

BEEF LABELLING GUIDE

for individuals/organisations
in Northern Ireland
selling beef

BL 2 (revised November 2008)



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**
www.dard.gov.uk



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Beef Labelling Guide (BL2)

This booklet supersedes the Beef Labelling Guide Booklet BL1 (December 2000) and provides guidance on the compulsory beef and veal labelling system and the Beef Labelling Scheme (the approval scheme for voluntary additional labelling information).

For Advice

Businesses in Northern Ireland should contact the Quality Assurance Branch (QAB) of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland (DARD):

Telephone: 028 9052 5001
Fax: 028 9052 4671
E-mail: QAB.Admin@dardni.gov.uk

Address: DARD
Quality Assurance Branch
Room 1031
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

QAB can provide copies of this Guide, the Beef Labelling Scheme application form BLS 2 (for labelling claims requiring approval) and a list of the recognised beef labelling verifiers.

All of these documents are also available on the DARD website:

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/fisheries, farming and food/animal products/beef>

Section A: General Information

1. What is the beef labelling system?

1.1 The beef labelling system is European Community (EC) wide. It provides consumers with clear, reliable information about the origin of beef on sale. A customer information note describing the system is provided in Appendix 4. Retailers may wish to copy this to hand out to their customers. Display of this information is not compulsory. The legislation governing the system is listed in Appendix 6. Definitions of terms used in the legislation are listed in Appendix 7.

2. What are the beef labelling rules?

2.1 The beef labelling rules apply to all fresh or frozen beef and veal (including mince and trimmings) offered for sale in the EC. Additional labelling requirements apply to meat and offal from animals aged 12 months or less. The rules are in two parts:

- (i) The **compulsory system** requires you to label your beef with prescribed information (see Section B for full details of what labelling information you need to display). **As provision of this information is compulsory, you do not need to apply to DARD for its approval.**
- (ii) The **voluntary scheme** allows you to label beef with terms relating to the origin, characteristics or production methods of the beef you sell. **These terms require approval by DARD under the Beef Labelling Scheme** (see Section C).

3. Do the beef labelling rules apply to you/your business?

3.1 Yes, if you are selling fresh or frozen beef or veal, or offal from animals aged 12 months or less, anywhere in the supply chain. For example; slaughterhouses, cutting plants, cold stores, re-packaging centres, butchers' shops, mobile shops, market stalls, supermarkets, or farm shops. Suppliers to hotels, restaurants and other catering facilities are also included.

3.2 No, if you are selling cooked beef. For example; hotels, restaurants, fast food outlets, cafes or canteens. Consumers of beef from catering establishments may expect that information equivalent to that provided on labels on fresh/frozen beef should be available to them on request, particularly where claims are made (e.g. on restaurant menus) as to the nature of the beef on sale.

4. What type of beef must comply with the labelling rules?

4.1 Fresh and frozen beef and veal e.g. a whole carcass, quarters, sirloin or rump steak. This includes mince and uncooked beef burger patty with no added ingredients (e.g. soya protein, cereal binder). Offal from animals aged 12 months or less is also included. Uncooked beef that has been seasoned, either in depth or over the whole surface of the product and is either visible to the naked eye or clearly distinguishable by taste, is not included. Beef and offal in processed products, such as, processed beef burgers, pies, sausages, ready meals or tinned beef are not covered by the beef labelling system. Such products do not need to be labelled with the compulsory terms, nor do their labels require approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme. Fresh or frozen beef and veal means all products falling within Customs Nomenclature (CN) codes 0201, 0202, 0206 10 95 and 0206 29 91. If in doubt please contact DARD, QAB, (see page 3).

5. What is labelling?

5.1 Labelling covers 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 at the point of sale in advertisements, posters, announcements and leaflets associated with the product. Information given by word of mouth is not covered, although it is an offence under other legislation to mislead the consumer. Information conveyed by pictures or symbols may also require approval. For example, a veal label with a picture of calves in an open system would require approval as it implies that the veal came from calves reared that way. If in doubt, please contact DARD QAB.

6. How should pre-packaged beef be labelled?

6.1 Pre-packaged beef must be labelled on its packaging. If packages are grouped together and sold in a carton, the required information may be shown on the carton and omitted from the individual packages within it. If however, the packages are sold without the outer covering, each must be labelled with the required information before sale. (See Section 13 for detailed requirements).

7. How should non pre-packaged beef be labelled?

7.1 For non pre-packaged beef sold to the end customer, information must be on the meat or displayed in the shop, e.g. on a ticket in close proximity to the meat or on a sign on the wall visible to your customers (examples are provided at Appendix 2). The display must ensure that the beef is distinguishable within the shop so that the customer can see which information applies to which meat. The reference code(s) or number(s) on display must ensure that the beef can be traced back to its source through your traceability system. (See Section 14 for detailed requirements)

8. What is a traceability system?

8.1 This is a manual or computer system kept by your business which will link the animals or beef you buy, to the reference number or code of the meat which you sell. All operators in the supply chain must have a traceability system so that beef on sale to the consumer can be traced back to the animal or group of animals from which it was derived and to prove that the labelling information given to customers throughout the supply chain is correct.

