

Cattle passport change as electronic reporting services prove popular

The cattle passport is set to become a one-page document in the Summer.

Rural affairs Ministers in England, Scotland and Wales have agreed a move to a single A4 sheet from August 2011. The change is being introduced as the electronic services for cattle reporting – CTS Online and the self-service phone system - prove increasingly popular. With more than 80 per cent of movements now being reported electronically, cattle farmers say it makes sense to produce a more environmentally-friendly and less expensive passport.

A number of alternatives for reporting movements are available, including the CTS Online website and the self service telephone line which is helpful for those without broadband internet access. Farm software packages can also report movements for farmers as they update their records. RPA is also working with livestock markets and abattoirs to encourage them to offer a reporting service for their clients.

Sue Mellor, BCMS Operations Manager said:

“We have seen a huge increase in the popularity of electronic cattle tracing services so it makes sense to produce a cattle passport which meets the needs of our farmers.

“We have worked with industry, including the NBA and NFU, to design a new passport which meets the needs of farmers. The new passport is cheaper to produce and will save £1m every year. We will also be able to send out more than one passport per envelope, which is something farmers have been asking us to do.”

Kim Haywood, Director of the National Beef Association said

“The industry has been challenging RPA to reduce costs for some time. We’re pleased to see they are making this common sense move to cut down on printing and postage costs. We’d encourage all farmers to save their own time and use the electronic and telephone services to report cattle births, movements and deaths.”

The new-style passport will contain all the same information as the cheque book style passport and there are no changes to the rules. It will not contain pre-paid movement cards. Cattle keepers will still need to report all movements to BCMS within three days.

Notes to editors

RPA is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is the single paying agency responsible for CAP schemes in England and is responsible for administering the Single Payment Scheme. Other key services include carrying out rural inspections and livestock tracing.

BCMS is part of the Rural Payments Agency. BCMS is the specialised cattle tracing organisation for Great Britain. Its functions are to:

- maintain a register of births, deaths and imports of cattle to be used for animal health and subsidy control purposes;
- issue cattle passports;
- record where individual cattle are;
- operate a dedicated Helpline and provide online facilities for delivering its services.

RPA is making changes to its website which is now found at rpa.defra.gov.uk

A redirection has been set up so if visitors do use the current web address they will be sent to the new one. It may be easier to bookmark the new site for the next visit. The site is being updated so it uses the same style template as the Defra website. This means the information on the RPA website will be presented in a slightly different way on the page but all the content is the same.

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