



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Beef labelling guide
for people and organisations selling beef
in Scotland

**Guidance on the compulsory beef labelling system
and
the beef labelling scheme (the approval system for
other labelling claims)**

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD)

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Contact

Businesses in Scotland should contact our Beef Labelling Section.

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Website: www.scotland.gov.uk

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Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Pentland House
Room 251
47 Robb's Loan
Edinburgh
EH14 1TY

The Beef Labelling Section can give you copies of this guide, the beef labelling scheme application form BLS 2 (for labelling claims that need approval) and a list of the recognised beef labelling verifiers (this list is also available on our website).

Section A: General information

1 What is the beef labelling system?

The beef labelling system is a European Union (EU) system for providing clear, reliable information about beef (including veal). The main purpose of the system is to allow people to trace beef back to where it came from.

2 What are the beef labelling rules?

All fresh or frozen beef (including veal) must be labelled with certain compulsory information (**section B**). Producers and processors can also apply to use approved labels under our voluntary beef labelling scheme (**section C**).

3 Who do the rules apply to?

The compulsory beef labelling rules apply to everyone selling fresh or frozen beef, for example, slaughterhouses, cutting plants, repackaging centres, shops, market stalls, supermarkets, butchers and farm shops. Beef labelling rules apply to suppliers of hotels, restaurants and other catering facilities but not to the hotels and restaurants themselves, or any other premises where the beef sold has been cooked and/or additional ingredients added. The rules do not apply to beef sold in the form of processed products (for example, sausages, pies, ready-meals or canned beef) or to sales of live calves or cattle.

4 What type of beef do the rules apply to?

Fresh and frozen beef, including veal, mince, and uncooked beefburger patty with no added ingredients, must meet the labelling rules. Uncooked meat that has been seasoned, beef and veal in processed products, and offal, are not included. If in doubt, please contact the Beef Labelling Section.

5 What is labelling?

Labelling is written information given to customers at the point of sale. This includes information given on packaging material and on labels near the product. It also includes information given in advertisements, websites, posters, announcements and leaflets, or information conveyed by pictures or symbols associated with the product. Information given by word of mouth is not covered, but it is an offence under other legislation to mislead the customer.

6 How should beef be labelled?

Prewrapped meat must be labelled on its packaging. If packages are grouped together and sold in a carton, the information may be shown on the carton rather than the individual packages. For non-prewrapped meat sold to customers, information must be on the meat or displayed in the shop near to the meat. The customer must be able to see exactly what the information refers to. The reference code or codes on display must make sure that the meat can be traced back to its source through your traceability system.

7 What is a traceability system?

This is a manual or computer system containing records linking the animals or beef bought to the reference number or code of the beef sold. All operators in the supply chain must have a traceability system so that beef on sale can be traced back to the original animal or group of animals which it came from, and to prove that the labelling information given to customers throughout the supply chain is correct.

You must have a traceability system. The type of information it should contain depends on the nature of your operation. It should record the arrival and departure of each carcass, part carcass, primal or other cut of meat. Depending on your type of operation, you could record some or all of the following:

- the date the animal, carcass or cut arrived
- the supplier
- delivery note details
- the date the animal was killed
- weight
- UK ear tag, cattle passport number or reference code
- product (cut)
- tray number or colour
- the date placed on the counter

These should link to:

- the reference number or code;
- the compulsory labelling about slaughterhouse and cutting plants; and
- any approved labelling claims made against sales.

8 How are the rules enforced?

Our authorised officers will carry out checks in premises licensed by the Food Standards Agency. In all other food businesses, local authorities will carry out the checks to make sure that the rules for compulsory labelling and approved labelling are being followed. You must give these officers access to your premises and to your records. If you have been approved under the beef labelling scheme, you must be able to show the officers a certificate that the product meets the rules, issued by your government-recognised independent verifier as a result of a previous inspection, and your approval document issued by us.

You must not supply inaccurate or misleading information. Unless you have reason to doubt its accuracy, you can assume that the beef labelling information you were given when you bought beef from your suppliers is accurate. If you fail to follow the rules, you will have to remove your beef from sale until the beef or veal is relabelled in line with the rules. If the meat cannot be relabelled because not enough information is available to trace it, you may be allowed to send it on for processing into products. You may also have to take steps to make sure your beef meets the rules. If you break the rules and it is a serious matter, this may be a criminal offence, which could lead to a fine if you are convicted.

Section B: Compulsory labelling

1 What compulsory information must you show on your labelling?

You must show the following information on your label (Examples of labels are shown in **section E**).

- Reference number or code

This links the meat with the original animal or group of animals which it came from.