8.2 The exact type of information recorded in your traceability system depends on the nature of your operation. It should record the arrival and departure of each animal carcase, part carcase, primal or other cut of beef to ensure that there is a balance between arrivals and departures. The date of birth of each animal must be recorded at the slaughterhouse. Depending on your type of operation, you will need to record some or all of the following:

- intake date (of animal, carcase or cut);
- date of birth
- the supplier;
- delivery note details;
- kill date;
- weight;
- UK ear tag/cattle passport number or reference code;
- product (cut);
- tray number or colour;
- the date placed on the counter;

and link these to:

- the reference number or code;
- the compulsory labelling relating to the slaughterhouse and cutting plants;
- the compulsory labelling relating to animals aged 12 months or less; and
- any approved voluntary labelling claims.

9. What happens if I do not follow these rules?

9.1 Checks to ensure compliance with the compulsory and voluntary rules are carried out by DARD authorised officers in slaughterhouses, cutting plants and cold stores, and by Environmental Health Officers at other premises. This includes checks on those operators who have been approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme (to ensure that they are continuing to label in accordance with their approval) and on those who have not been approved (to ensure that they are not giving their customers information which requires approval). You must give these officers access to your premises and to your records. Operators who have been approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme must show the officers a current certificate of product conformity issued by your Government-recognised verifier, and your approval document issued by DARD, QAB.

9.2 You must not supply inaccurate or misleading information. Unless you have reason to doubt its accuracy, you can assume that the beef labelling information given to you when you buy beef from your suppliers is accurate.

9.3 If you fail to follow the rules, you will be required to remove your beef from sale until it is re-labelled in accordance with the rules. If it cannot be adequately re-labelled, because insufficient information is available to trace it, you may be allowed to sell it on directly for processing into products. You could also be required to take further steps in order to correct your breach of the rules. Serious breaches of the rules could constitute a criminal offence which, on conviction, will lead to a fine.

Section B: Compulsory Labelling

This Section explains the compulsory information you must show on your labelling for fresh and frozen beef and veal

10. What **compulsory** information must be shown on your labelling?

10.1 The following indications must be shown on your labels. For more detail see paragraphs 10.3 to 10.11.

- (1) **Reference number or code;**
- (2) The name of the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals was/were **born;**
- (3) The name of the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals was/were **raised;**
- (4) The name of the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals was/were **slaughtered** and the **approval number** of the slaughterhouse;
- (5) The name of the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the meat from the animal or group of animals was **cut** and the **approval number** of the cutting plant(s).

10.2 In addition, the following indications must be shown on labels on meat from animals aged 12 months or less. See paragraphs 10.10 and 10.11.

- (6) The **age of the animal at slaughter.**
- (7) The **sales description** for each age category.

10.3 **Indication (1)** is a **traceability reference number or reference code** which ensures the link between the beef and the animal, or group of animals, from which it was derived.

For a slaughterhouse –

- The reference number or code may be the identification number or any other number or code relating to the individual animal, or group of animals, from which the meat was derived.
- If the reference number is a batch number, a batch may comprise, at most, one day's production in the slaughterhouse.

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, or group of animals, from which the cut meat is derived.

- If the reference number is a batch number, a batch may comprise, at most, one day's production in the cutting plant.
- A batch formed in a cutting plant may only be formed from beef which has been born in the same country, raised in the same country or countries, slaughtered in the same country and at the same slaughterhouse, and, if relevant, cut previously in the same cutting plant.
- If you are cutting beef from a number of different slaughterhouses, beef from each slaughterhouse must be assigned a different reference number.
- In a single batch, you may include beef slaughtered in the same slaughterhouse but on different days.
- Batches undergoing further cutting (e.g. primals into retail cuts) 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.
- During the production of cut meat (see definition at appendix 7) operators may make up a batch from meat originating from animals slaughtered at a maximum of three different slaughterhouses and from carcasses cut up at a maximum of three different cutting plants.
- During the production of trimmings and mince, operators are only required to follow the rule relating to a single country of slaughter when making up batches.

For a retail outlet -

- Any reference number or code enabling traceability within your shop can be used provided there is a link through your register and documentation to your supplier's reference number or code. This could be a batch number.

10.4 **Indication (2)** must show the **Member State** or **non-EC country** in which the animal or group of animals was/were born.

- This information must be shown as; **Born in: [name of Member State or non-EC Country]** and must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country.
- A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme (e.g. "Northern Ireland") is not sufficient.

