

15 January 2003

## **MEP SEEKS SOLUTION TO SHEEP "ID" NIGHTMARE**

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" This is MEP Ian Hudghton's view following the publication of new EU sheep identification procedures, which have angered many sheep farmers. The recently published EU proposals mean that each and every sheep is given its own ID number and has to be individually recorded each and every time it is moved, causing a bureaucratic nightmare for Scottish sheep farmers. The SNP member says that the current Scottish flock-tagging system is working and that it would be nonsensical to ditch a perfectly satisfactory system in favour of the new proposals.

Mr Hudghton, who has been phoned by anxious sheep farmers about the tagging plans, says:

"I have written to MSP Ross Finnie expressing my concerns and suggesting that the text of the Directive is loose enough to allow scope for the current system to be retained. Animals are to be identified in accordance with Directive 92/102/EEC. My reading of the section on animal identification suggests to me that the current Scottish system would be permissible. I have therefore written to the Scottish Minister to ask him for his interpretation of the legislation and setting out my concerns if the new proposals are adopted."

ENDS -

NOTES: The relevant text from Directive 92/102/EEC is as follows:

*"Article 4, 1(b) - any keeper of sheep. .. whose holding is listed in accordance with Article 3 (1) (a) shall keep a register including at least the total number of sheep... present on the holding each year on a date to be determined by the competent authority.*

*The register shall also include:*

- an up-to-date statement of the number of live female sheep ... which are over 12 months of age or which have given birth present on the holding;*
- the movements (numbers of animals concerned by each entering or leaving operation) of sheep ... on at least the basis of aggregate movements stating as appropriate their origin or destination, their mark and the date of such movements.*

*Article 4,2 - However, in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 18 of Directive 90/425/EEC, a simplified registration procedure shall be established ... before 1 October 1994 for sheep ... kept on common pasture or raised in regions which are isolated geographically."*

*Article 4, 3 - However, the competent authority may authorize the movement of sheep ... without marks between holdings with the same health status in the same ownership and situated in that authority's territory, provided that each such movement occurs under a national system which enables the animal to be traced back to the holding on which it was born."*