

Traceability rules to ensure the labelling of the place of rearing of meat as laid down in Regulation (EC) No 1337/2013

1. General aspects

From 1 April 2015 the indication of the country of origin is obligatory on the label of fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry. Article 5(1)a of Regulation 1337/2013 relates the origin of meat to a defined rearing period in the life of the animal.

According to Article 3(2) of the Regulation slaughterhouses are responsible to ensure the link between the meat and the animal(s) it has been obtained. Slaughterhouses are obliged to record the provenance information and transmit this information to operators at the subsequent stages.

Consequently, if slaughterhouses accept animals without complete provenance information they cannot sell the meat unprocessed to operators at subsequent stages. The meat without provenance information can only be marketed in form of products for which provenance information is not obligatory according to Regulation (EU) 1169/2011.

Farmers that sell animals to slaughterhouses provide the provenance information according to Art 5(1)a on the basis of existing traceability rules for live animals and available on farm documentation.

According to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 on food hygiene (and implementing Regulation 2074/2005) all animals to be slaughtered must be accompanied by the food chain information linking the animal with the holding of provenance. In the majority of cases animals have not moved during their last period of fattening and the last holding (holding of provenance) can provide evidence about the rearing period referred in Art 4(1)a of Regulation 1337/2013. Only in cases where the necessary rearing period involves more than only the last holding before slaughter additional information must be provided on the basis of the existing rules on animal identification and holding registration for animal health purposes.

If deemed necessary, Member States can provide elements in national legislation on traceability of live animals to ensure that the provenance information is provided when animals arrive to a slaughterhouse.

2. Specific aspects of the different species concerned

2.1 Poultry

No specific EU rules on identification and registration of poultry exist.

'reared in' according to Art 5(1)a(iii) of 1337/2013: latest period of at least one month

Normal rearing period in weeks:

broiler	5
duck	7-12
goose	10-32
guinea fowl	12
turkey	16-22

In general, poultry is not moved during the rearing after being placed for growing/fattening before slaughter. The fattening farm from where the animals are delivered to the slaughter house can provide evidence of the country of rearing (on the base of food chain information).

2.2 Sheep and goats

EU rules on identification and registration of sheep and goats in Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 (individual eartags with country code of birth, holding register, movement document, national database). The eartag contains the country code of the MS of birth.

'reared in' according to Art 5(1)a(ii): latest period of 6 month; if slaughtered younger than 6 month the whole rearing period

Animals slaughtered in MS of birth

Eartag provides evidence of the country of rearing.

Animals not slaughtered in MS of birth

The last fattener provides evidence on the age of the animal and the respective holding periods in different MSs on the basis of movement documents, holding registers or the national databases.

Animals that show already signs of second dentation (starting at the age of 1 year) are perceived as being older than 6 months. In such cases evidence about the latest period of 6 months is sufficient.

2.3 Pigs

EU rules on identification and registration are laid down in Council Directive 2008/71 and Commission Decision 2000/678/EC (identification marks with holding code during each movement [but no individual identification], holding registers, national databases [recording movements of groups]).

'reared in' according to Art 5(1)a(i):

Case 1: slaughtered > 6 months: latest rearing period of 4 month

Case 2: slaughtered < 6 months and at least 80kg live weight: period after 30 kg live weight

Case 3: slaughtered <80 kg live weight: whole rearing period

All weight limits are not to be understood as the weight of individual animals but as average weights of animals that are traded in groups in singular consignments in one transport means. This takes into account that the weight is subject to biological variation.

Directive 2008/71 does not require individual identification of pigs, nor does it require the recording of weights or age. It is, therefore, not possible to trace individual pigs and record data on age and weight during their live.

The final weight is routinely determined at slaughter. If the live weight is not directly measured, it can be calculated from the carcass weight (coefficient 0,78).

The weight of 30 kg characterises a production step when at the age of about 10 weeks the piglets are physically moved from the piglet rearing unit to the fattening unit.

Case 1.

Under normal production conditions pigs achieve within 6 months a carcass weight of at least 85 kg (109 Kg live weight).. No further evidence is required about the age of animals with a carcass weight of 85 kg or above- The fattening farm, from where the animals are delivered to the slaughter house, is in most of the cases the farm on which the animals have spent their last 4 months and can provide the evidence that the animals spent this minimal period in the same country. The food chain information links the animal to the holding of provenance. This is controllable on the basis of holding register, national database entries and on farm documentation (bills, contracts).

Case 2.

Animals slaughtered between 80 and 109 Kg live weight (62 to 85 Kg carcass weight) are subject to the verification of 30 kg to 80 Kg rearing period. The weight of 30 kg characterises the start of the fattening period when piglets for further fattening are physically moved into the fattening unit.

The fattening farm, from where the animals are delivered to the slaughter house, is in most of the cases the farm on which the animals have been reared since the weight of 30 kg. The food chain information links the animal to the holding of provenance. This is controllable on the basis of holding register, national database entries and on farm documentation (bills, contracts).

For this range of weight in case the producer would argue that animals are older than 6 months and therefore subject to the last 4 months condition, the available information on rearing intensity (daily gain) together with the final weigh allows the calculation of the age of the animal. This is also controllable on the basis of on farm documentation.

If appropriate, Member States have the power (by implementing Directive 2008/71) to lay down national rules and demand recording of the average weight when piglets are moved into the fattening unit.

Case 3.

For animals slaughtered with less than 80 Kg live weight (62 Kg carcass weight) the food chain information links the animal to the holding of provenance. The fattener that delivers the animals to the slaughter house provides evidence on the Member State(s) where the animals were reared on the basis of holding register, national database entries and on farm documentation (bills, contracts). In most of the cases such animals move from the holding of birth to the slaughter house, so that the food chain information is sufficient.

3. Rearing in several Member States or third countries.

When there is evidence that the animals moved from one member state or third country to another during the minimum rearing periods as expressed in point 2 (on the basis of existing food chain information) then the producer provides to the slaughter house the information that the animals have been reared in "several member states of the EU", in "several non-EU countries" or in "several

EU and non-EU countries" pending on the case the animals were or not imported directly for slaughter or for further rearing.