10.5 **Indication (3)** must show the names of all the **Member States** or **non-EC countries** where the animal or group of animals lived between birth and slaughter.

- This information must be shown as; **Raised in: [name of Member State(s) or non-EC country]**
- Each animal in the group of animals must have been reared in all 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 on the label as a country of rearing.

- 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 on the label as a country of rearing.

10.6 Where your beef is derived from animals which were **born, raised and slaughtered** in the **same Member State or same non-EC country**, instead of separate indications (2) and (3), your labelling can be shown as "**Origin: [name of Member State or non-EC country]**", along with indications (1), (4) and (5). Indications (6) and (7) will also be required for meat from animals aged 12 months or less.

10.7 **Indication (4)** must show the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the **slaughterhouse is located** and the **slaughterhouse approval number**.

- Your labelling must include the words: "**Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]**". This must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country e.g. "Slaughtered in UK". For beef from animals slaughtered in Northern Ireland, "Slaughtered in UK" should be the indication. A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme (e.g. Northern Ireland) is not sufficient.
- Your label must show the **slaughterhouse approval number**. This is the veterinary approval number which has been allocated to the establishment or premises, and which 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 only one slaughterhouse. Beef from two or more slaughterhouses must not be combined to form a pack or batch, except in relation to the production of cut meat where a batch may consist of meat originating from animals slaughtered at a maximum of three different slaughterhouses and from carcasses cut up at a maximum of three different cutting plants.

10.8 **Indication (5)** must show the **Member State or non-EC country** in which the cutting plant is located and the **cutting plant approval number**.

- Your labelling must be shown as: "**Cutting/cut in: [name of Member State or non-EC country]**". This must be a single Member State or a single non-EC country. A regional name approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme (e.g. "Northern Ireland") is not sufficient.
- Your label must show the **cutting plant approval number**. This is the veterinary approval number which has been allocated to the establishment or premises, and which appears on the health mark stamp.
- Where a batch of beef is processed through more than one cutting plant, your labelling must show the approval numbers of all the cutting plants at which the beef was processed.

- Beef which has not been cut in the same cutting plant, or series of cutting plants, must not be mixed to form a pack or batch, except in relation to the production of cut meat where a batch may consist of meat originating from animals slaughtered at a maximum of three different slaughterhouses and from carcasses cut up at a maximum of three different cutting plants.
- Where beef is cut in unlicensed premises (e.g. butchers, farm shops or other shops), the address of the premises must be shown in place of an approval number. Where beef is cut and sold on the same unlicensed premises, the indication may state "on these premises". If a slaughterhouse also does the cutting then the slaughterhouse approval number should be used if no cutting plant number is allocated.

10.9 When labelling beef with the name of the Member State or non-EC country, the **full name of the Member State(s) or non-EC country(ies)** must be shown on the label. Abbreviations are not acceptable. The only exceptions to this rule relate to beef which originates from within the UK or the Republic of Ireland, which may be labelled "UK" or "IRL" respectively. Furthermore, this exception only applies to beef presented for sale within the UK. Beef exported to other Member States, including the Republic of Ireland, must carry the full name of the country.

10.10 Indication (6) is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the age of the animal at slaughter, shown as; "**Age on slaughter: up to 8 months**" in the case of animals aged 8 months or less, or "**age on slaughter: from 8 to 12 months**" in the case of animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months. However, operators may, at each stage of production and marketing, **except when on sale to the final consumer**, replace the age on slaughter information with the category identification letters; "**V**" for animals aged 8 months or less, or "**Z**" for animals aged between 8 and 12 months.

- At slaughter, all bovine animals aged 12 months or less must be classified by the operator as either; aged 8 months or less i.e. from the day of birth until the day they reach 8 months (category identification letter V); or, aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months i.e. from the day after reaching 8 months until the day they reach 12 months (category identification letter Z).
- The category identification letter must be placed on the outside surface of the carcase by using labels or a carcase stamp. The labels or stamp must be applied on the hindquarters, on the striploin at the level of the fourth lumbar vertebra and on the forequarters, on the brisket between 10 and 30 centimetres from the cut edge of the sternum. The labels must not be less than 50cm² and where a stamp is used, the letter must not be less than 2 centimetres in height.

10.11 **Indication (7)** is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the sales description for each age category as; "**veal**" for meat from animals up to 8 months, and "**beef**" for meat from animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

Examples of labels containing information you must display are shown in Appendix 1 of this guide.

11. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for minced beef?

11.1 You must label with the following indications. However, if you wish, you may label with all the indications at 10 above. You may also include the date of mincing. For more detail see paragraphs 11.2 to 11.6 below.

- (1) Reference number or code;
- (2) Name of the Member State or non-EC country of slaughter;
- (3) Name of the Member State or non-EC country of mincing;
- (4) Name of the Member State(s) or non-EC country(ies) where the animal or group of animals lived from birth to slaughter.

