

Exports of food and drink

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 non-EU countries (third 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 third countries has been produced in accordance with EU requirements. We also make sure that it meets any additional import requirements that have been set by the destination country.

Export certification

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

Before you export food and drink products from the UK to European Union (EU) and 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

Within the EU there is 'free movement' of goods. Free movement is where goods, including food products, can freely move within the EU without customs checks.

Further information on exports within the EU is available on the [Defra](#) and the [DAERA](#) websites.

Exporting food and drink to 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 a non-EU country, it is your responsibility to check the restrictions and export conditions that apply before you export.

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. Further details are available on the [Defra](#) website.

Local authorities or district councils can provide export certification for certain products not covered by 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 third countries in such certification is usually confirmation that the product is:

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

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

In Northern Ireland, [DAERA](#) are responsible for issuing these EHCs.

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.