

Exports of food and drink

Information for businesses on how to export food and drink products.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the UK Central Competent Authority (CCA) for International Trade. It is responsible for negotiating new export markets 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 has been produced in accordance with relevant legislative requirements. For exports from [establishments approved by us](#), we also ensure it meets any additional import requirements that have been set by the destination country.

Export certification

Certain countries, including the EU, require that some UK food and drink exports are certified by a UK certifying authority before being exported.

[Information on export certification for exporters from England and Wales is available from the Defra](#) and for [exports from Northern Ireland from Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\)](#).

Before you export food and drink products from the UK, 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

We are not responsible for issuing any type of export certification.

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

There is no single source of information of those individual products to country export requirements. When commercially exporting food or drink from the UK, 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) is responsible for issuing export health certificates (EHC) for certain products of animal origin (POAO) to specific countries. Find out how to [Get an export health certificate](#).

In Northern Ireland, DAERA is responsible for issuing these EHCs for POAO. Further information is available at [Exporting animals and animal products from Northern Ireland](#).

In GB, Local Authority Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCO) are authorised by APHA to sign certain APHA issued EHCs. Guidance for FCCOs on their role is available at [APHA Vet](#)

[Gateway - FCCOs](#). [In Northern Ireland FCCOs are authorised by DAERA](#) to issue relevant EHCs.

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 destination 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

GB local authorities can also provide certification for exporting or moving high risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFNAO) from GB to EU countries or Northern Ireland. Defra guidance on the role of LAs is available in the [Frequently Asked Questions section](#) (High-Risk Foods Not Of Animal Origin) on [APHA Vet Gateway - FCCOs](#).

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

Guidance on exporting food and drink

Defra has published the following guidance for businesses on the rules for exporting products of animal origin, including to EU countries:

- [Guidance for Food and drink businesses: working with the EU](#)
- [Webinars for exporters of animals and products of animal origin to the EU](#)
- [Guidance on importing and exporting live animals or animal products](#)
- [Export or move composite food products](#)
- [Exporting or moving fish from the UK](#)
- [Aquatic animal health and movements guide](#)
- [Exporting organic food to the EU](#)
- [Returning goods to the UK](#)
- [Export animal feed or pet food](#)
- [Get an export health certificate](#)
- [How to register for Export Health Certificate Online \(EHCO\)](#)

Defra guidance on the new rules for exporting or moving high risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFNAO) from GB to EU countries or Northern Ireland is available at [Exporting or moving HRFNAO](#).

Northern Ireland

Guidance from DAERA regarding exports from Northern Ireland can be found via:

- [General information about exporting](#)
- [EU Exit](#)

Additional sources of information on exporting

The [Department for Business and Trade](#) has a specific remit to help businesses export and grow into global markets. It has developed the Exporting is Great (Opens in a new window) website which has tailored support and advice for businesses. This advice can help businesses 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](#)
- [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board](#)

Northern Ireland

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

Business advice and guidance provided by InvestNI is also available at:

- [NIBusinessInfo - How to export goods from Northern Ireland: step-by-step](#)
- [InvestNI - Thinking about exporting?](#)