11.2 Indication (1) is a traceability reference number or code which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef used for mincing.

11.3 Indication (2) must show the name of the Member State or non-EC country in which the animals were slaughtered. Mince in the same batch must be made from beef derived from animals slaughtered in the same country. Your labelling must include the words "Slaughtered in:[name of Member State or non-EC country]".

11.4 Indication (3) must show the name of the Member State or non-EC country in which the beef was minced; the batch must be minced in only one country. Machines must be cleaned between consignments of beef where the animals have been slaughtered in a different country from the previous batch. Your labelling must include the words "Minced in [name of Member State or non-EC country]".

11.5 Indication (4) must show the names of the Member States or non-EC countries where the animal or group of animals lived from birth to slaughter. Your label must include the words "Origin: [name(s) of Member State(s) and/or non-EC country(ies)]", or "Origin: Non-EC" if all those countries are outside the EC. Indication (4) does not need to be shown if the country of origin of the animals is the same as the country of mincing.

11.6 Where mixed minced meat is sold and the larger proportion of the meat is beef (e.g. 60% beef, 40% pork), the compulsory indications must be shown.

Examples of labels containing information you must display are shown in Appendix 1 of this guide.

12. What compulsory information must be shown on your labelling for trimmings?

12.1 You must label with the following indications:

- (1) Reference number or code.
- (2) Name of the **country of slaughter**.
- (3) Name of the **country of production** of the trimmings and the **approval number of the plant** at which they were produced.
- (4) Names of the **countries of birth and rearing** of the animals in the group.

12.2 **Indication (1)** is a **traceability reference number or code** which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef.

12.3 **Indication (2)** must show the name of the **country of slaughter** of the animals from which the trimmings originate. The information must be shown as: **“Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of slaughter]”**. Trimmings in the same batch must be produced from beef derived from animals slaughtered in the same country.

12.4 **Indication (3)** must show the name of the **country of production of the trimmings and the approval number of the plant** at which they were produced. The information must be shown as: **“Produced in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of production]”** and the **plant approval number**.

12.5 **Indication (4)** must show the names of the **countries of birth and rearing** of the animals in the group. This information must be shown as: **“Born and raised in: [names of the countries in which the animals were born and raised]”**. When the country of birth, the country of rearing and the country of slaughter is the **same** for all animals in the group, operators may use the indication **“Country of origin: [name of Member State or non-EC country in which birth, rearing and slaughter took place]”**.

13. What compulsory information must be shown on pre-packaged cut meat?

13.1 You must label with the following indications:

- (1) Reference number or code.
- (2) Name of the **country of slaughter and slaughterhouse approval number**.
- (3) Name of the **country in which carcasses were cut and cutting plant approval number(s)**.
- (4) Names of the **countries of birth and rearing** of the animals in the group.

13.2 In addition, the following indications must be shown on labels on meat from animals aged 12 months or less.

(5) **The age of the animal at slaughter.**

(6) **The sales description for each category.**

13.3 **Indication (1)** is a **traceability reference number or code** which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef.

13.4 **Indication (2)** must show the **country of slaughter and slaughterhouse approval number**, or where required, the two or three slaughterhouse approval number(s) at which the animals in the group were slaughtered. (A batch may be made up from meat derived from animals slaughtered at a maximum of three different slaughterhouses.) The information must be shown as: **“Animals in the group slaughtered in [name of Member State or non-EC country of slaughter]”** and the **approval number(s)** of the slaughterhouse or the two or three slaughterhouses concerned.

13.5 **Indication (3)** must show the **country in which the carcasses were cut and the cutting plant approval number**, or where required, the two or three cutting plant numbers at which the carcasses were cut. (A batch may be made up from meat derived from carcasses cut up at a maximum of three different cutting plants.) The information must be shown as: **“Cutting of meat in batch in: [name of Member State or non-EC country of cutting]”** and the **approval number(s)** of the cutting plant or the two or three cutting plants concerned.

13.6 **Indication (4)** must show the names of the **countries of birth and rearing** of the animals in the group. This information must be shown as: **“Born and raised in: [names of the countries in which the animals were born and raised]”**. When the country of birth, the country of rearing and the country of slaughter is the same for all animals in the group, operators may use the indication **“Country of origin: [name of Member State or non-EC country in which birth, rearing and slaughter took place]”**.

13.7 **Indication (5)** is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the **age of the animal at slaughter**, shown as; **“Age on slaughter: up to 8 months”** in the case of animals aged 8 months or less, or **“age on slaughter: from 8 to 12 months”** in the case of animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

13.8 **Indication (6)** is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the sales description for each age category as; **“veal”** for meat from animals up to 8 months, and **“beef”** for meat from animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

14 What compulsory information must be shown on non pre-packaged cut meat?

14.1 You must label with the following indications:

- (1) Reference number or code.
- (2) Name of the country of birth, rearing, slaughter and cutting.

