



If it's true that the basic cost of the EU scheme to the UK farmer would be between £13,000 and £16,000 – according to DEFRA – and if it's true that the average UK farmer is earning below £15,000 a year, then both the sheep industry and the animal tagging industry can kiss each other goodbye.

With about 67 million sheep movements a year, how could the sheep farmers cope with the costs? And let's not forget the rising feed costs.

Animal tagging is a novel idea, one that I support wholeheartedly. But like many types of technology, it needs to be supported by a justifiable business strategy. The much-touted Wireless Application Protocol (WAP) has been around for more than 10 years, but hey, if you can organise a knees-up with good old text messaging, why need WAP? Similarly, if you can get by with good old head-counting and low-tech ID methods, why bother upgrading?

But if we have a reliable tracking and tracing system in place, it will be a lot easier to know where to look first when the diseases strike again.

Contact:

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(No) thanks to global warming, midges can survive the Northern European winter and spread the disease all year round. Isn't it time the animal health industry stops compensating for other industries' greenhouse activities, and do something to reduce carbon emission in agriculture? Photo: *Institute of Animal Health*

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