

# **Veterinary Attestations - FAQs for livestock markets and producers**

## **Effective from 13th December 2023**

### **1. What's changing?**

Changes in EU legislation, as from 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, will require all producers selling livestock for slaughter to have had an annual on-farm veterinary visit to allow their animals, and/or part of any animal, to be exported out of the UK.

Up until now, a farmer declaration has satisfied the requirements, however from 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, producers will require a Veterinary Attestation. This will certify that an annual on-farm visit has taken place to verify the absence of notifiable diseases and provide general advice on farm biosecurity, meeting EU requirements.

The Vet will provide the producer with a unique Veterinary Attestation Number, known as a "VAN" (see question 2) within their certificate.

Templates of the Veterinary Attestation Certificate can be found [here](#).

## 2. What is the “VAN” number?

The Veterinary Attestation Number, known as “VAN”, is a unique reference number provided by Vets to producers within their Veterinary Attestation certificate to certify that an annual on-farm visit has taken place. A VAN number is valid for 12 months. This information will need to be provided to livestock markets, and onwards to buyers, for livestock sold for slaughter.

The VAN number is made up of 20 digits as follows, including the Vets RCVS number, the CPH number the VAN corresponds to, and expiry date.

For example:

**1234567-12/345/6789-0624**

[MRCVS number]-[CPH number]-[Valid to the end of June 2024].

### 3. What will the process be for producers when selling through livestock markets?

- a. The vendor will provide the auctioneers with their VAN prior to, or on arrival at the market.

For **sheep**, this will be included on the official sheep movement form.

An updated official sheep movement form is being circulated in due course. In the meantime, vendors may include the VAN number within the FCI declaration of the current official sheep movement form.

For **cattle**, this should be provided to the market on the market entry form.

For **pigs**, the digital eAML2 form has been updated to accommodate the VAN number.

*N.B If vendors are members of a qualifying assurance scheme (see question 4), a VAN number is not required.*

- b. The auctioneers will upload the vendors VAN number into their market system. Any livestock that are not accompanied by a VAN number or evidence of membership of a qualifying assurance scheme will be announced at point of sale.
- c. Following sale, the relevant VAN/Farm Assurance number for each lot will be provided to the purchaser on their sales invoice which can then be provided to the abattoir Vet, if/when requested.

#### **4. Does membership of an assurance scheme, or other, automatically qualify?**

Yes. Farms that are part of qualifying assurance schemes do not need to complete the veterinary declaration. Membership of these farm assurance schemes is accepted as evidence that the premises of origin meet the requirement for regular health visits from a vet. The qualifying schemes are:

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

In addition, membership of the Animal Health & Welfare Pathway (AHWP) (England only) will qualify. Members of the AHWP will be provided with a VAN by their Vet.

#### **5. Is a VAN number required for all livestock?**

No. A VAN is only required for livestock sold for slaughter, from the consigning holding.

## **6. Does a VAN number cover more than one holding?**

The VAN number issued by the vet on the Veterinary Attestation certificate will include the producer's main holding number (see question 2). However, the VAN number provided to the producer covers all holdings that the producer has business connections to.

If livestock are consigned to the market off a temporary holding, or other, the main farm holding number should be used within the VAN number provided to the market.

## **7. Is there a minimum residency period for the last holding?**

The requirement for a VAN number is applicable only to the last holding of residence, regardless of the length of time livestock have spent on the last holding.

## **8. What happens if a vendor does not have a VAN or assurance scheme membership after 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023?**

Any farmers unable to provide a Veterinary Attestation or membership of a qualifying assurance scheme will be identified as such and announced at point of sale.

Without evidence that a farm receives regular veterinary visits, the Official Veterinarian 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.

## **9. Will there be a digital solution?**

Yes, in time. DEFRA and EID Cymru are working on creating a digital solution within the Livestock Information Service for all species.

## **9. What do producers need to do to prepare for the changes?**

Prior to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023, livestock producers should arrange a veterinary visit on farm for completion of the Veterinary Attestation Certificate. This visit can coincide with any other routine on-farm veterinary visit, or Animal Health & Welfare Pathway Review (England only).

In some cases, veterinarians may be able to provide a retrospective Veterinary Attestation Certificate if a recent on-farm visit has taken place that complies with the requirements of the Veterinary Attestation.

Alternatively, producers must provide evidence of a qualifying assurance scheme (see question 4).

## **11. How has the LAA represented the interests of LAA members and British farmers on this matter?**

The LAA has attended regular meetings with DEFRA and Welsh Government representing the interests of LAA member livestock markets and British farmers. Whilst all of industry fought hard to oppose Veterinary Attestations, UK Government and RCVS have chosen to make this a requirement to satisfy EU legislation.

The LAA has demonstrated the operations of, and integral role of, livestock markets within the supply chain and been successful in moving UK government away from proposed burdensome paper-based solutions, ensuring a solution for non-assured farmers, and pushed government for decisions ahead of a fast-approaching implementation deadline.

The LAA will continue to represent LAA members and British farmers on this matter. **If you have further questions, please your local market/auctioneer.**