



Veterinary attestation for exports of Products of Animal Origin to the EU Q&A guidance for industry and vets

Key points:

- Membership of certain assurance schemes or a Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway visit (Eng) meets the requirement – see [question 5](#)
 - A vet attestation visit can be combined with any farm visit if the criteria at [question 10](#) have been met
 - Record the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) on Food Chain Information (FCI) documentation – see [questions 7-9](#)
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Key links: *note there will be updates to these pages during October 2023*

- [Veterinary attestation for animal health visits \(previously veterinary declaration\)](#)
 - [Export or move food, drink and agricultural products - GOV.UK](#) - see the 'Health visits from vets' section:
 - [Farm assurance schemes: evidence of vet visits](#)
 - Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway (England): [Annual Health and Welfare Review: making it easier to apply, comply and export](#)
 - [AHDB - exports](#) – veterinary attestations section
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1. Where did this requirement come from?

In January 2022, the EU's Animal Health Regulation ([Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#)) introduced a new requirement for farms producing animals or products of animal origin or germinal products for export to the EU (or movements to Northern Ireland under the conditions of the Northern Ireland Protocol/Windsor Framework) to be subject to

“regular veterinary visits”. This is implemented by Article 8(e) of Delegated Regulation 2020/692.

“must receive regular animal health visits from a veterinarian for the purpose of the detection of, and information on, signs indicative of the occurrence of diseases, including those listed diseases referred to in Annex I relevant for the particular species and category of animal, germinal product or product of animal origin and emerging diseases.”

Official Veterinarians (OVs) have had to certify compliance with this new requirement since 15 January 2022.

2. Previously farmers were able to self-declare that a veterinary visit has taken place; what has changed?

A temporary measure - farmer’s attestation - was put in place to maintain trade to the EU. However, farmer self-attestation does not comply with RCVS requirements for certification. Therefore, in 2022, it was agreed that farmer attestations could only be used as evidence of compliance until 13 December 2023. From this date, evidence of the veterinary visits needs to be passed from the veterinarian on farm to the certifying OV at the end of the food chain.

3. How often do I need to have a visit?

The frequency of veterinary visits should be at least annual. This has been agreed by all four UK Chief Veterinary Officers.

4. I want to send animals to market or to an abattoir on and after 13 December 2023 and I haven’t yet had a visit, what can I do about it?

For products derived from your animals to be able to be exported to the EU, you must have had in the 12 months leading up to 13 December:

- a veterinary visit *or*
- be part of a recognised assurance scheme *or*
- a Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway visit (England only).

This means you need to plan ahead and arrange to have one of the three visits above in advance of the 13 December 2023 deadline.

Without evidence that your farm receives regular veterinary visits, the OV at the slaughterhouse may not be able to sign a Support Health Attestation (SHA) facilitating products derived from your animals to be exported to the EU.

5. Do I need proof that I have had a veterinary visit?

Yes, you will need evidence to prove that a veterinary visit has taken place on your farm. This requirement can be fulfilled in several ways:

a. The regular vet visit requirement is met if the farm is a member of a recognised assurance scheme. The schemes currently recognised in this context are:

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

If you are part of the assurance schemes above, there is no need for further evidence to be provided by you while you remain a member of the assurance scheme. The slaughterhouse operator will verify membership details, as they do currently. The assurance schemes operate their own audit and compliance processes which provide the level of confidence that assurance scheme members are meeting the [Article 8\(e\) Delegated Regulation 2020/692](#) requirements.

b. In England, if your farm has had an annual visit as part of the Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway scheme, then this visit will fulfil the requirements. You need to retain the review's receipt – which will have a space for the visiting vet to record the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) of the veterinary visit - from your visit as evidence. This is because OV's certifying goods for export do not have access to the AHWP database. More information can be found here: [Annual Health and Welfare Review: making it easier to apply, comply and export](#).

c. If the farms are not part of a recognised farm assurance scheme, or not receiving a Pathway vet visit (for England only), then a visit must be organised with a private veterinarian and an attestation is required from the veterinarian stating the visit has taken place. The responsibility of organising this visit lies with the farm business owner. The vet will leave a signed attestation form with you which will include the Vet Attestation Number (VAN).

