



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 20/25

Changes introduced to cattle identification, registration, and reporting for cattle in England

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Purpose

This week, [Defra announced](#) that cattle identification in England will move to a mandatory Electronic ID (eID) for all new-born calves from 2027.

Background

The change is a major step forward in cattle identification and traceability and means that animals with eID eartags can be scanned when animals are moved and recorded, rather than requiring a visual read and manual input of the identification number. The Defra announcement provides detail of how eID eartags in England will use low frequency technology. This technology is already in place for sheep in England.

These changes will improve identification, registration and reporting in England, and greatly aid identification and traceability during disease outbreaks. These changes will align with wider system changes happening as part of the Livestock Information Transformation Programme (LITP) which includes a new Livestock Information Service (LIS) for cattle, replacing the current Cattle Tracing Service system.

Defra's announcement was informed by the UK Government's Cattle Identification Consultation in 2023, which showed strong industry support for the measures being introduced. This news [follows Scotland's announcement](#) to deliver ultra-high frequency (UHF) electronic identification for cows, earlier this year. Welsh Government has not yet announced a decision on their eID technology.

Action

There is no immediate change or action. Key stakeholders are working together to determine the most appropriate way to introduce eID eartags, allowing industry to prepare and to align with policy colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to ensure interoperability and consistency of traceability of all cattle across the UK.

Further Information

The full press release is available online: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/electronic-id-for-cattle-mandatory-in-step-forward-for-uk-biosecurity>

For queries relating to this Briefing Note please emailing LISP@apha.gov.uk.