



THE LIVESTOCK AUCTIONEERS' ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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Veterinary Attestations – Effective 13th December 2023 Guidance for LAA Member Livestock Markets

1. What's changing?

Changes in EU legislation, as from 13th 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 13th 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 section 2) within their certificate. Templates 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 (see section 3).

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 in 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 section 5), a VAN number is not required.

- b. The auctioneers upload the vendors VAN number into the market back-office system. This would only need to happen the first time the vendor sells at the market. The market back-office system recognises the expiry date of the VAN (valid for 12 months) and this would be stored within the system.
- c. At point of sale, auctioneers should make buyers aware if livestock will not qualify for export (if a valid VAN number or evidence of membership of a qualifying assurance scheme has not been presented)
- d. Following sale, the relevant VAN/Farm Assurance number will be printed next to each lot on the purchaser's sales invoice which can be provided to the abattoir Vet, if/when requested. In addition, the VAN number should also be printed on the vendors sales statement for reference.

4. Is our back-office market system prepared for the changes?

Yes, both Newline & TGL (MartEye) are preparing their systems to accommodate the changes and will be in touch with markets in due course.

5. 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.

6. Is a VAN number required for all livestock?

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

Whilst a VAN is not required for store or breeding stock, if buyers within store sales are purchasing livestock to be sent directly to slaughter, VAN numbers will be required for those lots/consignments purchased from a store sale.

7. Does a VAN number cover more than one holding?

The VAN number issued by the vet on the Veterinary Attestation certificate will include the producers main holding number (see section 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.

8. 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.

9. Do livestock consigned from Ireland, or other non-GB holding of origin, require a VAN number?

The LAA continues to discuss with DEFRA, Welsh Government (WG) and RCVS the requirements for livestock from Ireland, or other non-GB holding of origin, being sold for slaughter in the UK.

Confirmation is on-going and will be provided to members by the LAA in due course.

10. What happens if a vendor does not have a VAN or assurance scheme membership after 13th December 2023?

DEFRA, WG and the RCVS have set a firm implementation date of 13th December 2023. However, to ensure trade is not disrupted, the LAA continues to discuss with DEFRA, WG & RCVS a "soft touch" approach for a period of time, during which farmer declarations could be accepted. Confirmation will be disseminated to members as soon as a decision is agreed.

Any farmers unable to provide a declaration at all, should be identified as such and announced at point of sale.

11. 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.

12. What do livestock markets need to do to prepare for the changes?

Encourage all vendors to prepare for the changes by having a Vet visit their farm prior to 13th December 2023. Alternatively, a Vet can provide vendors with a retrospective Veterinary Attestation if a recent on-farm visit has taken place that satisfies the requirements.

Ensure the market back-office system, and internal operations are prepared.

13. How has the LAA represented the interests of LAA members on this matter?

The LAA has attended regular meetings with DEFRA and Welsh Government representing LAA members. 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 on this matter.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Chris/Zanna.