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• UKIP MEP urges Commission not to penalise sheep farmers struggling to cope with EID

“Don’t punish the farmers” is the message from Welsh MEP John Bufton in the latest twist of his on-going fight against EID.

In a second letter to the Commission (below), Mr Bufton urges the EU to consider the possibility of a moratorium on penalising farmers for non-implementation of sheep EID in Wales and UK. In a previous letter the MEP had urged for the policy to be introduced on a voluntary basis before its implementation over the New Year.

In the correspondence to the Commission, he argues “the European regulation to tag 30 million sheep in the UK (9 million in Wales) on the basis of improving disease control has clearly not been thought through. In my opinion, the technology used for sheep EID has major flaws and at present it does not give accurate readings. However the legislation was pushed through at Christmas despite calls for the practice to be initially voluntary. As a result farmers struggling to fully adopt EID are subject to particular sanctions if deemed to be non-compliant.”

Speaking in his home town of Rhayader in Mid-Wales, Mr Bufton said “It’s getting to the point where there is absolutely no flexibility or compassion in the way the EU implements its policies. There is a complete disregard to the individual needs of different member states, something which you would think would be fundamental to a union of 26 different countries.

“I have time and again urged the Commission to approach the implementation of EID differently to prevent hardworking farmers from being punished during a time when agriculture is struggling, the economy is on its knees and the winter has been extremely long and cold.

“Sheep farming is a national pride in Wales and something we should fiercely protect. I refuse to let this Commission tell us how the job should be done. Sheep farming is in our blood.

“I have pushed the Commission on how farmers are being helped to adopt EID and whether they would consider imposing a moratorium on penalising non-compliant farms. It is about time the Commission formally acknowledged the difficulties faced by some farmers and prepared a framework for support. They point blank refused to introduce sheep tagging voluntarily despite many calls from member states and farming unions.

This issue is so serious it is above party politics. The farming industry in Wales and the rest of the UK is under severe risk. We must all do everything that we can to protect our sheep industry in the UK.”

Written letter from John Bufton (EFD) to the Commission

Subject: Possibility of moratorium on penalising farmers for non-implementation of sheep EID in Wales and UK

The European regulation to tag 30 million sheep in the UK (9 million in Wales) on the basis of improving disease control has clearly not been thought through. In my opinion, the technology used for sheep EID has major flaws and at present it does not give accurate readings. However the legislation was pushed through at Christmas despite calls for the practice to be initially voluntary. As a result farmers struggling to fully adopt EID are subject to particular sanctions if

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deemed to be non-compliant.

I would like to raise the following questions:

1. How are farmers being helped to adopt EID and what sort of exceptions and exemptions do you currently lay out to mitigate the possibility that farmers will be unfairly penalised?
2. Would the Commission consider imposing a moratorium on penalties for non-compliance in place of not introducing EID on a voluntary basis?
3. Will farmers with genuine problems have an avenue for compensation if they are penalised?
4. What measures are being taken to monitor the efficacy of the equipment under various conditions, particularly in those regions with adverse weather conditions?
5. Would the Commission formally acknowledge the difficulties faced by some farmers and prepare a framework for support?

I would urge the Commission to consider these concessions in order to help our farming industry in the difficult climate that it currently faces.

This issue is so serious it is above party politics. The farming industry in Wales and the rest of the UK is under severe risk. We must all do everything that we can to protect our sheep industry in the UK.

www.johnbufon.eu

["Hustles in Brussels" \(blog\)](#)