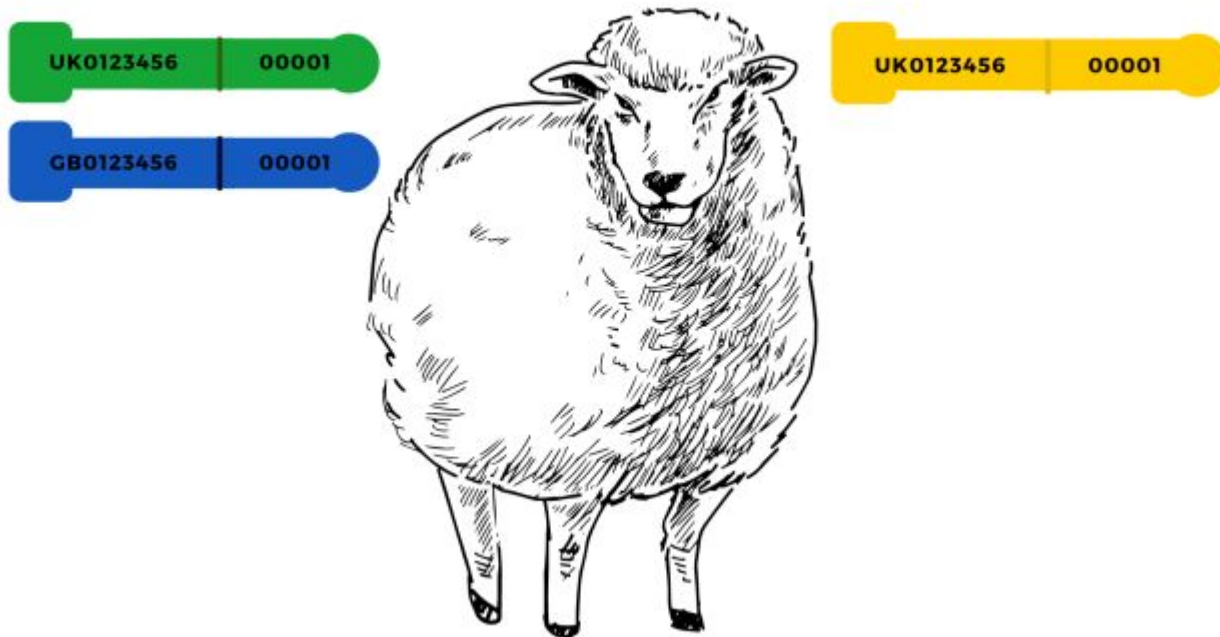
For animals that are already double tagged with UK tags (one of which must be the mandatory yellow electronic identification (EID) tag) you can add a third tag with the GB prefix.

For example:

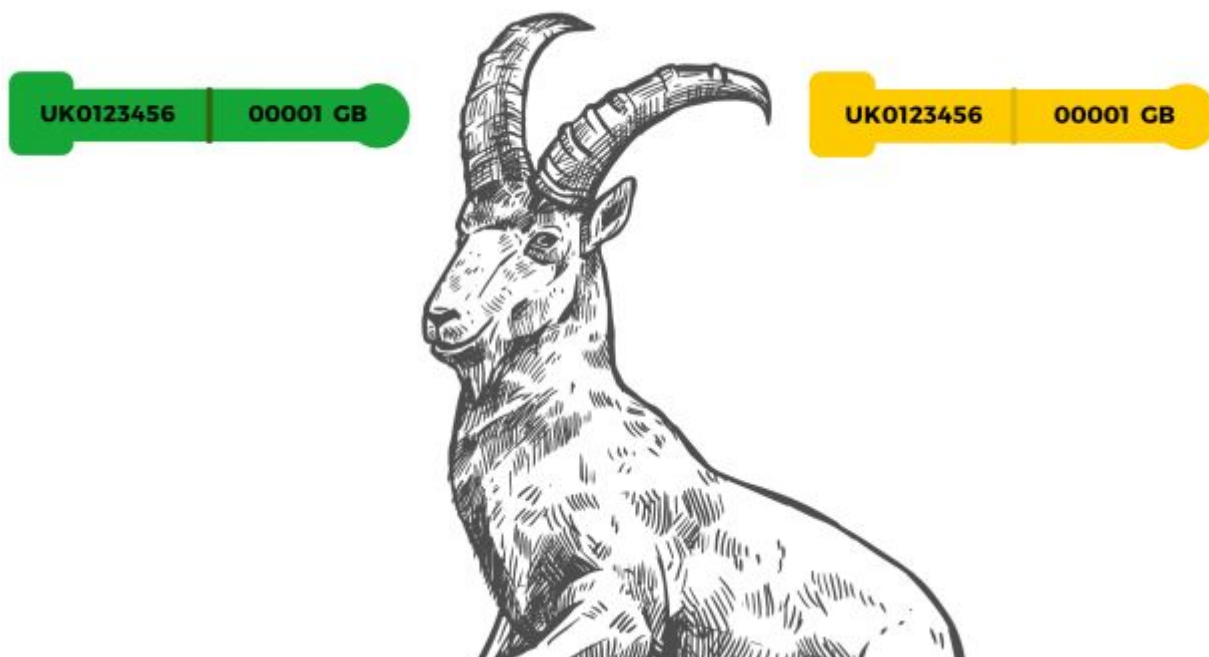
- existing tags: UK0123456 00001
- third tag: GB0123456 00001

Double-tagged animals should have one tag in each ear and the third can go in either. Third tags must not be yellow or red. Lost or damaged tags can be replaced with tags bearing the GB prefix.

