Beef Labelling

Rules for the labelling of fresh or frozen beef and veal

These regulations apply to beef including veal for sale. Meat products such as pies, sausages and burgers, which contain other ingredients, are not covered by these requirements. Cooked beef e.g. that supplied by restaurants is also not covered. The aim of the regulations is to enable beef and veal on sale to be traced back to where it derived.

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Fresh and Frozen Beef & Veal

All packed fresh and frozen beef and veal e.g. whole carcases, quarters, fresh or frozen bone in / boneless beef cuts including joints, steak and dice, other than mince, must be labelled with the following compulsory indications:

- Traceability reference number or code: A number which links the meat back through the cutting plant/slaughterhouse to the animal or group of animals from which it came from.

- the country of birth of the animal or group of animals) e.g. 'Born in UK'

- the country that the animal or group of animals was reared in e.g. 'Reared in UK' or 'Raised in UK'

- ‘Slaughtered In’ (the country of slaughter) e.g. 'Slaughtered in UK'

- Licence number of the slaughterhouse, e.g. 'Slaughtered in UK (1234)'. Note: Only one licence number must appear on the beef label, therefore beef from more than one slaughterhouse must not be mixed to form a pack or batch

- ‘Cutting in’ (the country of cutting) e.g. 'Cutting In UK'

- Licence number(s) of cutting plant(s), where the beef is cut and sold on the same unlicensed premises the indication may state ‘on these premises.’

Pre-packed cut Beef

Pre-packed cut beef and veal meat which has been cut into small cubes, slices or other individual portions that do not require further cutting and is on offer to the final consumer or to a retailer maybe sold from up to three different slaughterhouses and three different cutting plants in the same packet.

It must be labelled as given above for fresh and frozen beef and as follows if more than one slaughter and/or cutting plant has been used with:

- All the countries of slaughter and the slaughterhouses licence numbers where the animals in the group were slaughtered. The information must be shown as: ‘Animals in the group slaughtered in’ and the licence numbers of the slaughterhouses.

- All the countries in which the carcases were cut and the cutting plant licence numbers. The information must be shown as: ‘Cutting of meat in batch in’ and the licence numbers of the cutting plants.
Minced beef

Minced beef must be labelled with:

- Traceability reference number or code
- ‘Slaughtered In’ (the country that the animal was slaughtered in) e.g. ‘Slaughtered in UK’. Mince can only be from animals slaughtered in one country only
- ‘Minced In’ (the country of mincing) e.g. ‘Minced in UK’ the batch must be minced in only one country
- ‘Origin’ if different from where minced, e.g. ‘Origin: Ireland’ or ‘Origin: Non-EC’ if the country is outside the EC

Trimmings

Trimmings must be labelled with:

- ‘Slaughtered In’ (the country that the animals were slaughtered in)
- the country of production and plant approval number
- the countries where the animals was born and raised in

Method of labelling

Pre-packed beef and mince

All pre-packed beef must carry the required information on the packaging.

Loose non pre-packed beef and mince

The information above must be on the meat or displayed within the shop, e.g. on a sign on the wall visible to your customers. The information must be clear enough so that customers can tell to which meat it relates.

Loose non pre-packed cut beef

Non pre-packed cut beef 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 must only come from a maximum of three cutting plants and three slaughterhouses. The batch may be more than one day's production. Meat from different countries must be displayed separately.
The meat must be labelled with:

- country of birth
- country of rearing
- country of slaughter
- country of cutting

**Method of labelling**

You must keep a record each day of the date, licence numbers of slaughterhouse and cutting plant relating to the beef for sale. These records must be available for anyone who requests them.

**Traceability**

Everyone in the supply chain must have a traceability system in place to enable beef on sale to the consumer to be traced back to the animal or group of animals from which it was originated. This system can be a manual or computerised system linking the animals, or beef which you buy, to the traceability reference number or code of the beef which you sell.

Example labels for beef where born, raised and slaughtered in the UK:

**Pre-packed sirloin steak**

British Beef  
08/07/00/324694/1 - (ref. no./code)  
Sirloin Steak  
Weight 600g  
Price £3.00  
Unit Price £5.00/kg  
Slaughtered in: UK (1234)  
Cutting in: UK (1234)

**Pre-packed minced beef**

Minced Beef  
08/07/00/324694/1 - (ref. no./code)  
Grass-fed  
Weight 1 kg  
Price £4.75  
Minced in: UK  
Slaughtered in: UK
Non pre-packed beef
Ref no/code: DG 1234 00107
Origin: UK
Slaughtered in: UK
Slaughterhouse licence No. 1234
Cutting in: UK
Cutting plant licence No. 5678

Non pre-packed cut beef
Green Trays:
Ref. no. /code MB 535 WB 14/08/00
Origin: UK
Slaughtered in: UK
Cutting in: UK

Non pre-packed minced beef
Red Trays:
Ref. no. /code HB626 - DN 5
Slaughtered in: UK
Minced in: UK

The above are legal requirements

They are the provisions of the Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations 2010. Failing to comply with these regulations is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £5,000.

Voluntary schemes

If you wish to make claims in addition to the information required by the Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations 2010, you are advised to contact The Rural Payments Agency before making any such statement. E.g. Aberdeen Angus:

Beef Labelling Section, Meat Technical Schemes (MTS)
The Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
Eden Bridge House
Lowther Street
Carlisle CA3 8DX

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