

Exports of food and drink

Information for businesses on how to export food and drink products to other non-EU countries.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the UK Central Competent Authority (CCA) for International Trade. They are responsible for negotiating new export markets in other non-EU countries and for ensuring continued access to those export markets.

Our role is to provide assurance to Defra that food and drink exported from the UK to non-EU countries has been produced in accordance with UK legislative requirements. We also make sure that it meets any additional import requirements that have been set by the destination country.

Export certification

Certain non-EU countries will require that some UK food and drink exports will require to be certified by a UK certifying authority before being exported. Information on export certification is available from the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(Defra\)](#) and Northern Ireland [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\)](#) websites.

Before you export food and drink products from the UK to other non-EU countries, you must check if there are any specific restrictions with:

- your customer
- the authorities in the destination country
- the relevant country's [foreign embassy](#) in the UK

The FSA is not responsible for issuing any type of export certification.

Exporting food and drink to EU countries

During the transition period (until 31 December 2020), UK food and drink remains subject to the EU rules on the 'free movement' of goods within the EU. Free movement is where goods, including food products, can freely move within the EU without customs checks.

[Defra guidance on exporting food, drink and agricultural products](#)

[DAERA general information about exporting](#)

Defra and DAERA will provide guidance on any new rules for exporting to EU countries from 1 January 2020 on their websites.

Exporting food and drink to other non-EU countries

Individual countries will have specific requirements in terms of the types of documentation needed for products being imported. The requirements will differ depending on the country and the specific type of product.

There is no single source of information of those individual product to country requirements. When commercially exporting food or drink from the UK to another non-EU country, it is your responsibility to check the restrictions and export conditions that apply before you export.

In Great Britain, the [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#) are responsible for issuing export health certificates (EHC) for certain products of animal origin (POAO) to specific third countries. Find out [how to get an export health certificate](#).

In Northern Ireland, DAERA is responsible for issuing these EHCs for POAO.

Local authorities or district councils can provide export certification for certain products not covered by official EHCs issued by APHA and DAERA. This can relate to products that are:

- not of animal origin
- processed meat products
- manufactured food and drinks

The type of certification that needs to be provided is specific to the product being exported and the requirements of the destination country.

You should provide the information you have gathered on the import requirements of the destination country to your local authority or district council. This will inform what the export certification needs to say.

The minimum required by non-EU countries in such certification is usually confirmation that the product is:

- produced in accordance with domestic hygiene rules
- fit for human consumption
- freely available for sale within the UK

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) can also provide [Certificates of Free Sale](#) for the export of certain processed food and drink products.

Additional sources of information on exporting

The [Department for International Trade \(DIT\)](#) has a specific remit to help businesses export and grow into global markets. They have developed the website [great.gov.uk](#) which has tailored support and advice for businesses. This advice can help you start exporting or increase the amount of goods and services they sell overseas.

The [Open to Export](#) website is a free online information service from The Institute of Export & International Trade. It is dedicated to helping small UK businesses get ready to export and expand internationally.

trade bodies that can also help with advice on exporting your products include:

- [Food and Drink Federation](#)
- [Food and Drink Exporters Association](#)
- [Provision Trade Federation](#)

The [Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association](#) can offer advice on exporting products.