6. Where can I get a copy of this attestation form?

The attestation form including guidance are online: [Attestation template ET242](#).

A form is also here however note that this page will be updated in October 2023: [Veterinary declaration for animal health visits - GOV.UK](#)

7. What do I do with the attestation?

The attestation form should be kept on farm with the farmer. One copy should be kept with the visit notes on the veterinary practice database. The Vet Attestation Number (VAN) from the attestation form or the Pathway receipt will need to be included in the FCI which goes to the market/abattoir. *See question 8 for further information.*

Market/slaughterhouse operators will verify this information and will make it available to the slaughterhouse OV. Vets issuing support health attestations and/or certificates in abattoirs and along the food chain, including the export certifying OV at the end of the chain, will be able to rely on this information and/or carry out their own verification checks.

In addition, the auditing system carried out by the competent authority will further assure the information along the export certification chain.

You don't have to send paper copies of the vet attestation form with each animal or batch of animals which go to market or to a slaughterhouse. It is the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) which 'travels' with the animals to markets, slaughterhouses or collections centres including multiple consignments. However, you should retain the copy of the vet attestation form and make it available on request for random verification checks.

8. What is the Vet Attestation Number (VAN)?

This will be created by the visiting vet for vet visits and those under the Defra Animal Health and Welfare Review Pathway scheme (England only). It will comprise of:

- The visiting vet's RCVS number
- County Parish Holding (CPH) number of the establishment visited
- date of validity of the declaration

For example: **1234567** [MRCVS number] **12/345/6789** [CPH number] **0624** [Valid to the end of June 2024].

The Vet Attestation Number (VAN) should be recorded on FCI documentation when an animal or animals move to market or to a slaughterhouse.

9. Isn't there a digital solution using the Livestock Information Service (LIS) in England or ScotEID or EID Cymru?

The aim is to enable the visiting vet to record their vet attestation on LIS against your CPH number, with the sheep platform (England) being updated from December 2023, or ScotEID for all species in Scotland.

The eAML2 movement reporting system for pigs will have a field for the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) to be recorded.

The table below sets out the different ways of providing the information through the export food chain:

Species: all

<p>Using FCI documentation</p> <p>Timeframe: from now if vet visits are taking place</p>	<p>The Vet Attestation Number (VAN) can be recorded on existing FCI documentation for different species.</p> <p>For <u>sheep</u>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the VAN can be recorded in the existing 'Additional FCI' section – the final box – of the LIS-1 sheep and goat movement document. See Annex 2 (screenshot). We aim to amend the LIS-1 (sheep movement document) to have a dedicated box for the VAN for the next print run and online - timeframe TBC.
<p>Using ScotEID for Scottish holdings</p> <p>Timeframe: TBC</p>	<p>Scottish Government officials are working together with ScotEID to develop a digital solution to evidence annual veterinary visits. Further details will be provided in due course.</p> <p>The FCI documentation route can be used where e.g. vets do not have access to ScotEID.</p>
<p>Species: pigs</p>	
<p>eAML2: fully digitalised end-to-end system (England & Wales)</p> <p>Timeframe: December 2023</p>	<p>Keeper enters the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) on eAML2 movement document that they create online.</p> <p>Keeper presents confirmation of attestation when checking in pigs for market or abattoir.</p>
<p>Species: sheep</p>	
<p>LIS sheep platform (England)</p> <p>Timeframe: December 2023</p>	<p>Adding functionality to the existing sheep platform for RCVS registered visiting vet to record the attestation.</p> <p>Abattoirs will be able to view the attestation, searching by CPH or ear tag number.</p> <p>The FCI documentation route can be used where e.g. vets do not have access to the LIS sheep platform.</p>
<p>EID Cymru sheep platform (Wales)</p> <p>Timeframe: TBC</p>	<p>Welsh Government are exploring digital solutions for the longer term with EID Cymru.</p> <p>The FCI documentation route can be used.</p>

