

Importing high-risk food and feed into GB

Defining what a high-risk product is, guidance on aflatoxin levels in imported food, current GB restrictions and guidance for importing certain products from defined countries.

All products imported into Great Britain (GB) must comply with the law on contaminants. These laws are put into place to protect public health.

There are certain types of food which are considered high risk, if you are involved with importing them, then you must be aware of this guidance.

If imported products fail to meet the correct standards they will not be allowed into GB. It is important to note that restricted goods can only be imported through [Border Control Posts \(BCPs\)](#), where documentary checks must be carried out and physical checks may be required prior to release. If you are importing foods which contain contaminants you must ensure you import through a BCP, which can check your products.

Products may be considered high risk if they contain:

- contaminants - mycotoxins and aflatoxins
- pesticides
- Microorganism that present a risk to public health, such as *Salmonella* or Listeria

Information on high-risk products, country of origin and the frequency of checks can be found in assimilated [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#) as amended. This Regulation controls imported food and feed of non-animal origin.

Products that are controlled at the border, may be permitted to move inland pending the results of laboratory tests. However, arrangements must be put in place to ensure that the consignment remains under the continuous control of the competent authorities and cannot be tampered with in any manner pending the results of the laboratory checks. This can only be permitted with agreement of the port health authority.

Until the results of the laboratory checks are known, the consignment must be stored at a Customs-controlled warehouse or a UK External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF). If you have any questions/queries, please email imported.food@food.gov.uk.

Please follow this link to see the [current list of ETSF operators](#).

Important

It is essential to pre-notify authorities in Great Britain before high-risk food and feed, including products of animal origin, arrive. Importers and import agents must use the online import of products, animals, food and feed system (IPAFFS) to do this.

Guidance on the import of high-risk food and feed not of animal origin from the EU to Great Britain can be found [here](#).

Foodstuffs with current restrictions

These controls exist to protect public health and may either suspend imports or specify conditions of import. In most cases, consignments may only be imported through designated entry points, documentary checks must be carried out and sampling and analysis or examination may be required prior to release. You can find here the list of [foodstuffs with GB import restrictions](#).

Aflatoxin levels in imported food

Aflatoxins are a type of natural toxin which are found in food and are linked with cancer when eaten at high levels. Some spices, nuts, dried fruit and cereals, including cereal products like breakfast cereals, can contain high levels of aflatoxins.

There are limits on the level of aflatoxins that can be in foods imported into GB and some products might need to be tested.

Pesticide levels in imported food

Certain products of non-animal origin from certain third countries are controlled due to the risks of contamination with pesticides residues.

Importing produce from China

Permitted products of animal origin which are imported from China must comply with specific health conditions.

The following products can enter GB providing consignments adhere to the following rules:

- undergoes pre-shipment checks for the presence of the illegal veterinary medicines chloramphenicol and nitrofurans and their metabolites
- is accompanied by a signed declaration from the Chinese competent authority with the analytical check results

Fishery products are all animal products derived from fish. Aquaculture is a type of fishery product that has been farmed.

Consignments of aquaculture need to undergo pre-shipment checks for the presence of malachite green, crystal violet and their metabolites. Aquaculture must be accompanied by a signed declaration from the Chinese competent authority with the analytical results.

For full controls and a complete list of controlled products see the assimilated [Commission Decision 2002/994/EC](#).

The import restrictions for some poultry products from China remain in place due to the outbreak of avian (bird) flu.

Restricted food stuffs

Soy sauce containing 3-MCPD

Some soy sauce contains a dangerous chemical called 3-MCPD. There are limits on the levels of 3-MCPD that can be present in products imported into GB.

These are:

- soy sauce can contain levels of 3-MCPD no higher than 0.02 mg/kg
- this is for the liquid product containing 40% dry matter, which corresponds to a maximum level of 0.05 mg/kg in the dry matter

Import ban on jelly sweets

There are restrictions on the additives permitted in certain jelly confectionery because there is a risk of choking:

- The use in jelly mini-cups of certain additives specified in Annex II of assimilated [Regulation \(EC\) 1333/2008 as amended](#), and the sale of these jelly mini-cups, is prohibited
- In addition, the use of E425 konjac in all jelly confectionery, including jelly mini-cups, and the sale of such confectionery, is not permitted under Regulation 1333/2008
- These provisions are enforced by way of [The Food Additives, Flavourings, Enzymes and Extraction Solvents \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

Kava kava import ban

Kava Kava, a member of the pepper family, is as a traditional herbal remedy for the treatment of anxiety. The herb has been banned since 2003. This is because of concerns about its toxic effect on the liver. Kava kava supplements, or foods containing this herb cannot be imported into GB.

Illegal dye in spices and palm oils

Certain spices are at risk of contamination. Food authorities regulate high risk imports. If illegal dye levels are at or above 0.5 parts per million (0.5ppm) they are rejected.

Spices at risk of contamination from illegal dye include:

- dried chilli
- chilli products
- curry powder
- palm oil