14.2 In addition, the following indications must be shown on labels on meat from animals aged 12 months or less.

- (3) The age of the animal at slaughter.
- (4) The sales description for each age category.

14.3 Indication (1) is a traceability reference number or code which links back to the source animal, group of animals or batches of beef.

14.4 Indication (2) must show the name of the country of birth, rearing and slaughter of the animals from which the meat originates, followed by the name of the country of carcass cutting.

14.5 Indication (3) is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the age of the animal at slaughter, shown as; “Age on slaughter: up to 8 months” in the case of animals aged 8 months or less, or “age on slaughter: from 8 to 12 months” in the case of animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

14.6 Indication (4) is required when labelling meat from animals aged 12 months or less and must show the sales description for each age category as; “veal” for meat from animals up to 8 months, and “beef” for meat from animals aged more than 8 months but not more than 12 months.

14.6 When displaying non-pre-packaged cut beef at retail level to the final consumer, operators must ensure that the rule on batch composition on further cutting using a maximum of three slaughterhouses and three cutting plants is followed for all cut meat.

14.7 Meat from animals born and/or raised and/or slaughtered in different countries must be clearly separated from each other, including when displayed for sale. The information displayed in the retail outlet must be placed near these meats to enable the final consumer to distinguish easily between meat of different origins.

14.7 Operators who sell non-pre-packaged cut beef displayed together for sale, must record each day, with the date, the approval numbers of the slaughterhouses where the animals were slaughtered and those of the cutting plants where the carcasses were cut. Operators must provide this information to any consumer who requests it.

14.8 During further cutting or mincing, the composition of a batch may be composed of meat derived from a group of animals which exceeds one day’s production for non-pre-packaged cut beef displayed for sale to the final consumer, provided the requirements detailed at 14.1 and 14.2 are followed.

15. How should you label beef imported from a non-EC country?

15.1 Beef imported from a non-EC country must be labelled in accordance with the EC rules. Where all the compulsory information is not available on non-EC country imports you must label with the wording "**Origin: Non-EC**" and "**Slaughtered in [name of non-EC country]**". You should also supply a reference number or code when the beef is cut or repackaged after import along with the cutting plant approval number.

15.2 Meat or offal from animals aged 12 months or less imported from a non-EC country must be labelled with the age at slaughter and the appropriate sales description of the Member State in which it is marketed (as detailed at 10.10 and 10.11). Operators in non-EC countries wishing to place meat from animals aged 12 months or less on the Community market must subject their activities to checks by a competent authority or independent third-party body (EN45011 accredited), who will ensure that the requirements of the regulations are met

16. How do the rules apply to beef approved under the Protected Geographical Indications (PGI) and Product of Designated Origin (PDO) systems?

16.1 Products approved under the PGI/PDO systems (e.g. "Scotch Beef", "Welsh Beef" and "Orkney Beef") must be labelled with the compulsory indications listed at 10.

17 What are the criteria for PGIs and PDOs?

17.1 PGI products are produced, processed or prepared within a geographical area, as defined under Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 (as amended) 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. For example, 'Scotch Beef' is a PGI and must come from quality assured cattle born, bred, slaughtered and dressed within Scotland. 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 a PDO and is produced, slaughtered and dressed exclusively on Orkney.

Section C: Other Labelling Claims under The Beef Labelling Scheme Approval System

18. What is the Beef Labelling Scheme?

18.1 The Beef Labelling Scheme (BLS) is the voluntary part of the EC beef labelling system which allows voluntary terms to be used on labels in addition to the compulsory indicators. Before use, all voluntary terms must be inspected and verified by a beef labelling verification body recognised by DARD.

19. What information needs to be approved?

19.1 Non-compulsory labelling information, such as, the method of production, the characteristics of the beef or animal from which it came, and origin claims such as the region or locality. The following are examples of information for which you will need approval. If you are not sure whether the information you wish to use requires approval, please contact DARD, QAB (see page 3). See also Appendix 5 which details standard definitions for a number claims under the Beef Labelling Scheme.

- region or locality where the animal was born and reared;
- breed or cross breed (see 19.4);
- age or gender of animal;
- method of production (e.g. farm assured, grass-fed);
- method of slaughter (e.g. halal, kosher);
- date of slaughter;
- method or length of maturation.

19.2. If you intend to label your beef with this or similar information, you must ensure that the information you are providing is common to all animals/beef from which the labelled product has been sourced. Unless you can guarantee this, we will not be able to approve your application.

19.3 You will need to obtain approval when a name is given to a product range where all the produce is said to share certain characteristics. This would include, for example, a farm assurance scheme where all the beef is said to have been sourced only from farms and slaughterhouses in certain locations or which meet certain standards.