10. What will the visit cover?

These visits are in place for the purpose of disease prevention, the detection of biosecurity risks and the issuing of veterinary advice where necessary. It is important to note that:

- this does not need to be the sole purpose of the visit and can be combined with other visits covering routine work, providing that all species present at the premises are considered.
- the vet visit attestation is confirming the farm has regular vet visits and is under veterinary supervision. If there is suspicion or confirmation of a notifiable/reportable disease, or other animal health or welfare issues are identified, these will be addressed through existing processes, and export certification will still be protected. Therefore, the visiting veterinarian, after issuing the relevant advice can confirm that the farm is under regular veterinary supervision, and a VAN *can* be issued.
- the approach of the annual vet visit is non-prescriptive: the fundamental role of the farm vet is to assess the biosecurity risk on the premises, e.g. it is not necessary to inspect every animal or to take any samples. An example would be a vet attending a premises to complete a TB test. As part of this visit, they could expand the scope of this visit and will assess and advise on biosecurity even though it is not the primary purpose of the visit.

To meet the requirements of this attestation, visits to establishments must be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon, who should:

- incorporate assessments of animal health at an establishment level (all animals under the same CPH number) – this should cover on-site inspection and visualisation only. Examination of individual animals, sampling and laboratory testing is not required.
- include the provision of advice to the farmer, as seen fit by the veterinary surgeon, on any biosecurity concerns there may be as relevant for the type of establishment and the species and categories of kept animals on the establishment. Any advice given is not recorded on the attestation. It is important to note that this does not need to be the sole purpose of the visit and can be combined with other visits covering routine work, providing that all relevant species present at the premises are considered.
- consider the associated diseases and risks of the species present. Multiple species on one site can be subject to one veterinary attestation if the biosecurity issues for all species on that site are addressed.

Associated land and temporary CPHs:

Establishments with more than one site under the same CPH number will need to have all sites assessed for the relevant species to enable the vet to issue the attestation for the whole CPH number. However, please note:

- A VAN can be issued if the visiting vet is confident that the premises and the relevant areas or locations related to that premise is/are subject to regular veterinary visits or are within the routine control of the farm vet.
- If the last holding prior to movement to a slaughter market or abattoir is from a temporary CPH, the requirement has been met if the main CPH in the movement chain has had a vet visit and a VAN issued.

Further guidance:

- The [Contingency plan for exotic notifiable diseases of animals in England](#) contains guidance on the determination of the epidemiological situation in the zone or region of the establishment for the listed diseases referred to in Annex I to Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/692.
- The [Notifiable diseases in animals](#) has guidance on diseases notifiable and reportable in GB relevant to the species present on the establishment.

11. Do I need two vet visit attestations if I keep sheep and cattle?

Multiple species on one site can be subject to one veterinary attestation if the biosecurity issues for all species on that site are assessed during the vet visit.

12. Would the visit assess if the animals are fit for slaughter or for export?

No. The controls already in place such as the provision of food chain information, ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection at the slaughterhouse, and other official controls and verifications along the supply chain will continue to assess the suitability of the animals/products for slaughter/export.

13. If I had a vet visit in the last 12 months, and have a vet declaration, can this be recorded by the vet on the LIS sheep system (England), the pig eAML2 system (England and Wales) or ScotEID when the additional functionality is introduced?

For other species, if I already have a vet declaration, can the vet issue the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) retrospectively so it can be added to the FCI?

It is understandable that vet visits will be carried out ahead of 13 December 2023. If this is the case, the visiting vet can record the visit onto the sheep system (LIS England), or ScotEID once the additional functionality is introduced in December.

For pigs, once your vet has issued the VAN, you can then enter it into the eAML2 system (England and Wales) once the functionality is introduced in December.

For other species, or when the vet cannot access the LIS sheep system, the vet can issue the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) retrospectively and the VAN can be added to the FCI documentation.

14. What if I do not know the final destination of the meat or products from my animals?

It is understandable that a farm owner may not be certain if the animals/derived animal products will be exported to the EU. Even when meat from animals is not intended for export to the EU, there is a high likelihood that some of the animal products or by-products derived from them may be included in exports to the EU. Therefore, we strongly recommend that all farm businesses ensure a veterinary visit has taken place at their farm.