For a slaughterhouse - the reference number or code may be an identification number or any other number or code relating to the animal or group of animals, or carcasses or quarters.

For a cutting plant - the reference number or code may be the individual identification number or any other number or code relating to the animal which the cut of meat comes from. However, it could be a batch number. For this purpose, a batch may include up to one day's production in the cutting plant. A batch formed in a cutting plant may only include beef which has been slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse and, if relevant, cut previously in the same cutting plant or plants. If you are cutting meat from different slaughterhouses, beef from each slaughterhouse must have a different reference number. You may include in a single batch beef slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse but on different days. The batches which undergo further cutting (for example, primals into retail cuts) is limited in the same way, so a batch must not involve more than one day's production and must be formed from beef which has been cut previously in the same cutting plant or plants.

For a retail outlet - any reference number or code allowing you to trace the meat within your shop can be used as long as there is a link through your register and documents to your supplier's reference number or code. It could be a batch number.

- 'Slaughtered in: [name of member state or non-EU country]'

This is the **member state** or **non-EU country** where the slaughterhouse is. Your labelling must include the words: 'Slaughtered in [name of member state or non-EU country]'. This must be a single member state or a single non-EU country, for example, 'Slaughtered in UK'. For beef from animals slaughtered in Scotland, the label should say: 'Slaughtered in UK'.

- Licence number of slaughterhouse

This is the **veterinary licence number** which has been given to the establishment or premises. The number appears on the health-mark stamp. There must be only one slaughterhouse number on the beef label and therefore all beef sold together in a pack or batch must be from one slaughterhouse only. Beef from two or more slaughterhouses must not be combined to form a batch or pack.

- ‘Cutting or cut in [name of member state or non-EU country]’

This is the **member state** or **non-EU country** where the cutting plant is. Your labelling must include the words: ‘Cutting or cut in [name of member state or non-EU country]’. This must be a single member state or a single non-EU country. A regional name, such as ‘Aberdeenshire’ or ‘Scotland’, is not enough.

- Licence number of the cutting plant(s).

This is the veterinary licence number which has been given to the establishment or premises where the beef was cut (or deboned), and which appears on the health-mark stamp. If a batch of beef is processed through more than one cutting plant, your labelling must show the licence numbers of all the cutting plants where the meat was processed. Beef which has not been slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse and cut in the same cutting plant or series of cutting plants must not be mixed in the same batch. If beef is cut in unlicensed premises, for example, butchers, farm shops or other shops, the address of the premises must be shown instead of a licence number. But where the beef is cut and sold in the same unlicensed premises, the label may say ‘on these premises’. If a slaughterhouse also does the cutting, the slaughterhouse licence number should be used.

- The name of the member state or non-EU country in which the animal, or group of animals, was born.

This must be a single **member state** or a single **non-EU country**. A regional name, such as ‘Aberdeenshire’ or ‘Scotland’, is not enough. Meat from animals born in different countries cannot be put in the same batch. Meat from animals born before 1 January 1998, where information on the place of birth is not available, should be marked ‘Born before 1 January 1998’.

- The name of the member state or non-EU country where the animal, or group of animals, lived between birth and slaughter.

This is the name of all the member states or non-EU countries where the animal, or group of animals, lived between birth and slaughter. Each animal in the group of animals must have been reared in all of the countries listed. If the animal or animals spent less than 30 days immediately after birth in the country of birth, you do not have to list that country. Also, if the animal spent less than 30 days immediately before slaughter in the country of slaughter then you do not have to list that country. Meat from animals born before 1 January 1998, where information on the place of rearing is not available, should be marked ‘Born before 1 January 1998’.

If your beef comes from animals which were **born, raised and slaughtered** in the same member state or same non-EU country, your label can show ‘Origin: [name of member state] or [non-EU country]’, along with the other compulsory labels (for example, ‘British beef - Origin: UK’), and the label would also have to contain ‘Slaughtered in UK (licence number), Cut in UK (licence number)’, together with the reference number or code.

2 What compulsory information must be displayed on your labelling for minced beef ?

You must show the following information on your label.

- Reference number or code

This is the traceability reference number or code which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef used for mincing.

- Member state or non-EU country of slaughter

This is the name of the member state or non-EU country where the animals were slaughtered. Subject to legal advice to the contrary, beef minced in the UK may come from animals slaughtered in no more than two member states or two non-EU countries, or one member state and one non-EU country. Your labelling must include the words ‘Slaughtered in [name of member state or non-EU country]’.

- Member state or non-EU country of mincing

This is the member state or non-EU country where the meat was minced. The batch must be minced in only one country. Machines must be cleaned between consignments of meat where the animals have been slaughtered in a different country or mix of two countries. Your labelling must include the words ‘Minced in [name of member state or non-EU country]’.

