

Importing cooking oils

Guidance on licensing, labelling, packaging, chemical safety when importing cooking oils.

General information

Imports of cooking oils from countries outside third countries must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in GB. You do not normally need a health certificate to import cooking oils.

Import licences

You may not need a health or hygiene licence to import food, but many foods from third countries require licences for trading purposes and may be subject to quotas.

For further information please contact the Rural Payments Agency by email at Trader@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.

Food colourings, flavourings and sweeteners

Some oils contain food colourings, flavourings or sweeteners. Although these may be approved by the food authority in the country of origin, some may not be approved in GB.

For information on food flavourings, sweeteners, colourings and preservatives, please contact our Food Additives team [through our online form](#).

Labelling

You will find general [information about food labelling](#) at GOV.UK.

For advice on the labelling of specific products, please [contact your local authority's Trading Standards Department](#) or Environmental Health Department.

Olive oil

Department of Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) provide information on [marketing standards for olive oil](#).

Organic information

If you are importing organic products (live or unprocessed agricultural products, processed agricultural for use as food or feed and vegetative propagating material and seeds for cultivation), from outside the EU, please contact the [Organic Imports team](#) at DEFRA.

Packaging

Food contact materials and articles, including those used for food packaging, are controlled by retained UK legislation that has been fully implemented in GB. This legislation is particularly thorough in its control of plastic materials and articles intended for food use.

For information on the safety of packaging please contact the Food Contact Materials team [through our online form](#).

Food hygiene

For general enquiries on food hygiene please contact the [Food Hygiene Policy team](#) by email.

Pesticides

[For information on pesticides safety levels for imports](#) please contact Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD).

Contaminants

A guidance note on the Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013, which make provision for enactment and enforcement of retained UK legislation setting regulatory limits for contaminants in food (nitrate, mycotoxins, metals, 3-MCPD, dioxins and PAHs).

See our [business guidance on contaminants](#).

Import restrictions

There are some import restrictions/requirements that can apply to cooking oils of which importers need to be aware.

Higher-risk products

Imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin that are considered 'higher-risk' can only enter the UK through specific ports and airports which are authorised Border Control Posts (BCP) where official controls will be carried out. A 'higher-risk' product is feed or food that is either known to be, or is, an emerging risk to public health.

Products of animal origin

The rules for importing animal-based cooking oils are dealt with by the [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#) (APHA). APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Information on importing cooking oils that contain shellfish or fish, or their products, can be found online.