

Importing food from within the EU

Information on EU member states, food establishments selling products of animal origin and considerations for importing fishery products.

EU Member States

A full list of EU member states that have freed trade between them is [available online](#). Please note that the whole Island of Cyprus is considered to be within EU territory. In principle, foodstuffs from 'Northern' Cyprus should have passed via 'Southern' Cyprus and consequently be considered to be Union goods.

All food products, produced or imported into the country, must be fit for human consumption and must meet the general food safety requirements of General Food Law [Regulation 178/2002](#).

In general, this prohibits food being placed on the market if it is unsafe, that is if it is either:

- injurious to health
- unfit for human consumption

Food brought into the UK must meet Regulations introduced under the Food Safety Act. Food businesses must apply Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) based procedures. The HACCP system is a tool for food business operators to control hazards in food.

Food (including that of animal origin, food not of animal origin, and food containing both products of plant origin and processed products of animal origin) brought into the UK must comply with the requirements of Commission [Regulation No 852/2004](#). This is to ensure that food under your control has satisfied the relevant hygiene requirements at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

The [Commission's guidance](#) sets out these regulations.

Food placed on the UK market can be checked by local authorities for compliance with food safety and hygiene standards, whether it is produced in the UK, other EU Member States or in a non-EU country. In the UK, food safety and food standards checks are carried out by qualified environmental health practitioners and trading standards officers employed by local authorities. Non-compliant food products can be removed from the food chain.

You will find general information about [food labelling](#) online.

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

If you intend to set up a business in the UK to sell food, that activity has to be registered under [Regulation No 852/2004](#). You will need to get in touch with the environmental health office of the local authority where you intend to set up your business. They are in the best position to determine whether legislation applies according to individual circumstances.

Locate your [local Environmental Health Department](#) in the UK online.

Further guidance on [food hygiene requirements and how to set up a food business](#) can be found online.

Food establishments selling products of animal origin

There are strict rules within the EU for selling any foods that are or that contain any POAO. Amongst other requirements, this will require certification of the product and the premises that produce the product being licensed by the EU.

To confirm that the EU establishment supplying you is fully licensed for distributing

- red meat
- meat products -including sausages, meat pizzas, meat pies)
- dairy products -including milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, cream)
- eggs
- poultry meat
- wild game
- insects
- grubs
- unusual meat -including reptiles, alligators
- honey

please contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) [through their website](#). APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

To [confirm that the EU establishment supplying you is fully licensed](#) for distributing gelatine, please check the European Commission's website.

Food hygiene

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

Fishery products

We provide business guidance on [importing fishery products and bivalve molluscs](#) from other EU countries is available on our website.

You can confirm that the EU [establishment supplying you is fully licensed](#) to distribute fishery products or bivalve molluscs, on the European Commission's website.

the Fish Health Inspectorate at the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), provides [information on importing live fish intended for human consumption](#) from other EU countries on their website.

Contaminants

A guidance note on the Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013, which make provisions for enactment and enforcement of Commission Regulations setting regulatory limits for contaminants in food (nitrate, mycotoxins, metals, 3-MCPD, dioxins and PAHs), can be found online.

Team contacts

Food hygiene policy

foodhygiene.policy@food.gov.uk