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Red Rock **Publicity**

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Many Welsh sheep farmers remain unprepared for January tagging rule change.

Evidence that not all Welsh sheep farmers are prepared for the January tagging rule change has been identified by an independent survey conducted on behalf of Allflex at Monmouthshire Livestock Market in November.

It found 30% of farmers questioned unaware of the upcoming changes to tagging rules for lambs going to slaughter.

From January 1st 2016 all lambs for slaughter before 12 months of age at a UK abattoir, privately or through a mart must be identified with either a single electronic slaughter tag (EID) or full EID (one electronic tag and a matching non electronic tag) rather than a non-EID visual tag. The forthcoming changes were announced in 2014 as a result of the EIDCymru and slaughter derogation consultation. Lambs off Welsh farms that are born or tagged for the first time after January 1st 2016 and arriving at market without an EID tag will be rejected.

The survey was done to help ensure that all affected farmers are ready for the change before it comes in, according to Allflex Area Manager for Wales Ian Jones. "Although a majority of farmers are aware of the January changes, it is worrying that a large minority remain unprepared," he says.

"With only a few weeks before the new rules take effect, I would advise farmers unsure of how they work to contact their tag supplier. Non-compliance with the rules will prove costly so getting it right is important."

Of farmers surveyed at Monmouth, 24% were already using EID tags. According to Mr Jones, as well as providing individual traceability, EID tags are being used increasingly by farmers as a valuable management tool. "They enable lamb performance to be measured easily and quickly on farm, allowing decisions to be taken at an individual level rather than basing management choices across an entire flock," he explains.

More information can be found at www.allflex.co.uk or by calling 01450 364120.

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