- If different from the country of mincing, all the countries where the animal or group of animals lived from birth to slaughter

This is the member states or non-EU countries where the animal or group of animals lived from birth to slaughter. Your label must include the words ‘Origin: [name of member state or non-EU country]’, or ‘Origin: Non-EC’ if all those countries are outside the EU. It does not need to be shown if the animals come from the same country that they were minced in.

You can also label with all the compulsory labels in **section B1**, and include the date of mincing.

3 How do you label beef imported from a non-EU country, when not all compulsory labelling information is available?

Where compulsory information is not available on non-EU country imports, you must label with the wording ‘Origin: Non-EC’ and ‘Slaughtered in [name of non-EU country]’. You should also supply a reference number or code when the beef is cut or repackaged after being imported.

4 How do the rules apply to ‘Scotch Beef’ and ‘Orkney Beef’?

Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products are produced, processed or prepared within a geographical area, as defined under ‘Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for

agricultural products and foodstuffs'. The product must have a specific quality, reputation or other characteristic related to the area. Scotland has a 'Scotch Beef' PGI. To qualify as 'Scotch Beef', the product must come from cattle born, bred, slaughtered and dressed within Scotland, and quality assured.

Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) products are produced, processed and prepared in a geographical area, and the features and characteristics of the product must be due to the geographical area and methods of production unique to the area. 'Orkney Beef' is the PDO recognised in Scotland. It is produced, slaughtered and dressed exclusively on Orkney.

Examples of labels are shown in **section E**.

Section C: Voluntary beef labelling scheme

1 What is the beef labelling scheme?

The beef labelling scheme has been in place in the UK since 1997. It puts into practice EC legislation which requires beef labelling information, apart from compulsory labelling, to be approved by the authorities in the member state or states and checked by recognised verifiers.

2 What information needs to be approved?

The following are examples of information which needs to be approved. If you are not sure whether the information you want to use needs to be approved, please contact the Beef Labelling Section.

- Region or local origin - where the animal was born and reared
- Breed or cross breed (If you are labelling your beef with the name of the breed, your labelling must make clear whether the beef is from a pure-bred or cross-bred animal.)
- Age or sex of the animal
- Method of production (for example, farm assured, grass-fed)
- Method of slaughter (for example, halal, kosher)
- Date of slaughter
- Method or length of maturation

If you want to label your beef with this or similar information, you must make sure that the information you are providing is common to all animals and meat which the labelled product comes from. Unless you can guarantee this, we will not be able to approve your application. Terms must also be clear to your customers. For example, a term such as 'grass-fed' must mean that the animals concerned were fed mainly on grass or silage.

3 What information does not need to be approved?

Information that must be displayed as required by law, for example Compulsory labelling (**section A**), does not need approval under the voluntary beef labelling scheme. This information includes:

- the name of the product or cut (for example, brisket);
- the weight of the product;
- the 'best before' or 'use by' date;
- storage conditions or conditions of use (for example, keep refrigerated);
- instructions for use (for example, cooking instructions);
- the name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller;
- statements that the product has been packaged in a protective atmosphere;
- statements in line with the carcass classification grid;
- the health mark needed under the Fresh Meat Directive, and other similar veterinary approval; or
- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and approved Certificates of Specific Character (CSC).

If you are not sure whether the information you want to use has to be approved, please contact the Beef Labelling Section.

4 What rules must you follow under the beef labelling scheme?

You must prove the information you give to your customers is clear and not misleading. You must employ, at your expense, an independent verifier from our list of government-recognised beef-labelling verification organisations. We will send you a list of recognised verifiers with the application form, or you can ask for one from the Beef Labelling Section. The list is also available on our website.

The verifier will check that the labelling information you are giving to your customer is accurate. You must give the verifier access at all times to your premises and to your records. Before your premises are inspected, you must let the verifier know what information you are including on labels. You must have available copies of your approval document we have issued and the certificate issued by your verifier. Your verifier must carry out regular checks to prove that your labelling information is correct.

If you want your application to cover your beef when it is sold at outlets outside your business, you must list all these outlets in your application and update the list at least every year if it changes. You will need to employ your verifier to report on the outlet controls as well as yours. If the outlets are being verified for other claims, it may be convenient for the verifier to co-ordinate verification to reduce costs.

