



New requirement for farmers to provide evidence of annual vet visits

To Livestock Producers,

From the 13 December 2023 all livestock farmers who produce livestock or livestock products that end up in the food chain and which may be exported to the European Union will require proof of an annual vet visit. The vet visit will review the farm and all its livestock species for signs of notifiable diseases and biosecurity risks. Our livestock industry has high volumes of EU trade of both fresh meat and other livestock produce (like 5th quarter), so we are working to support industry in meeting these criteria. Defra is supporting the veterinary profession in the smooth implementation of this measure.

Defra have worked with industry and can confirm that farms in certain farm assurance schemes don't need to do anything new. Being part of these schemes gives assurance of at least an annual vet visit. The current qualifying farm assurance schemes are:

- Red Tractor
- Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)
- Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Beef and Lamb Scheme (FAWL) / Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers Ltd (WLBP)
- Lion Quality
- Poultry Health Scheme

If you are not part of the above farm assurance schemes, please read the below for what you need to do.

What does this mean for me?

Vet Attestation visits should be combined with other routine vet visits wherever possible, so long as all livestock species on the farm are considered and the vet can assess the biosecurity risk in relation to notifiable disease. They will provide you with a visit receipt, showing that they have been there. You should both keep a copy of that receipt.

The vet will also give you a 'Vet Attestation Number' - known as a 'VAN' - that is valid for a year from date of visit. If your vet has been out to your farm within the past year and feels content their visit also covered the scope described above, you can ask them to create a VAN for your reference and share that with you. You will need to write this VAN on your Food Chain Information (FCI) document when you sell livestock destined for slaughter through a livestock market or to an abattoir.

If your farm has received or is due to receive a Defra funded visit under the Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway scheme, part of the visit will include the vet giving you a VAN number, which you will need to record on the FCI document.

We are updating the paper forms and creating some new IT options for the VAN to be recorded. For pig keepers we are building functionality into eAML2 so that you can add this VAN digitally. We will share further communications on these details in the months ahead.

- If you're not part of an assurance scheme listed above or have had or are about to have a visit under the Defra Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Scheme, speak to your vet to either: a) request a VAN backdated from your farm visit in the last year that you can write on your FCI document, or b) arrange a visit for your vet to provide this service and VAN so your livestock and products derived from your livestock can be exported after 13 December 2023.
- Contact your local livestock market or abattoir – they can advise you.

Our Q&A with more information is being circulated to all industry organisations and veterinary profession bodies.

October 2023