Importing products of animal origin

Importing products of animal origin (POAO) or fishery products has potential hazards which businesses should be aware of.

This includes the following food groups:

- meat, including fresh meat, meat products, minced meat, meat preparations, poultry meat, rabbit, farmed game meat and wild game meat
- eggs and egg products
- milk and milk products
- honey gelatine and gelatine products

Importing composite product containing animal produce must follow similar rules.

A composite product is:

- foodstuff that contains both processed animal products and products of plant origin, for example, salami
- where the processing of the primary product is essential to the production of the final foodstuff

Importing into GB from EU countries

The UK government has introduced the first phase of the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) for food and feed imported into Great Britain from EU and EFTA countries. All medium risk imported products of animal origin from the EU and EFTA will now be required to be accompanied by an Export Health Certificate.

This page is currently being updated to reflect the most recent UK Government guidance. More information on importing products of animal origin to GB from the EU and EFTA.

Importing into GB from non-EU countries

For products of animal origin imported from non-EU countries, the current requirements will continue until the second phase of BTOM implementation on 30 April 2024. Until then, traders must continue to:

- notify the?border control post (BCP)?in advance of arrival of any POAO consignments
- submit the relevant documentation to the BCP, including an original health certificate. The type of certification required is dependent on the product type and country of origin present the goods to the BCP for veterinary checks to take place
- pay for all charges for the inspection of the goods retain the CHED, issued upon clearance, for one year at the first point of destination of goods in GB

Food supplements which are packaged for the final consumer containing glucosamine, chondroitin, or chitosan, do not need to be imported through a Border Inspection Post and are not subject to veterinary checks.

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

Border Control Posts

Border Controls Posts (BCPs) handle products of animal origin which is subject to import controls on arrival to Great Britain. Goods that fail checks will not be allowed into the UK and may be destroyed.

Importing test samples of food containing POAO

Including meat, honey or dairy products.

If you want to import samples of POAO, then you must check what and how much is allowed and complete an authorisation form. For further information contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). Find and download the POAO authorisation application form.

If APHA provides you with an authorisation exempting your product or products from checks at Border Inspection Posts, then these samples may be brought into GB without the need to be accompanied by certification. But they must be accompanied by the original authorisation form.

However, if they are to be used in taste testing, they must be safe for human consumption, and also

- not be contaminated
- be from an approved country
- have been heat treated
- only be consumed by employees and trade customers (i.e. representatives of companies that may purchase future products) who must be advised that the products have not been subjected to imported food checks at any Border Control Post on entry to the UK. Authorisations are not issued for samples intended for taste testing by the general public

Importers must ensure that their goods are safe and legal before they are purchased from producers and imported into the UK, therefore they may wish to test their products before importing them.

Public Analysts, who are skilled scientists, are available to test that food samples comply with food safety requirements by undertaking chemical analysis and/or by arranging for microbiological examination, although there is no legal requirement for importers to do so.

See our list of Official Food Control Laboratories in the UK.

In addition, there are a number of other laboratories in GB and abroad that would undertake the work that importers may require. The importer could then arrange for the analysis report to form the basis of their quality controls for their supplier.