

Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Service

Keeping Sheep Guidance Note

Whether you are a farmer, smallholder or just a pet sheep keeper you should be aware that there are certain legal obligations that you need to fulfil in order to comply with the law. Remember that laws surrounding your animals have been created to protect their health and welfare but also to prevent and control the spread of animal-borne diseases.

Registration

Before taking ownership of sheep, you must first register with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). You will be allocated a CPH number for your premises/land; this number is required in any movement of farm animals to or from your land.

Once you have a CPH number, you must now register your premises for the keeping of sheep by contacting the Animal Health and Veterinary Laboratory Agency. You will be given a Flock Mark, which is a unique number for you to identify your sheep.

If livestock are entering the food chain at any point, it is a requirement that you must register your feed usage. Registration is undertaken by the local authority, and can be done by contacting your Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health office.

Movements

All movements of sheep usually take place under the conditions of General Licence and should be by law recorded and reported by the keeper.

When moving sheep to another premise/land, to market or abattoir, you need to have an Animal Movement Licence document (AML1). This form records the departure and destination CPH and transportation details of the movement. By law this licence must accompany the animals during transport.

Within 3 days of the movement, a copy of the licence must be sent by the destination holding to their local authority. If buying from a market, make sure to get a copy as not all markets will send licences on your behalf.

Each movement of sheep onto the premise triggers a **movement standstill** which means that no livestock kept at that premise can be moved for the minimum period of full 6 days (20 days for pigs)

There is an exemption to this requirement, in respect of movements direct to an abattoir, or market designated as a slaughter market. These movements can be made when your premises is under the standstill period.

Identification

Sheep must be tagged within 9 months of birth (6 months if kept housed overnight) or before they leave their holding of birth, whichever is sooner.

For any sheep that will be kept over the age of 12 months, it is a requirement for the animal to be double tagged, with one of the tags being an electronic tag (EID).

For lambs intended for slaughter before 12 months of age, it is permissible for identification to be either a single slaughter non-EID tag, or a single EID batch tag. In the event of moving an animal to a market, it is advisable to check with the market first, to ensure acceptable identification.

Any colour tag may be used other than the reserved ones (yellow – electronic, black – bolus, red – replacement)

A list of Defra Approved identification tag suppliers is available on the AHVLA website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla-en/>

Records

Copy of movement documents must be kept for 3 years. A record of all movements on or off of your premises must be kept, either electronically or on paper. Deaths must be recorded within 36 hours.

On 1st December each year, an inventory of the number of sheep on your holding must be taken.

Any medicine or treatment given to your sheep must be recorded, either electronically or in a record book.

For further advice, record books or documentation call Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health Team (see below).

Health & Welfare

Under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, you have a duty to care for your animals and to ensure that all their needs are being met.

The basic set of needs for every animal includes the need for:

- suitable living and housing environment,
- suitable diet,
- exhibition of normal behaviour patterns and
- protection from any type of suffering including fear, pain, injury and disease.

Housing

An ideal accommodation involves warm, dry and straw-bedded housing in cold temperatures and a shelter from the sun in hot weather.

You need to ensure that materials used for construction of accommodation are not harmful to the animal and are designed to be thoroughly **cleaned and disinfected**.

For detailed information please refer to the Code of Recommendations for the Welfare of Livestock – Sheep available from your Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health or AHVLA website.

Feed

Your animals shall be fed a wholesome diet which is appropriate to their age and species and which is fed to them in sufficient quantity to maintain them in good health and to satisfy their nutritional needs and to promote a positive state of well-being.

The appropriate feed can be purchased from your local agricultural merchants. Once you purchased the feed you must ensure that it is appropriately stored in a clean and dry environment, where no pests or wild birds have access to it; if there is more than one type of feed in the area it needs to be segregated so the feeds do not mix.

If you intend to sell your sheep for human consumption you will also have register under the **Feed Hygiene Regulations** with Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health.

Biosecurity

Sheep and other farm animals carry high risk of diseases that may be harmful not only for the infected animal but the entire herd, neighbouring herds and even the entire sheep industry.