5 How to apply for beef labelling scheme approval

Please contact the Beef Labelling Section or our website to get an application pack. Your application must show the labelling information you want to give to your customers and explain how you can provide evidence (through your records) that the information is true. You should send your filled-in application form (BLS 2) to the Beef Labelling Section. If your business is in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, you should apply to the appropriate department on their application form.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Phone: 020 7238 3158 or 020 7238 3160

Welsh Assembly for Government Environment Planning and Countryside Department (EPC)

Phone: 029 2082 3624 or 029 2082 5130

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) - Northern Ireland

Phone: 02890 524536 or 02890 520844

6 What happens next?

If we have any questions about your application, we will phone you or write to you. Once we have approved your application, you may use the appropriate approved information. As soon as you receive our approval letter, you should contact your independent verifier to arrange for an inspection to be carried out. Within six months of the date of your approval, you must send us a copy of your verifier's certificate based on an inspection report produced by the verifier. The report should explain the controls that the verifier has carried out and comment on the reliability of your labelling information.

If, following this inspection, your verifier is satisfied with the standard of your traceability system, he or she will issue a certificate for a specific period. After the first report, you will need further reports every year or at other times decided by your verifier. We will review your approval in light of each certificate, or information from your verifier.

7 How will we use the information you give us?

We, and the other enforcement authorities, will use the information you give us to decide whether your application meets the rules of the beef labelling scheme. We may also use the information for other purposes, such as assessing the scheme. Any information we store electronically is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section D: Labelling imported and exported beef with non-compulsory information

1 How do you label beef imported from other European Union (EU) member states with non-compulsory information?

If you want to label beef imported from another EU country with information other than the compulsory information needed, you may need to send an application to the authorities of the country in which the beef is produced or sold. Please contact the beef labelling section for advice on how to proceed.

If you need to send an application to the authorities of that country, you will need to say what information you want to include on the label and explain the measures you will take to make sure the information is accurate. This should include the traceability system which would be applied at all stages of production and sale, and would also cover the handling or processing of the fresh or frozen beef and veal that takes place in that country. You would then only be able to label this beef in the UK once each country had approved your application.

Simpler rules apply if you are importing beef in small retail packs labelled in one member state according to an approved specification, where no extra information is added to the label. Labels only need to be approved by the exporting country, and the meat can be sold in the UK without further approval from us as long as:

- the packaging has not been changed in any way;
- the originating member state has given us all the information we need; and
- the approval of the originating member state also covers the labelling of the retail package sold here.

2 How do you label beef imported from outside the European Union (EU) with non-compulsory information?

You may only label beef with other information that the European Commission has given permission for the non-EU country to use. If you want to label beef imported from a non-EU country with non-compulsory information (**section B**), please contact the Beef Labelling Section for advice on how to proceed.

3. How do you label beef to export to other European Union (EU) countries?

If you want to export beef to another EU country, you must follow the rules and all export legislation in force at the time.

For non-compulsory labelling of beef for export, the same rules as for imported beef apply (see **section D1**).

Section E : Examples of labels

In the examples below, information which is compulsory is shown in **bold** type. Information which needs our approval and independent verification is shown in *italics*.

Label for carcasses

British beef

03/04/02/42864/1 - a reference number or code

Classification: CR3L (compulsory for most abattoirs)

Weight: 152 kilos

Slaughtered in: UK (1234)

Origin: UK

Cutting in (or cut in): UK (1234)

Label for beef where there are particular origin claims

British beef

05/02/02/324694/3 - a reference number or code

Rump steak

Weight: 500 grams

Price: £2.40

Unit price: £4.80 a kilo

Born in: *Orkney* - UK

Reared (or fattened) in: *Orkney and Aberdeenshire* - UK

Slaughtered in: *Aberdeenshire* - UK (2345)

Cutting in (or cut in): *Aberdeenshire* - UK (6789)

Label for mince

Organic

Minced beef

06/08/02/958425/2 - a reference number or code

Weight: 2 kilos

Price: £9

Minced in: UK

Slaughtered in: UK

Origin: Ireland

Cutting in (or cut in): Ireland

Relevant regulations

Regulation (EC) number 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000 – establishing a system for the identification and registration of bovine animals and regarding the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Council Regulation (EC) number 820/97

Commission Regulation (EC) number 1825/2000 of 25 August 2000 – laying down detailed rules for the application of European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) number 1760/2000 as regards the labelling of beef and beef products and repealing Commission Regulation (EC) number 1141/97

The Beef Labelling (Enforcement) (Scotland) Regulations 2001 came into effect on 29 June 2001. These regulations allow us to enforce the EU regulations above in Scotland.

Commission Regulation (EC) number 2081/1992 of 14 July 1992 – on the Protection of Geographical Indications and Designations of Origin

Council Regulation (EC) number 2082/1992 of 14 July 1992 – on the Certificates of Specific Character