

The Rt Hon Emma Reynolds MP

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

9<sup>th</sup> March 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

The UK meat processing sector is increasingly concerned that the integrity and effectiveness of livestock traceability across Great Britain is being undermined by the development of separate animal movement recording systems in the devolved administrations.

Traceability is a cornerstone of the UK's animal health framework, underpinning disease control, food safety, consumer confidence and international trade. For processors, a system that provides accurate, consistent and timely information on livestock movements is essential for managing supply chains, responding to disease incidents, and demonstrating compliance with domestic and export requirements. Effective traceability also enables retailers to provide assurance to consumers, while ensuring that livestock produced by farmers can be reliably tracked from farm through processing to the final product in near real time.

However, the current direction of policy – with England, Scotland and Wales developing distinct livestock traceability platforms and databases – risks fragmenting what needs to be a unified system. Livestock supply chains operate across administrative borders every day. Animals are routinely born in one part of Great Britain, reared in another and slaughtered in a third. If the systems used to record these movements diverge significantly, the result could be duplication, inconsistency in data standards, delays in accessing information and increased administrative burden for farmers, markets, hauliers and processors.

From a consumer and global perspective, the priority must be a single, coherent framework for recording and accessing livestock movement data across Great Britain. There are legitimate reasons for devolved administrations to modernise their systems, this must not come at the cost of interoperability and alignment. A fragmented approach risks weakening the very traceability safeguards that protect animal health and public confidence in the food chain.

There is therefore a strong case for renewed coordination between the UK Government and devolved administrations to ensure that livestock traceability systems remain fully compatible and function as one cohesive network across Great Britain. At a minimum, this requires common data standards, seamless data sharing and a unified approach to recording animal movements so that the industry can operate with a single, reliable traceability framework.



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Maintaining an integrated traceability system is not simply an administrative preference; it is fundamental to safeguarding disease control capability, protecting market access and ensuring the efficient functioning of the GB livestock supply chain. The meat processing sector strongly urges governments across Great Britain to work together to preserve a coherent, interoperable system that reflects the reality of an integrated livestock industry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'N.P. Allen.' The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Nick Allen**  
Chief Executive