



Cattle Identification Inspections

Information Leaflet

Introduction – why have cattle identification inspections?

The Isle of Man has a computerised Bovine Identification and Tracing System (BITS). The system will benefit everyone with an interest in the cattle industry – farmers, dealers, auctioneers, abattoir operators, retailers and consumers.

To be effective, BITS has to be understood by farmers and everyone must follow the rules. There is a system of inspections – known as Cattle Identification Inspections (CIIs) – to check that the rules are being followed.

This leaflet is about those cattle identification inspections. It explains what farmers and Inspecting Officers are required to do. It also explains what will happen if problems or mistakes are found. Finally, it explains what further action may need to be taken if problems are found.

1. What is the purpose of Cattle Identification Inspections (CII)?

The purpose of these inspections is to examine cattle, their eartags, passports and the farm records to check that all cattle identification requirements are being met. Farm records can be in computer form or movement record books.

Inspections will not normally be announced more than 48 hours in advance. We appreciate that this may be inconvenient, but we are obliged not to give notice and are grateful for your co-operation during the inspection.

2. What will the inspector do?

The inspector will check **ALL** animals on your holding (whether born on your holding or bought in). He/she will also check imported animals. The Inspector will additionally check a sample of farm records to verify dates of birth and dam identities.

The inspector will check:

Farm records to determine which animals are present on the holding;

That births, movements and deaths have been correctly recorded;

That all animals are correctly tagged, and match the animal's passport;

That all animals are present and correct;

That deadlines for identifying cattle and keeping records have been met;

That all passports for animals disposed of have been passed on to the new owner or returned to the Cattle Passport centre.

3. What is the Keeper expected to do?

An inspector has the right to visit farms to check that the rules for cattle identification and record keeping are understood and are being followed. You will need to let the inspector see on request, all required documentation and records (see section 4). You should co-operate fully to ensure that the inspector is able to undertake a safe inspection of animals. Suitable handling facilities and people to assist with the animals must be provided.

At the end of the inspection you will be asked to sign a report form and given the opportunity to make any comments. A copy of this form will be sent to you.

4. What farm records are required?

The law requires you to keep records of all cattle births, movements and deaths, including details of:

Eartag number; Date of birth; Sex; Breed; Dam identity;

Date of movements on and off your holding; Details of location where the animal has moved to/from;

These records **must** be kept up-to-date and held for a period of ten years.

5. How long will the inspection take?

This depends on the size of your holding, the number of cattle involved and the quality of your record keeping. Records that are set out clearly and accurately will significantly reduce the inspection time. The aim will be to carry out the inspection quickly and efficiently with the minimum disruption.

6. How are farms selected for inspection?

Farms are selected on a basis of 'risk analysis'.

You are likely to be inspected more frequently if problems have been found during a previous inspection. The number of farms to be visited each year depends in part how well the rules for cattle identification and record keeping are being followed across the Island. Good practice will result in fewer inspections.

7. What will happen if an inspector finds problems?

The inspecting officer will send a copy of the report form to the Cattle Passport Centre who will consider the findings and decide what further action is needed. If any errors or faults are found with an animal's identification or with the supporting paperwork, they will need to be corrected. If any passports are found to be incorrect or wrongly in your possession, the inspector will collect them and forward them to the Cattle Passport Centre for correction or further attention. You will not be able to move any animal whose passport has been sent to the Cattle Passport Centre until the passport comes back to you.

8. Are the results of the inspections made public?

There is an annual cycle of inspections. Results will be produced about the number of farms visited each year and how well the rules are being followed. These will be made public. They have to be sent to the European Commission and other Member States. Individual results will not be identified in these reports.

9. Follow up action that may be necessary if errors are found

If errors are found during the inspection, it may be necessary to impose a movement restriction on some or all of your cattle. This means that you will not be allowed to move the animal(s) on or off your holding until the restriction is lifted. Where many errors are found, the movement restriction may extend to your entire herd. The Cattle Passport Centre will need to be satisfied that the faults and errors identified have been put right before the movement restriction can be lifted in part or in full. In most cases this will require a follow-up inspection.

10. Penalties

Most farmers follow the rules for identification and record keeping. They will have no problems during the Cattle Identification Inspection.

There are some who make genuine mistakes or who are confused about the rules to be followed. The Cattle Passport Centre will help you understand what you need to do. A further inspection may be carried out to see that you have understood and are following the rules.

A small minority of people may deliberately seek to break the rules. They may be looking to obtain money to which they are not entitled. They may be trying to suggest that the animal's history is different to its actual history. These farmers if left unchecked would undermine the Bovine Identification and Tracing System and all the efforts of the majority. The Department may seek to prosecute any producer believed to be deliberately breaking the rules. If the court finds that a producer is guilty of an offence they may impose severe penalties. In the worst cases, the Court can also impose prison sentences.

CII penalties are also noted under the Countryside Care Scheme (CCS). Penalties can be incurred under CCS following a CII.