15. What if I sell my animals through a slaughter market?

If you sell your animals through a market without knowing the abattoirs where they will be slaughtered, ensure the market has a record of the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) for inclusion in their records. This can be provided through the FCI documentation.

16. Is it the holding of birth or the last holding of residence which requires the veterinary visit?

It is the last holding of residence.

17. Do I need to send the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) with every lot of animals sent to slaughter?

Yes: the Vet Attestation Number should be included in FCI documents to facilitate their acceptance at markets and slaughterhouses and to enable checks to be made. The slaughterhouses will verify the FCI and will retain the information and present it to the slaughterhouse OV.

It remains the farm business' responsibility to ensure that a vet visit is taking place at least annually and the new VAN is added on the FCIs.

The slaughterhouses will be able to view the attestation information on the LIS sheep platform (England) or ScotEID from December 2023, where the visiting vet has recorded the information.

18. How will the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) travel with batch animals as they are split and re-batched at markets prior to onward movement to slaughterhouses?

If batches of animals from different farms are grouped together at the market into a new larger batch to be sent for slaughter, the VAN from different batches will be collated by the market and be added to the new FCI documentation created at the market. This documentation would travel with the animals, enabling the slaughterhouse operators to assess if the animals have moved from an establishment that received a veterinary visit.

19. What about 5th quarter products?

Certificates for some 5th quarter products such as hides do not have the requirement for a veterinary visit and therefore a veterinary attestation is not needed for these products. However, other products coming from the same animal(s) might still be exported to the EU therefore we recommend farmers ensure that a veterinary visit has taken place at their farm.

20. What about Wales – what are the plans?

In Wales, the approach at questions 7 and 8 above will apply – record the Vet Attestation Number on FCI documentation when animal/s move to market or slaughterhouse. The Welsh Government is exploring digital solutions for the longer term. The Deputy CVO (Wales) is engaging with vet partners.

Annex 1 – glossary

<u>VAN</u>	<u>Vet Attestation Number</u>
eAML2	System for pig movement recording (England & Wales): link
FBO	Food Business Operator
FCI	Food Chain Information
LIS	System for sheep movement recording (England): link
LIS-1	Sheep movement document: link
OV	Official Veterinarian
POAO	Products of animal origin
RCVS	Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS: Member of RCVS)
SHA	Support Health Attestation (used by vets in slaughterhouses to support the export certification of products)

Annex 2 – where to put the VAN in the existing LIS-1 sheep movement document: bottom of page 2, final row of the ‘Additional FCI’ box in the screenshot below. *The LIS-1 will be updated to have a dedicated VAN box.*

2. All fields on the movement document must be completed to comply with paragraph 1 above.
3. It is the CPH of the premises from which the animals are departing, and to which they are travelling, that must be recorded on the form. The address must accurately reflect where the animals are moving from and travelling to.
4. This document serves as a single movement reporting document. Each stage of a multiple move must be completed on a separate movement reporting document.
5. Where Section 1 has not been completed by the keeper at the departure holding, these details must not be completed

7. Copies of this form can be found at www.livestockinformation.org.uk or available from markets, abattoirs, and some Local Authorities.
8. The Keeper at the destination holding must keep a copy of this movement document for 3 years.
9. Expected duration of journey is from the time the first animal is loaded at the place of departure until the time the last animal is unloaded at the place of destination including any rest times or stops for any other purpose en route.
10. Food Chain Information is described in EC Regulation 853/2004, Annex II, Section III.

This document may be retained by keepers as an alternative to completing records of OFF movements in their holding registers.

Food Chain Information (FCI)

- Sheep and goats on the holding are not under movement restrictions for animal disease or public health reasons (excluding any 6 day standstill).
- Withdrawal periods have been observed for all veterinary medicines and other treatments administered to the animals while on this holding and previous holdings
- 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
- 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.

Additional FCI

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

DATA PROTECTION
The Data Protection Statement may be found at
www.livestockinformation.org.uk/privacy

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