

Importing fishery products or bivalve molluscs

There are strict rules for the commercial import from outside the European Union (EU) of fishery products, bivalve molluscs and products that contain them.

The following organisms are defined as fishery products:

- crustaceans - prawns, lobsters, crayfish, crabs and shrimps
- cephalopods – octopus, squid and cuttlefish
- aquaculture products – farmed salmon, trout, prawns, shrimps
- fish oils – for human consumption
- Tunicates - sea squirts
- Echinoderms - sea urchins and sea cucumbers
- Gastropods - whelks, winkles and abalone

Bivalve molluscs are oysters, mussels, clams, cockles and scallops.

Bivalve molluscs are filter feeders, which means they are at risk of ingesting dangerous bacteria. Because of this risk these species can only be commercially harvested from approved production areas. These areas are monitored to ensure they meet the toxin and microbiological criteria [Council Regulation 852/2004](#)

If you are importing a product of animal origin (including fishery products and bivalve molluscs) you should check that the exporting country and establishment is authorised.

Imports from approved non-EU countries

Imports must meet the following conditions:

- come from an approved non-EU country
- be accompanied by appropriate signed health certification
- come from EU-approved fishery product establishment, premises or approved bivalve mollusc production areas

- enter the EU through an officially designated Border Inspection Post (BIP) where veterinary/hygiene checks are carried out by an Official Fish Inspector
- all consignments must be pre-notified to the BIP prior to arrival
- public health conditions for the production and placing on the market of fishery products and bivalve molluscs are outlined in

Some approved non-EU countries are only allowed to export either fishery products or bivalve molluscs. It is therefore important to know under which category your product falls see [2006/766/EC](#)

Imports of fishery products from non-EU countries

When importing fishery products from outside of the EU, you must check the country is approved. The EU Commission decides whether each non-EU country meets the required hygiene standards to ensure produce can enter Europe. Approved countries must adhere to the conditions set by the EU Commission.

For a list of non-EU countries with approved establishments or bivalve mollusc production areas see [2006/766/EC](#)

Controls at point of entry into the UK from non-EU countries

When bringing goods into the EU from outside it importers must notify the border inspection port beforehand. Imports arriving from countries outside the EU are subject to veterinary checks, this includes documentary, identity and physical checks at the border inspection port.

A charge will be made for all mandatory random checks required by EU legislation, which the importer must pay. Failure to comply with regulations may result in goods being returned to the non-EU country or destroyed - at the cost of the importer.

For information about veterinary checks, prior notification of BIPs, charges and failed consignments see the [controls at point of entry into the UK](#).

Bivalve molluscs

In [Regulation 853/2004](#) bivalve molluscs are defined as filter feeding lamellibranch molluscs. These products are filter feeders which means they are at risk of ingesting dangerous bacteria. If humans eat these fish products carrying dangerous bacteria, it could be dangerous to their health.

Because of this risk these species can only be commercially harvested from approved production areas. which are monitored to ensure they meet the toxin and microbiological criteria.

If your importing products of animal origin, you should check that the exporting country is authorised.

Identification marking

Under [Regulation 853/2004](#), it is a requirement that consignments of fishery products and bivalve molluscs display an identification mark in accordance with Annex II, which applies to most products of animal origin.

It is the responsibility of food business operators in the UK to ensure that products from other Member States do not pose a health risk to the public. The destination food business operator (the UK-based food premises), at its own discretion, will carry out a system of own checks under a predefined HACCP (food safety management) plan to meet required hygiene standards.

Illegal fishing

Fish imports from outside the EU are subject to new rules under the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Imports require certification detailing when the fish was caught and that the vessel was acting legally. For further information please see the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#).

Imports of scallops from the United States

Imports of live, frozen or processed bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods for human consumption from the United States are not permitted.

However food business operators may import the adductor muscle from pectinidae (scallops) of non-aquaculture origin, completely separated from the viscera and gonads.

Legislation on fish imports

- [FIN 20/2008](#) Import requirements for bulk consignments of fish oil, glucosamine, chondroitin and chitosan. This concerns bulk imports of fish oil, glucosamine, chondroitin and chitosan and lays out the measures that must be taken when importing these into the EU from a third party country.
- [2006/766/EC](#) Establishing the lists of third countries and territories from which imports of bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates, marine gastropods and fishery products are permitted

Information for importing composite products containing fish or fishery products, or bivalve molluscs can be found within our [frequently asked questions](#) and [flowchart](#).

See the step-by-step guide to importing fishery products from approved non-EU countries.

[Importing fishery products and bivalve molluscs from approved non-EU countries to the UK: Step-by-step guide](#) (370.77 KB)