19.4 If you are labelling your beef with the name of the breed, your labelling must make clear that the beef is derived from an animal that was either pure-bred or from a cross breed. For example, when labelling your beef as "Aberdeen Angus" we would expect the animal from which the beef came to have been pure-bred (i.e. both its sire and dam were Aberdeen Angus). However, if only the sire was Aberdeen Angus then we would expect your label to make this clear (i.e. 'Aberdeen Angus cross' or 'Aberdeen Angus-sired'), or information must be available at point of sale qualifying the claim.

19.5 Terms must also be clear to your customers. For example, a term such as "grass fed" must mean, as a minimum, that the animal concerned was fed primarily on grass in the field.

19.6 Under the compulsory system all beef must be labelled with the Member State or non-EC country of origin (where born, raised and slaughtered). Approved regional or local origin claims will still be allowed but will be subject to approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme and will be in addition to the compulsory origin labelling described in Section B. If you wish to put, for example, 'Northern Irish' or 'Ulster' on the label you will require approval. You will also need to add the compulsory UK origin indications required (see Section B).

20. What information does not need to be approved?

20.1 Compulsory labelling (Section B) does **not** need approval. Nor do you require approval for information that can easily be checked at the point of sale and information which other legislation requires you to give. The following are examples of information for which you do **not** need approval:

- the name of the product or cut (e.g. brisket, sirloin);
- the weight of the product;
- the 'best before' or 'use by' date;
- storage conditions or conditions of use (e.g. 'keep refrigerated');
- instructions for use (e.g. 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 accordance with the carcass classification grid;
- the health mark required under EU Regulations and other similar veterinary indications;
- labelling as "organic";
- PDO and PGI products.

20.2 If you are not sure whether the information you wish to use requires approval, please contact DARD, QAB (see page 3).

21. What rules must you follow under the Beef Labelling Scheme?

21.1 The information you give to your customers must be clear and not misleading. You must be able to **prove** that the information you give about your beef is true. For this purpose you must employ a verifier from our list of DARD-recognised beef labelling verification bodies, who will inspect your traceability system to ensure that your labelling information is true. A list of the recognised verifiers is despatched with the application form or can be requested from DARD, QAB (see page 3).

21.2 The DARD-recognised verifier(s), who you will be required to engage and employ at your expense, will check that the labelling information you are giving to your customers is accurate. You must give the verifier access at all times to your premises and to your records. Before the inspection of your premises you must let the verifier know exactly what labelling claims you are making. You must have available, copies of your approval document issued by DARD, QAB and the certificate(s) of product conformity issued by your verifier(s) as a result of your last inspection(s), and details of your traceability control procedures. Your verifier(s) must carry out regular checks to prove that your information is correct.

21.3 You must set up a system to guarantee that the information you give is accurate. This will probably involve further action by your suppliers and by yourself, in addition to that required under the compulsory labelling arrangements. As with compulsory labelling, your system must guarantee a link between your beef and the animal or group of animals from which it came so that you can prove the accuracy of the information you are giving to your customers.

21.4 If you wish your application to cover your beef when it is sold at outlets outside your business, you must list all of these outlets in your group application and update the list at least annually if it changes. You will need to employ your verifier to report on the outlet controls as well as yours. If the outlets are subject to verification for other claims, it may be convenient for the verifier(s) to co-ordinate verification to reduce costs.

22. How do you apply for Beef Labelling Scheme approval?

22.1 If you are a new applicant please contact DARD, QAB (see page 3) to obtain an application pack. Your application must show the labelling information you wish to give your customers and explain how you can provide evidence (through your records) that the information is true. You should send your completed application form (BLS 2) and your traceability control procedures to DARD, QAB (see page 3).

23. What happens next?

23.1 If we have any questions about your application, we will telephone or write to you. Once we have approved your application you may add the appropriate approved information to your label. As soon as you receive our letter of provisional approval you should contact your verifier to arrange for an inspection to be carried out. If, following this inspection, your verifier is satisfied

with the standard of your traceability system; a certificate of product conformity will be issued by the verifier for a stated period. You will be required, within six months of the date of your provisional approval, to send us a copy of your verifier's certificate of product conformity. After the first report, further reports will be required annually or at intervals decided by your verifier. We will review your approval in the light of each certificate of product conformity, or information from your verifier.

24. How will the information you give us be used?

24.1 We, and the enforcement authorities, will use the information in order to decide whether your application meets the rules of the Beef Labelling Scheme. We may also use the information for other purposes such as evaluation of the Scheme. All stored data is covered by the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Section D: Labelling of Imported Beef and Beef for Export With Non-Compulsory Information

25. Do you want to sell beef *imported* from other European Community (EC) Member States and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?

