

# Edible insects guidance

Guidance for businesses on authorisation of edible insects as novel foods.  
Important

From 1 January 2024, food products containing edible insects may only remain on the market in Great Britain (GB) if we received a novel food application for that edible insect species on or before 31 December 2023.

Valid novel food applications were submitted by that date for the following four edible insect species only:

1. **Yellow mealworm** (*Tenebrio molitor*)
2. **House cricket** (*Acheta domesticus*)
3. **Banded cricket** (*Gryllodes sigillatus*)
4. **Black soldier fly** (*Hermetia illucens*)

If you sell products containing any other edible insects, you must immediately remove them from the market and make a full application for novel food authorisation. You will be able to place them back on the market in GB, once they have been authorised.

## Edible insects as novel foods

There is no evidence for a significant history of consumption of most edible insects in the UK or European Union (EU) before 15 May 1997. That's why these insects are considered a novel food under [assimilated Regulation \(EU\) 2015/2283](#).

This means that they need to undergo mandatory pre-market safety assessment and authorisation before they can be legally placed on the market in Great Britain.

Find out more about novel foods in our [Novel foods authorisation guidance](#).

## Edible insects in the EU and UK before the EU Exit

All edible insects, except for the German cheese mite and flour mite, were recognised as novel foods in EU novel food regulations in 2015. This introduced the requirement for the products to be authorised before they can be placed on the EU market, which then included the UK.

Transitional measures allowed seven edible insect species to remain on the market in the EU and UK, subject to several specific conditions. Those species were:

1. Lesser mealworm (*Alphitobius diaperinus* larvae)
2. House cricket (*Acheta domesticus*)
3. Yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*)
4. Banded or decorated cricket (*Gryllodes sigillatus*)
5. Bird grasshopper / desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*)

6. Migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*)
7. Black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*)

## Transitional measures in GB

### Transitional measures before 31 December 2023

Regulation 20 of the [Food and Feed \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2022](#) came into force on 31 December 2022. It amended the original EU transitional arrangements and permitted the seven eligible edible insect products listed above to remain on the market in Great Britain until 31 December 2023.

### The end of transitional measures for edible insects after 31 December 2023

The GB-specific transitional measures ended on 31 December 2023.

From 1 January 2024 the only species that may remain on the market in GB without pre-market authorisation, until a decision is reached on their novel food application, are those which meet all the following criteria:

- meet the original EU conditions
- are the subject of a current application under the novel foods regulations to either the Food Standards Agency or Food Standards Scotland submitted by 31 December 2023

## Transitional measures in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, novel foods and processes, including edible insects, must undergo a safety assessment and authorisation before being placed on the market. Businesses seeking to place their products on the NI market should follow EU rules and the European Commission's authorisation process. For guidance on starting this process, visit [Novel food applications: regulations and guidance page](#) on the EFSA website.

Information on novel foods currently authorised for sale in the EU and Northern Ireland can be found in the [EU Union List of Novel Foods](#). The [EU Novel Food Status Catalogue](#) can also be used to search for the status of specific products.

Retail agri-food goods moving through the Northern Ireland (NI) Retail Movement Scheme will be able to meet Great Britain public health requirements as set out in legislation, including in relation to novel foods. NIRMS applies to pre-packed retail agri-food goods intended for final consumer sale. A novel food authorised in England, Wales or Scotland will therefore be able to move into Northern Ireland via NIRMS. A list of these can be found in the [register of novel foods](#).

In Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland), there are transitional measures in place for edible insect products that were lawfully placed on the market in the EU prior to EU exit to remain on the market in Northern Ireland. Until a final decision has been adopted by the EU Commission on any application which meets the requirements under Article 35 (2), Regulation (EU) No. 2015/2283, these products may continue to be placed on the NI market. A list of edible insects that are authorised to be placed on the market in Northern Ireland can be found on the [European Commission website](#).