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FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION FOR CATTLE AND SHEEP – 1 JANUARY 2010

Legislation requiring slaughterhouse food business operators (FBOs) to ‘request, receive, check and act on food chain information’ for cattle and sheep comes into force on **1 January 2010**. This food chain information (FCI) is to accompany all cattle and sheep going to slaughter in the UK, its purpose being to assist the slaughterhouse operator to organise slaughter operations and assist the Official Veterinarian (OV) to determine the required inspection procedures.

While responsibility to determine the exact content and information required within FCI rests with the FBO the legislation places an obligation on the competent authority (in this case the FSA) to set out the minimum elements to be supplied to the slaughterhouse. NFU Scotland organised a series of meetings with key stakeholders to identify the basic key information that needed to be included as part of these minimum requirements and the possible formats for FCI to take. The outcome from these meetings were presented to the FSA and have largely been taken onboard.

Requirements

From 1 January 2010 declarations similar to the models shown below will need to accompany all animals going to slaughter, or to sale for slaughter. The declarations can be incorporated into the movement documents, or other documentation, already required. **Animals will not be accepted for slaughter without this information.**

In all cases it must be possible to correlate FCI with the animal(s) to which it relates and so FCI must contain information about the identification of the animal or batch of animals to enable that correlation. Livestock producers must ensure that they have sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) for which they provide FCI. This is particularly important for animals that have only been in the care of the producer for a relatively short period of time prior to slaughter.

The proposed declarations represent the minimum information that is required. Producers should be aware that FBOs may require further information above these requirements and should check with their FBO before dispatching animals.

Guidance on the model documents for cattle, sheep and goats

In order to be able to complete the declarations on the new food chain information requirements NFUS requested the FSA provide guidance in relation to the questions asked. The following guidance has been provided by the FSA and should be taken into account when answering the questions on the FCI model documents.

The holding is not under movement restriction for bovine Tuberculosis (TB)*

OR

The holding is under movement restriction for bovine Tuberculosis (TB)*

***delete one**

- *Reactors or inconclusive reactors to a TB test must be accompanied by specific movement licences.*

Cattle/sheep and goats on the holding are not under movement restrictions for animal disease or public health reasons (excluding a 13-day standstill).

- *Information about routine 13-day standstills is not required.*

Withdrawal periods have been observed for all veterinary medicines and other treatments administered to the animals while on this holding and previous holdings.

- *Animals that are within a withdrawal period for veterinary medicines administered to them must not be sent for slaughter for human consumption.*
- *For purchased animals, you must obtain information about unexpired medicine withdrawal periods from the seller to enable you to make this declaration*
- *All types of medicines must be considered, including dry cow tubes, pulse release wormers, pour-on medicines, injectable parasiticides and sheep dips.*

To the best of my knowledge the animals are not showing signs of any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat derived from them.

- *Slaughterhouse operators can only accept animals that are healthy, as far as they can judge. In this context, healthy means free from signs of a generalised disease or condition.*
- *Animals with a localised condition may be considered healthy and may be sent to a slaughterhouse. Localised conditions may cause contamination of meat and affect its safety, or may result in the exclusion of part of the carcass from the food chain.*
- *Additional FCI should be provided for cattle, lambs and young goats showing signs of conditions that may affect the safety of meat.*
- *Localised conditions are often present in adult sheep (ewes and rams) and goats - slaughterhouse operators routinely apply measures to protect the safety of meat to take account of this. Provided the sheep are otherwise healthy, you may make this declaration for adult sheep with localised conditions, and you are not required to provide additional FCI for such adult sheep.*
- *Additional FCI may be provided in the form of the enclosed model document.*
- *If you are in doubt about whether to provide information about a condition, or about the eligibility of animals for slaughter for human consumption, you should seek the advice of your veterinary surgeon or the slaughterhouse operator.*
- *Under animal welfare legislation, animals may not be transported if the transport is likely to cause unnecessary suffering.*

No analysis of samples taken from animals on the holding or other samples has shown that the animals in this consignment may have been exposed to any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat or to substances likely to result in residues in meat.