25.1 If you want to label beef imported from another EC Member State with information in addition to the compulsory indications (Section B) you may need to send an application for approval to the authorities of the Member State in which the production or sale of the beef in question takes place. Please first contact DARD, QAB (see page 3) for advice on how to proceed.

25.2 If it is necessary to send an application to the authorities of that Member State you will need to specify what information you wish to include on the label and explain the measures you will take to ensure the accuracy of the information. This should include the control system which would be applied at all stages of production and sale, and would also cover the handling or processing of the beef that takes place in that Member State. You would only be able to label this beef in the UK once the required country approvals had been obtained.

25.3 Simpler rules apply if you are importing beef in small retail packs labelled in one Member State according to an approved specification, where no additional information is added to the label. Labels only require approval from the originating (exporting) country and can be sold in the UK without further approval from us provided that:

- the packaging has not been changed in any way;
- the originating Member State has provided all relevant information to us in advance;
- the approval of the originating Member State also covers the labelling specification of the retail package sold here.

26. Do you want to sell beef *imported* from outside the European Community (EC) and label it with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?

26.1 If you want to label beef imported from a non-EC country with information in addition to the compulsory indications (Section B) please contact DARD, QAB (see page 3) for advice on how to proceed. You may only label with the additional information that the European Commission has given permission for the non-EC country to use.

27. Do you want to *export* beef to other European Community (EC) countries labelled with information in addition to that covered by the compulsory system?

27.1 If you want to label such beef with additional information to that covered by the compulsory system (Section B) you may need to send an application to the authorities of each Member State involved. Please contact DARD, QAB (see page 3) for advice on how to proceed. If it is necessary to send an application

to the authorities of that country you will need to specify what information you wish to include on the label and explain the measures you will take to ensure the accuracy of the information. This should include the control system which would be applied at all stages of production and sale, and would also cover the handling or processing of the beef that takes place in that country. You would then only be able to label this beef with the additional information in that country once the authorities there had approved that application.

27.2 Simpler rules apply on the labelling information if you export beef in small retail packs. DARD, QAB can give you more information about this and will be able to give advice if you experience difficulties in obtaining approval for your labels in other countries.

Appendix 1

EXAMPLES OF LABELS CONTAINING COMPULSORY INFORMATION

In the examples, information which is compulsory is shown in **[bold]** type.

Information which requires DARD approval and independent verification is shown in *[italics]*.

Label for retail:

Northern Irish beef
05/02/05/324694/1 - ref. no. / code
 Sirloin Steak
 Weight: 600 grams
 Price: £3.00
 Unit Price: £5.00/Kilo
Farm Quality Assurance NI
Slaughtered in: UK (9000)
Cutting in (or Cut in): UK (9000)
Origin : UK

Label for mince:

British minced beef*
08/07/05/346248/2 - ref. no. / code
Farm Assured
 Weight: 1 kilo
 Price: £4.75
Minced in: UK
Slaughtered in : UK

* Where all animals from which the minced beef is derived were born, raised and slaughtered in the UK.

Label for carcasses:

British beef
Kill Date
03/04/05/42864/1 - ref. no. / code
 Classification: CR3L
 Weight: 152 kilos
Slaughtered in: UK (1234)
Origin : UK
FQAS NI (if eligible)

Label for mince:

Minced beef
06/08/05/958425/2 - ref. no. / code
 Weight: 2 kilos
 Price: £9.00
Minced in: UK
Slaughtered in: UK
Origin : Ireland*

* Where the animals of origin were born in Ireland and raised in Ireland.

Label for beef with origin claims:

British beef - *Product of Northern Ireland*
05/02/05/324694/3 - ref. no. / code
 Rump Steak
 Weight: 500 grams
 Price: £2.40
 Price: £3.00
 Unit Price: £4.80/Kilo
Born in: UK
Reared / Fattened in: UK
Slaughtered in: UK (2345)
Cutting in (or Cut in): UK (6789)
Origin : UK
Matured for longer

Label for animals born and reared in Ireland and finished in NI

Northern Irish Reared
05/02/05/324694/3 - ref. no. / code
 Lean steak pieces
 Weight: 500 grams
 Price: £2.90
 Price per Kg: £5.20
Born in: Ireland
Reared in: Ireland / UK
Slaughtered in: UK (9000)
Cut in : UK (9020)
Aberdeen Angus Sired

Appendix 2

EXAMPLE OF DISPLAYS FOR COMPULSORY LABELLING FOR NON-PRE-PACKAGED BEEF

Rump Steak:

Tray: A	Ref. No. / Code AB 1234 00105
Origin: UK* - British	
Slaughtered in: UK	Cutting in: UK

* Where born, raised, slaughtered in the UK.

Striploin:

Tray: Green Trays	Ref. No. / Code MB 535 WB 14/6/05
Origin: UK* - British	
Slaughtered in: UK	Cutting in: UK

* Where born, raised, slaughtered in the UK.

