

Guidance on application of country of origin and place of provenance rules for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry.

Introduction

1. These guidance notes cover the interpretation and application of origin labelling as applied to pre-packed fresh, chilled and frozen meat¹ of swine, sheep, goat and poultry for supply to the consumer or mass caterers, which can be found in Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1337/2013 (CoOL).

Purpose of guidance

2. The guidance notes have been produced to:
 - provide informal and non-binding guidance on the interpretation and practical application of CoOL.
 - be read alongside the EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation No. 1169/2011 (EU FIC), Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1337/2013 and the Food Information Regulations 2014 as apply to Wales and Northern Ireland.

Scope

3. Commission implementing Regulation (EU) No. 1337/2013 lays down detailed rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No. 1169/2011 (EU FIC) as regards the indication of country of origin or place of provenance for fresh, chilled and frozen meat¹ of swine, sheep, goats and poultry. The domestic enforcement Regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland are:

[The Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#)

[The Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Northern Ireland\) Regulations 2015](#)

Traceability and identification of animals²

4. Food Business Operators (FBO's) must have an identification and registration system in place which must be applied to ensure:

¹ The definition of meat can be found in Regulation EC 854/2004

² Article 3 EU No. 1337/2014

- At the slaughter stage there is a link between the meat and the animals or group of animals from which it has been obtained - This is the responsibility of the slaughterhouses.
- Information relating to the country of origin labelling along with the meat, to operations is available and is transmitted to subsequent stages of production and distribution – This is the responsibility of the FBO.

A food business operator must retain each record for a period of 12 months from the end of the calendar year to which the record relates³.

Group of animals⁴

5. The size of the group of animals referred to in Article 3 is defined by:

- the number of carcasses cut together and constituting one batch for the cutting plant in the case of cutting carcasses.
- the number of carcasses the meat of which constitutes one batch for the cutting or mincing plant concerned in case of further cutting or mincing.
- no more than the production of a given day.
- The establishments in which meat is cut or minced shall ensure that all carcasses in a batch correspond to animals to which identical labelling indications apply⁵

Labelling of meat⁶

6. All labels for fresh, chilled or frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry must contain information on rearing period, slaughtered in and a batch code identifying the meat supplied to the consumer or mass caterer.

6.1 Business to Business⁷ rules of EU FIC apply where meat is traded prior to packaging, if intended to be sold fresh, frozen or chilled.

Reared in

³ Regulation 5 of the Country of Origin of Certain Meats Regulations 2015

⁴ Article 4 EU No. 1337/2014

⁵ Except for minced meat and trimmings as per Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No. 1337/2013.

⁶ Article 5 of 1337/2014

⁷ Article 3 of EU FIC

6.2 The label should include an indication of the Member State or third country in which the rearing of the animal took place, indicated as: 'Reared in (name of Member State or third country)'. There are different rearing criteria for each animal.

Swine

6.3 For swine, the following criteria *determines the place of rearing* where;

- The animal is slaughtered *older than 6 months*, the Member State or Third Country in which the *last rearing period of at least 4 months* took place; or if
- The animal is slaughtered *younger than 6 months* and with a live weight of *at least 80 kilograms*, the Member State or third country in which the rearing period after the animal had reached 30 kilos took place; or if
- The animal is slaughtered younger than 6 months and with a live weight of less than 80 kilograms, the Member State or third country in which the whole rearing period took place.

Sheep and goats

6.4 For sheep and goats, the following criteria determines place of rearing where;

- The Member State or third country in which the last rearing period of at least 6 months took place; or the animal is slaughtered younger than 6 months, the Member State or third country in which the whole rearing period took place.

Poultry

6.5 For poultry the following criteria determines place of rearing where;

- The Member State or third country in which the last period of at least one month took place or, the animal is slaughtered younger than one month it would be the Member State or third country in which the entire rearing period after the animal was placed for fattening took place.

When the rearing criteria are not met

6.6 Where the rearing period as explained is not attained in any of the Member States or third countries where the animal was reared then the indication must be replaced by;

- "Reared in: several Member States of the EU" or

- “Reared in: several non-EU countries” or
- “Reared in: several EU and non-EU countries”

6.7 In the situation where the FBO can prove to the enforcing authority of the Member States or third countries that the animal was reared in then these can be specified:

- “Reared in UK and Ireland” or
- “Reared in UK and Denmark” or
- “Reared in Thailand and Ireland and UK”

These can be used instead of “Reared in several Member States of the EU”

Slaughtered in

6.8 The label should include the Member State or third country in which the animal was slaughtered, indicated as: ‘Slaughtered in: (Member State name or third country)’

Origin

6.9 The indications of ‘Reared in’ and ‘Slaughtered in’ can be replaced with an indication of ‘Origin: (Name of Member State or third country)’ if the FBO proves to the satisfaction of the competent authority that the meat has been obtained from animals born, reared and slaughtered in one single Member State or third country.