- *Any results of tests on animals, feed or the environment that have shown the presence on the holding of organisms transmissible to man through the consumption of meat (e.g. Salmonella) or contaminants (e.g. lead) should be reported as additional FCI.*
- *Information about historical events that are no longer relevant to the safety of meat from the animals in the consignment is not required.*
- *In any case of doubt you should seek the advice of your veterinary surgeon or the slaughterhouse operator.*

Model document for cattle

FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION FOR CATTLE consigned for slaughter for human consumption	
Holding Number	
Keeper's Name	
Address of Holding	
Telephone number	
E-mail address (optional)	
Individual identification mark(s) – or attach list	
Declaration	
<p>The holding is not under movement restriction for bovine Tuberculosis (TB)* OR The holding is under movement restriction for bovine Tuberculosis (TB)* *delete one</p> <p>Cattle on the holding are not under movement restrictions for other animal disease or public health reasons (excluding a 13-day standstill).</p> <p>Withdrawal periods have been observed for all veterinary medicines and other treatments administered to the animals while on this holding and previous holdings.</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge the animals are not showing signs of any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat derived from them.</p> <p>No analysis of samples taken from animals on the holding or other samples has shown that the animals in this consignment may have been exposed to any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat or to substances likely to result in residues in meat.</p>	
Keeper's signature	
Print name	
Date	
If the animals do not fulfil all the above statements, tick this box and provide additional information on an attached document**	

** See model document Annex C

Model document for sheep and goats

FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION FOR SHEEP AND GOATS consigned for slaughter for human consumption			
Holding Number			
Keeper's Name			
Address of Holding			
Telephone number			
E-mail address (optional)			
Identification marks – or attach list			
Number of animals	Identification mark	Number of animals	Identification mark
Declaration			
<p>Sheep and goats on the holding are not under movement restrictions for animal disease or public health reasons (excluding a 13-day standstill).</p> <p>Withdrawal periods have been observed for all veterinary medicines and other treatments administered to the animals while on this holding and previous holdings.</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge the animals are not showing signs of any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat derived from them.</p> <p>No analysis of samples taken from animals on the holding or other samples has shown that the animals in this consignment may have been exposed to any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat or to substances likely to result in residues in meat.</p>			
Keeper's signature			
Print name			
Date			
<p>If the animals do not fulfil all the above statements, tick this box and provide additional information on an attached document**</p>			

Model Document where additional information is required

ADDITIONAL FOOD CHAIN INFORMATION for Cattle, Sheep and Goats

Information about animals showing signs of a disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat derived from them.	
Identification of animals – or attach list	
Describe the disease or condition, or diagnosis if a veterinary surgeon has examined the animal(s)	
Withdrawal periods have been observed for all veterinary medicines and other treatments administered to the animals while on this holding and previous holdings.	

Details of holding movement restrictions for animal health or other reasons

Details of analysis of samples taken from animals on the holding or other samples that have shown that the animals in this consignment may have been exposed to any disease or condition that may affect the safety of meat, or to substances likely to result in residues in meat.

Keeper's signature	
Print name	
Date	

Outstanding concerns

Producers purchasing animals for further rearing before slaughter will need to obtain appropriate information about them to permit subsequent provision of FCI. Producers will need to be aware of some of the long withdrawal periods for some medicines, such as pulse-release anthelmintics and some topical ecto-parasiticides.

There has always been an obligation on producers to ensure that animals going for slaughter are outwith any withdrawal periods for any medications. However, the need to sign a declaration that withdrawal periods have been observed whilst under your own ownership and previous ownership(s) stands to make many producers nervous about signing the declaration.

The obligation will be placed on producers to determine any withdrawal periods that are applicable for any purchased animals that they wish to slaughter. This may ultimately lead to a need for store declarations of FCI.

Enforcement

FSA recognise concerns raised about enforcement of this requirement, especially in light of the additional challenges facing producers and slaughterhouses in coming to terms with new identification requirements for sheep in 2010. They have recognised that initially a 'flexible and practical' approach to enforcement will be necessary, using advice and education, whilst producers adapt to the new requirements.