Striploin:

Tray: B	Ref. No. / Code F18 – 21/06/05
Born in: Ireland	Reared in: Ireland and UK
Slaughtered in: Ireland	Cutting in: UK

Minced Beef:

Tray: C	Ref. No. / Code HB 626 – DN 5
Slaughtered in: Ireland	Minced in: UK
Origin: Ireland	

Appendix 3

Blank Labels:

Tray:	Reference number/code:
Origin:	
Slaughtered in:	Cutting in:

Tray:	Reference number/code:
Born in:	Raised in:
Slaughtered in:	Cutting in:

Minced Beef

Tray:	Reference number/code:
Slaughtered in:	Minced in:
Origin:	

● Appendix 4

Beef Labelling

Customer Information

By law, all beef and veal on sale must be clearly labelled with the EU country where the animal was born, reared and slaughtered. If the beef is imported from outside the EU, the name of the country of origin must be on the label.

The labels must have a code or reference number which allows the meat to be traced back to the animal, or batch of animals, that it came from.

There may be other terms on the label, such as the breed of the animal, the region or locality it came from, or the method of production. These terms are not compulsory, but their use must be approved by DARD.

In addition, meat from animals under 8 months old must be labelled as veal and show the age at slaughter. Meat from animals between 8 and 12 months old must be labelled as beef and show the age at slaughter.

Appendix 5

BEEF LABELLING SCHEME - STANDARD DEFINITIONS IN NI

Farm Quality Assured (This includes Farm Assured, Quality Assured, FQAS NI etc.)

- Animal born on a farm that has F.Q.A. status that has been approved by an EN 45011 independent auditor.
- Animals will also be accepted that have met the 90 day continuous residency period prior to slaughter on a F.Q.A. farm.

Northern Irish, Northern Ireland, Product of Northern Ireland, Ulster

- Product from a batch of animals, which have been born, reared and slaughtered in Northern Ireland. These animals will also qualify for British status.

Northern Irish Reared, Reared in Northern Ireland, Locally Produced

Product from a batch of animals that have resided on a farm in Northern Ireland for a minimum of 90 days prior to slaughter in Northern Ireland.

Breed

Animals that have been sired by a registered pedigree bull and can be verified by the appropriate breed society. These animals will be correctly identified in the herd book and declared on the DARD APHIS System. Additional checks on change of breed will be conducted at random. Spot checks on DNA of meat product will be verified annually.

Maturity of Beef

It is accepted good practice to age hindquarter cuts for at least 14 days and very best practice for at least 21 days. Any maturation claims need a minimum of 14 days

Sex – of animal

Steer, Heifer, Cow, Young Bull, Bull etc.

● Appendix 6

LEGISLATION

Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council 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) No. 820/97.

Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1825/2000 (as amended) laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products.

Commission Regulation (EC) No. 275/2007 of 15 March 2007 amending Regulation (EC) 1825/2000 laying down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the labelling of beef and beef products.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products.

Commission Regulation 566/2008 of 18 June 2008 laying down the detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards the marketing of meat of bovine animals aged 12 months or less.

The Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009

Appendix 7

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of Regulation 1760/2000, the following definitions apply:

- (a) “minced meat”: any meat that has been minced into fragments or passed through a spiral-screw mincer, and that falls within one of the CN codes referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No. 1760/2000 and contains less than 1% salt;
- (b) “trimmings” : small pieces of meat recognised as fit for human consumption produced exclusively during trimming operations during the boning of carcasses and/or the cutting up of meat;
- (c) “cut meat”: meat which has been cut into small cubes, slices or other individual portions that do not require further cutting by an operator before being bought by the final consumer and can be directly used by that consumer. This definition does not cover minced meat and trimmings;
- (d) “pre-packaged cut meat”: the individual pack offered unaltered to the final consumer or to an establishment engaged solely in retail sales, made up of cut meat and the packaging in which it was packaged before being offered for sale, whether the packaging covers it fully or partially, but such that the content cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging;
- (e) “non-pre-packaged cut meat”: cut meat displayed for sale non-pre-packaged in outlets for sale to the final consumer and all pieces of meat displayed for sale non-pre-packaged in outlets for sale to the final consumer, intended to be cut at the request of the final consumer;
- (f) “batch”: meat, on the bone or boned, for example, carcasses, quarters or boned pieces of meat, cut up, minced or packaged together under practically identical conditions;
- (g) “retail”: the handling and/or processing of meat and its storage at the point of sale or delivery to the final consumer, including caterers, company canteens, institutional catering, restaurants and other similar food service operations, shops, supermarket distribution centres and wholesale outlets;
- (h) “final consumer”: the ultimate consumer of cut meat who does not use it as part of a food business operation or activity.

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GUIDE**

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selling beef in Northern Ireland

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