The infection can be easily spread by contaminated surfaces (like clothing, hands, equipment) or by direct contact to fallen stock or with other infected animals, including dogs, cats and stray foxes which may carry infection without being infected. Biosecurity measures can minimise the risk of an outbreak and spread of the disease. The main measures you can take to protect your sheep and livestock belonging to others are:

- Clean and disinfect all surfaces that came into contact with the animals or their by-products – clothing, footwear, equipment, and vehicles.
- Use **defra approved** disinfectant (further details available on request)
- Always wash your hands after handling sheep
- Restrict visitor's access to the sheep and if they have been in contact with the animals make sure they follow hygienic and cleansing and disinfection routine described above
- Keep different groups of sheep separately

Transport

When transporting your sheep ensure that they are not at risk of injury or unnecessary suffering.

You need to ensure that the animals are fit to travel before transporting. The transport vehicle should be designed and constructed to ensure safety of animals during the journey, ideally designed for transport of livestock. You will need to

thoroughly **cleanse and disinfect** your vehicle with Defra approved disinfectant within 24 hours of the movement and before transporting other animals.

Remember that if you are transporting sheep as a part of commercial activity which aims at achieving direct or indirect financial gain and your income source exceeds expenses of hobby you will have to comply with the EU Regulations 1/2005 introduced on 5th of January 2007.

Disposal of Fallen Stock

Sheep that died from natural causes or disease or that have been killed on premise for reasons other than human consumption are classified as fallen stock and need to be disposed of in appropriate manner using an approved processor (Your local AHVLA will provide you with a list).

Remember – burying or burning carcasses or animal-by-products is illegal.

The carcasses/ animal by-products should be disposed of without 'undue delay', usually within 24 hours.

Whilst waiting for the collectors ensure that no other animal has got access to the carcass – remove it to a safe location and cover it with a sheet of tarpaulin or similar material.

If you suspect that your sheep has died of a notifiable disease immediately contact your Local Animal Health Office.

If in any doubts, contact Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health Team.

Residential Nuisance & Waste Disposal

Farm animals may produce noise, odours, troublesome animal waste and may cause pest infestations.

If you live in a residential area you should ensure that your animals will not cause a nuisance to other residents.

The following questions should be answered before you decide to keep livestock:

- Is your property suitable for keeping farm animals? (Have you got sufficient space to house the animals and deal with waste and manure?)
- If you rent a property do you need permission from your Housing Association or landlord?
- Do you need permission from your Planning Department for building or utilising any farming structures?
- Have you discussed keeping farm animals with your neighbours to address any concerns?

Good husbandry techniques may minimise residential nuisance:

- Regular disposal of the used bedding and manure can eliminate some of the odour
- Keeping feed locked away preventing access of wild animals and pests and disposal of unused, stale feed and feed spillage may help in help you to protect the flock and your premise from vermin.

Your **Local Authority's Environmental Health Department** will deal with any complaints about odour, noise pollution or pest infestations. Contact them with any concerns or if you need advice and guidance on minimising the risk of nuisance.

Remember that some animal waste may be classified as animal-by-products and may need to be disposed of in an appropriate manner – on animal waste disposal contact your Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Animal Health Team.

Useful Contacts

Advice

For free and impartial advice on animal health and welfare and relevant legislation, free leaflets, movement documents, record books, or to report animal health & welfare complaints contact:

Email: tslicensing@warwickshire.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/animalhealthadvice>

For Advice on pest infestations, animal related residential nuisance complaints and for approval of egg packing and grading centres contact the Environmental Health Department of your local Borough or District Council area.

Registration / Movement Reporting

Rural Payments Agency (RPA)

Telephone: 0845 6037777

Website: www.rpa.gov.uk

(CPH numbers, single payment scheme)

Animal Health & Veterinary Laboratory Agency (AHVLA)

Telephone: 01785 231900

Website: <http://animalhealth.defra.gov.uk>

(Registering livestock, egg marketing, special licences, exports)

This leaflet is a brief summary of the law. It is not an authoritative document on the law and is only intended for guidance. For further advice, please contact Warwickshire Trading Standards.

Publication Date: July 2017

Contact us:

*Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards Service, Old Budbrooke Road,
Warwick, CV35 7DP*

Telephone (reception): 01926 414040

Email: tradingstandards@warwickshire.gov.uk

Web: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Twitter: www.twitter.com/warkstss