Batch Code

6.10 A batch code which identifies the meat supplier to the consumer or mass caterer must be given on the label. This code may be referenced with other information to enable food businesses to demonstrate the accuracy of the information on the label.⁸

Exceptions

6.11 Where several pieces of meat, of the same or of different species, correspond to different labelling indications in respect of “reared in” and or “slaughtered in” are presented in the same pack to the consumer or mass caterer, the label shall indicate:

⁸ See Article 5(1)(c) of EU No. 1337/2014 and Regulation 2 (1) of The Country of Origin of Certain Meats (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2016

- The list of Member States or third countries in accordance with the requirements for each species
- The batch code identifying the meat supplied to the consumer or mass caterer

Derogation for meat from third countries⁹

7 Where meat is imported for placing on the EU market from a non EU source and where the information in regards to the place of rearing is unavailable then the label shall contain the indication:

- “Reared in non-EU” and
- “Slaughtered in (name of the third country where the animal was slaughtered)”

Derogation for minced meat and trimmings¹⁰

8. A range of alternative indications may be applied related to “EU” and “Non EU origin”.

For example:

“Origin EU” may be used when the minced meat comes from animals born, reared and slaughtered in different EU Member States or “reared and slaughtered in: non-EU” where minced meat or trimmings are produced exclusively from meat imported into the Union.

Voluntary information¹¹

9. Mandatory country of origin information required by Articles 5, 6 and 7 can be supplemented with additional information on the place of provenance of the meat. Any voluntary information must be provided in accordance with Articles 36 and 37 of EU FIC.

Examples of additional voluntary information:

- Origin UK “Northern Irish”
- Origin UK “British”
- Origin UK “Welsh”

⁹ Article 6 of EU 1337/2014

¹⁰ Article 7 of EU 1337/2014

¹¹ Article 8 of EU 1337/2014

Enforcement

10. The method of enforcement for the majority of provisions in the Regulations will be via improvement notice. This should be used as a part of the hierarchy of enforcement when informal measures are no longer appropriate and the labelling contravention or issue should be elevated to formal action. If the conditions set by an improvement notice are not met then the non-compliance with those conditions will constitute a criminal offence. An FBO served with an improvement notice may appeal against the notice. The appeal will be heard before the Magistrates Court.

Contacts

Northern Ireland: infofsani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Wales: food.policy.wales@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Annex I – Rearing criteria for Swine

	Slaughter age/weight	Indication on label
Member State or Third Country of Rearing	Slaughtered \geq 6 months old	Reared In: Member state or third country in which last rearing period of at least 4 months took place.
	Slaughtered < 6 months old and at least 80kg liveweight.	Reared In: Member state or third country in which rearing from 30 kgs took place.
	Slaughtered < 6 months old and < 80kg liveweight	Reared In: Member state or third country in which the whole rearing period took place.
Member State or Third Country of Slaughter		Slaughtered in: Member State or third country where animal was slaughtered.
Origin Labelling (Voluntary Indication) Reserved for animals Born, Reared and Slaughtered in a single EU Member state or Third Country.		Origin: Member State or Third Country.
Batch Number		Assigned by FBO in accordance with requirements of (EU) No. 1337/2013.

Annex II – Rearing criteria for Sheep and goats

Member State/s or Third Country of Rearing	Slaughter age/weight	Indication on label
	Slaughtered \geq 6 months old	Reared In: Member state or third country in which last rearing period of at least 6 months took place.
	Slaughtered < 6 months old	Reared In: Member state or third country in which whole rearing took place.
Member State or Third Country of Slaughter		Slaughtered in: Member State or third country where animal was slaughtered.
Origin Labelling (Voluntary Indication) Reserved for animals Born, Reared and Slaughtered in a single EU Member state or Third Country.		Origin: Member State or Third Country.
Batch Number		Assigned by FBO in accordance with requirements of (EU) No. 1337/2013.

Annex III – Rearing criteria for Poultry

	Slaughter age/weight	Indication on label
Member State/s or Third Country of Rearing	Slaughtered \geq 1 month old	Reared In: Member state or third country in which last rearing period of at least 1 month took place.
	Slaughtered $<$ 1 month old	Reared In: Member state or third country in which whole rearing took place.
Member State or Third Country of Slaughter		Slaughtered in: Member State or third country where animal was slaughtered.
Origin Labelling (Voluntary Indication) Reserved for animals Born, Reared and Slaughtered in a single EU Member state or Third Country.		Origin: Member State or Third Country.
Batch Number		Assigned by FBO in accordance with requirements of (EU) No. 1337/2013.