

Importing products of animal origin

Imports refer only to products which come from outside of the EU. Importing products of animal origin (POAO) or fishery products has potential hazards which all involved 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 from a non-EU country

Those involved with importing products of animal origin from a non-EU country are required to

- notify the BIP in advance of arrival of any POAO consignments
- submit the relevant documentation to the BIP, 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 BIP for veterinary checks to take place
- pay for all charges for the inspection of the goods retain the CVED, issued upon clearance, for one year at the first point of destination of goods in the EU

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.

Border inspection posts

Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) handle products of animal origin which is being imported into the UK. These products must be presented at a designated border inspection post (BIP) for veterinary checks to be carried out.

Goods that fail these checks will not be allowed into the UK and may be destroyed. Animal products entering the UK from other EU Member States must have undergone import checks at a BIP where they entered the EU.

For a full list of controls see [Commission Decision 2007/275/EC](#)

There are two types of BIP which handle products of animal origin – those who handle products

intended for human consumption and those who don't. There are some exception posts which can process both.

See a list of the different types of UK BIPs on the [Department for Environment Food and Rural Affair](#).

Free circulation within the EU

Free circulation is the movement of food products freely within the EU without custom checks. Goods that fail checks upon entering the UK must be re-exported outside of the EU, destroyed.

Imported goods can receive free circulation within the EU once they have received a Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED).

Once the CVED has been issued, the produce of animal origin is given free circulation within the EU. Blank CVED and guidance for completion

For information on charges for veterinary checks see the appropriate legislation for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI).

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 the UK 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 non-EU country (see [European Commission](#))
 - 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 Inspection 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 the UK 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.

European Commission guidance

European Commission guidance and interpretation of the rules on hygiene of foodstuffs is available. The guidance clarifies rules on food imports and the hygiene of foodstuffs, as outlined in Regulation [852/2004](#), [853/2004](#), [854/2004](#) and on the rules of official feed and food controls as per Regulation [882/2004](#).

The guidance aims to assist food businesses and government authorities to better understand these regulations and to apply them correctly and in a consistent way.

The guidance refers mainly to the new EU food hygiene requirements and the consequences for food imports. In addition to food hygiene requirements, other measures may apply, including health and plant health requirements. Where appropriate, the guidance refers to such measures.

We provide [guidance on importing from approved EU countries](#) in a step-by-step guide.