Single-tagged animals must be re-identified using double tags before being exported or moved to the EU or NI.



For unidentified animals being tagged for the first time, you should use double UK tags with the GB suffix - for example, UK0123456 00001 GB. One of these must be the mandatory yellow EID tag.



All tags must include the animal's individual ID number.

Cattle

For those cattle that are already tagged with UK tags you can add a third 'management' tag that has a GB prefix followed by the animal's ID number. The third GB tag can be a plastic flag-style tag or button tag of any colour.

For example:

- existing tags: UK 111111 123456
- third tag: GB 111111 123456



For unidentified calves tagged for the first time, you can add double UK tags, one of which must have a GB suffix. These are primary and secondary tags, one in each ear. The secondary tag has the GB suffix.

For example:

- primary tag: UK 111111 123456
- secondary tag: UK 111111 123456 GB



All tags must include the animal's individual ID number. A freeze branded 'L' is required to be applied to the hind quarters of cattle exported for slaughter.

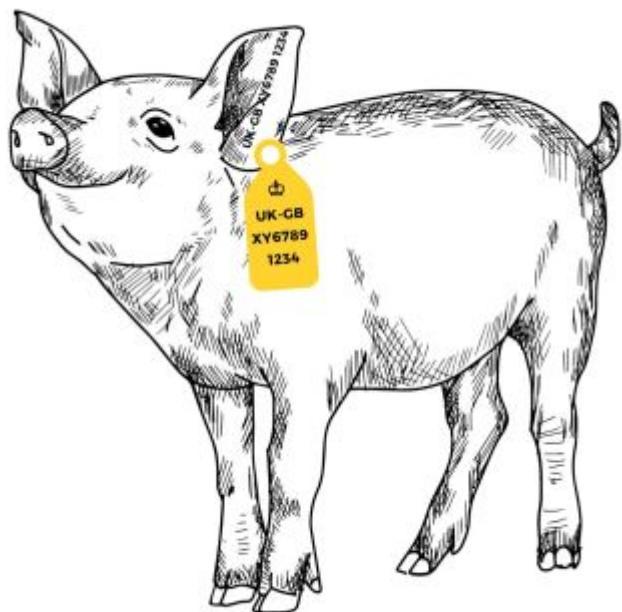
Pigs

Pigs must be identified with an ear tag or ear tattoo with a 'UK' prefix, followed by the herd mark of the departure holding and a unique individual identification number - for example, UK XY6789 1234.

Pigs moving to the EU or NI must be identified with an ear tag or tattoo with a 'UK-GB' prefix, followed by the herd mark of the departure holding and a unique individual identification number - for example, UK-GB XY6789 1234.

Exports of pigs must also be reported to bureau service provided by [AHDB Pork](#) within three days of the animal leaving the holding.

Full identification for the pig moved must be recorded as part of the animal movement record.



Horses

To export horses (except registered horses*) into the EU from GB, horse owners must have a Government-issued supplementary travel ID from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), as well as holding a valid passport. The supplementary travel ID, horse passport and export health certificate must remain with the animal during transport.

[*Registered domestic horses are those registered with a recognised breed society or companies like the British Horse Database at Weatherbys. 'Registered domestic Equidae' does not simply mean those with horse passports.]

For information on other export rules and documentation requirements, please refer to the GOV.UK website's guidance on [special rules for export horses and ponies](#).

Assembly centres

When equidae, bovine, ovine, caprine and porcine animals are to be exported they need to pass through an approved [assembly centre](#). The assembly centres arrange for the animals to be moved to the premises (usually a port or airport) from which they will leave the country.

Pets and non-native species, including zoo residents

You can no longer use a pet passport (for dogs, cats or ferrets) that has been issued in GB for travel to an EU country or NI. You can still use a pet passport issued in an EU country or NI. More information on the requirements when [travelling to an EU country or NI with your pet](#) is available on the GOV.UK website.

Different rules apply when travelling to a non-EU country with your pet, including the need for an [export health certificate](#). More information on the requirements for [travelling to a non-EU country with your pet](#) is available on the GOV.UK website.

Many zoo and lab animals are subject to the [Balai Directive](#), which covers what is required to move certain animals (and their germplasm) that are not traditional livestock.

Any animal listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) [requires a permit or certificate for export](#). This documentation is also required for movements between GB and NI.

Further information

More detailed information on [exporting or moving livestock and poultry](#) and [transiting animals and animal products through GB](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

Trading standards

For more information on the work of trading standards services - and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law - please see '[Trading standards: powers, enforcement and penalties](#)'.

In this update

Extra information added about pigs and horses.

Last reviewed / updated: November 2022

Key legislation

[Diseases of Poultry \(England\) Order 2003](#)

[Avian Influenza \(Preventive Measures\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[Cattle Identification Regulations 2007](#)

[Sheep and Goats \(Records, Identification and Movement\) \(England\) Order 2009](#)

[Pigs \(Records, Identification and Movement\) Order 2011](#)

[Non-Commercial Movement of Pet Animals Order 2011](#)

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links often only shows the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on changes to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

© 2025 Chartered Trading Standards Institute

Source URL:

<https://businesscompanion.owastaging.co.uk/en/quick-guides/animals-and-agriculture/exporting-animals>