

Veterinary attestation for exports of Products of Animal Origin to the EU: Frequently Asked Questions

Key points:

- Membership of qualifying assurance schemes or having a Pathway visit (England) is deemed as meeting the requirement (Q4)
- A vet attestation visit can be combined with any farm visit as long as the criteria have been met (Q7)
- The keeper records the vet attestation number (VAN) on the Food Chain Information documentation (Q5)

Useful links:

- Veterinary attestation template and guidance:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/veterinary-declaration-for-animal-health-visits>
http://apha.defra.gov.uk/External_OV_Instructions/Export_Instructions/Certification_Procedures/Products_Exports.html
- Information on exports of goods, with reference to products of animal origin (POAO) and the need for a veterinary attestation: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-food-and-agricultural-products-special-rules>
- Advice for farmers: <https://defrafarming.blog.gov.uk/2023/08/23/annual-health-and-welfare-review-making-it-easier-to-apply-comply-and-export/>

1. Where did this requirement come from?

In January 2022, the EU's Animal Health Regulation ([Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#)) introduced a new requirement for farms producing animals, products of animal origin (POAOs), or germinal products for export to the EU (or movements to Northern Ireland under the conditions of the Northern Ireland Protocol/Windsor Framework) to be subject to "regular veterinary visits". This is implemented by Article 8(e) of Delegated Regulation 2020/692.

"must receive regular animal health visits from a veterinarian for the purpose of the detection of, and information on, signs indicative of the occurrence of diseases, including those listed diseases referred to in Annex I relevant for the particular species and category of animal, germinal product or product of animal origin and emerging diseases."

Official Veterinarians (OVs) have had to certify compliance with this new requirement since 15 January 2022.

2. Why can farmers no longer self-declare that a veterinary visit has taken place?

A temporary measure – the farmer's attestation - was put in place to maintain trade with the EU. However, does not comply with RCVS requirements for certification, and in 2022 it was agreed that the temporary measure could only be used as evidence of compliance until 13 December 2023. From this date, evidence of the veterinary visits needs to be passed from the vet on farm to the certifying OV at the end of the food chain.

3. How often do I need to visit my client's farm?

The frequency of vet visits should be at least annual. This has been agreed by all four UK Chief Veterinary Officers.

4. What is my client required to demonstrate?

For products to be exported to the EU, farms must have had, in the 12 months leading up to 13 December, one of the following:

- a veterinary visit
- an Animal Health and Welfare Pathway veterinary visit (England only)

OR

- be part of a recognised assurance scheme (see below)

Without the evidence of a regular vet visit, the slaughterhouse OV will not be able to sign a Support Health Attestation (SHA) facilitating products to be exported to the EU.

The vet visit requirement can be fulfilled in a number of ways:

- If the farm is a member of a recognised assurance scheme no further evidence is required. The slaughterhouse will verify membership details. Recognised schemes are:
 - Red Tractor
 - Farm Assured Welsh Livestock Beef and Lamb Scheme (FAWL) / (Welsh Lamb and Beef Producers Ltd (WLBP)
 - Quality Meat Scotland (QMS)
 - Lion Quality
 - Poultry Health Scheme
- If the farm has had an annual health and welfare review as part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway (England only) the receipt from the review – which will have a space to record the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) (see below) – is acceptable as evidence.

- Alternatively, the farm must organise a visit with you, their vet. You should complete the [attestation](#) stating the visit has taken place. The responsibility of organising the visit lies with the farm.

5. What is the Vet Attestation Number (VAN) on the attestation?

You should create the number as part of the visit. It is composed of:

- your RCVS number
- the County Parish Holding (CPH) number of the farm
- the date of validity of the declaration

For example: 12345 [MRCVS number] 12/345/6789 [CPH number] 0624 [Valid to the end of June 2024].

The VAN should be recorded on the vet attestation template or Pathway visit receipt, and it can then be added by the keeper to the food chain information (FCI) documentation when an animal or animals move to market or to a slaughterhouse. **It is the VAN which travels with the animal(s) not paper copies of the vet attestation.**

6. What happens to the attestation paper copy?

It should be kept on farm, with a copy kept on your veterinary practice database. The VAN on the attestation or Pathway receipt will need to be included in the FCI which goes to the market/abattoir.

Vets issuing support health attestations and/or certificates in abattoirs and along the food chain, including the export certifying OV at the end of the chain, will be able to rely on this information and/or carry out their own verification checks.

7. What should I cover as part of the visit?

Visits are in place for the purpose of disease prevention and the detection of biosecurity risks, but it can be combined with other visits covering routine work, providing that you consider all species present at the premises.

The approach is non-prescriptive. To meet the requirements of the attestation, your visit should:

- incorporate assessments of animal health at the farm level (all animals under the same CPH number) – this should cover on-site inspection and visualisation only. Examination of individual animals, sampling and laboratory testing is not required.
- include the provision of advice to the farmer on suggested biosecurity improvements that could be made which are relevant for the farm, the species, and categories of animals kept. Advice given is not recorded on the attestation. Consider the associated diseases and risks of the

species present. Multiple species on one site can be subject to one veterinary attestation if the biosecurity situations for all species on that site are addressed.

NOTE: farms with more than one site under the same CPH number will need to have all sites assessed for the relevant species before you can issue the attestation for the whole CPH number. It is only the last holding of residence which needs a vet visit. However, a VAN can be issued if:

- you are confident that the premises and the relevant areas or locations related to that premise is/are subject to regular veterinary visits or are within the routine control of the farm vet.
- If the last holding prior to movement to a slaughter market or abattoir is from a temporary CPH, the requirement has been met if the main CPH in the movement chain has had a vet visit and a VAN issued.

8. What about a digital solution using the Livestock Information Service (LIS)?

The ultimate aim is to enable you to record your vet attestation on LIS. The necessary updates to the sheep platform will be available from December 2023, with other species to follow.

The eAML2 is a fully digitalised end-to-end system for pig movement recording. This will be updated for December 2023 with a field for the VAN of the vet attestation visit.

9. What about in Wales?

In Wales the FCI approach will apply – recording the visit's VAN on FCI documentation when animals move to market or the slaughterhouse. The Welsh Government is exploring digital solutions for the longer term.

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