



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Import of Equidae

Import Information Note (IIN) EQ/2b

January 2024

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1. General Information

This Import Information Note (IIN) must be read in conjunction with the IIN for general information for imports of live animals and germplasm, which provides information on pre-notifications, veterinary checks, risk categories etc.

[General information for imports of live animals and germplasm \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://www.defra.gov.uk)

References to European Union (EU) legislation within this document are references to direct EU Legislation which has been assimilated in Great Britain (assimilated direct legislation), as defined in the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 and can be viewed on the UK legislation website ([legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)).

2. Scope

Imports of horses and other equidae.

Information concerning the importation of equine semen, ova and embryos is contained in [Import Information Note EGTC/2](#).

Equidae are defined in [Regulation \(EU\) 2015/262](#) as:

“equidae’ or ‘equine animal(s)’ means wild or domesticated soliped mammals of all species within the genus *Equus* of the family Equidae, and their crosses.” This includes horses, ponies, asses, mules, donkeys and zebras.

Registered Equidae are defined in Regulation (EU) 2015/262 as any equidae which are:

(i) entered or registered and eligible for entry in a studbook, in accordance with the rules laid down by Articles 4(3), 19(4), 30(9) and (10), 32, 33 and 34(1)(c) of, and Annex 1, Part 1 of Annex 2 and Annex 5 to—

— in relation to the United Kingdom, Regulation (EU) 2016/1012,

— in relation to member States, Regulation (EU) 2016/1012 of the European Parliament and of the Council as it has effect in EU law, as amended from time to time, and identified by means of an identification document issued by a competent authority, or

(ii) horses, including ponies, registered with an international association or organisation, which manages horses for competition or racing and identified by means of an identification document issued by the national branch of that association or organisation;”.

3. Great Britain and Crown Dependencies

Trade movements between Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are treated as national movements, and as such, no animal health conditions are applicable.

For movements to the CDs, please check the Isle of Man, Jersey or Guernsey websites to ascertain their import conditions:

Isle of Man: <https://www.gov.im/categories/business-and-industries/agriculture/>

Jersey: <https://www.gov.je/Industry/FarmingFishing/FarmingLivestock/Pages/default.aspx>

Guernsey: <https://gov.gg/article/119655/Imports--Exports>

4. Northern Ireland

Equines imported into GB from Northern Ireland do not need to fulfil any pre-export requirements. The equine must be accompanied by its ID ('horse passport').

5. Country of origin

Imports are permitted from trading partners listed in a document published by the Secretary of State, with the consent of the Scottish and Welsh Ministers. See the documents for Equidae at the links below.

- [Non-EU countries](#)
- [EU and EFTA countries](#)

6. Conditions applicable to imports of equidae

All equidae must comply with the animal health requirements laid down in [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/659](#) and be accompanied by the relevant original [health certificate](#), signed by an Official Veterinarian of the veterinary authority in the country of export.

Conditions applicable to imports of equidae into Great Britain can be found on the following link, which includes conditions applicable to imports from EU countries, Norway, and other trading partners:

<https://www.gov.uk/horse-passport/import-or-export-a-horse-or-related-animal>

The Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2020 lays down the animal health conditions governing the movement and import of equidae.

In all cases, the health certificate must:

- be issued on the day of loading or, in the case of registered horses, on the last working day before embarkation;
- be in English and the official languages of the country of export and the Member State in which the import inspection is carried out;
- consist of a single sheet or linked sheets following the principles of certification;
- be made out for a single consignee;
- be valid for a period of 10 days, and;
- for consignments of registered horses, only one horse can be present on a health certificate, or;
- for consignments of unregistered horses, multiple horses can be present on the same health certificate.

7. Transits of Equidae

Information regarding transits of equines through GB, from non-EU countries, and from non-EU countries that transit the EU, can be found here: [Transiting animals and animal products through Great Britain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transiting-animals-and-animal-products-through-great-britain)

8. Transit of Equidae through non-approved countries

Countries are approved to send horses to Great Britain if, amongst other things, they have a satisfactory equine disease status. The accompanying health certificate is issued following clinical examination and obtaining satisfactory test results. In order to ensure that certification guarantees are not compromised, horses should not be placed at risk of contracting disease en route.

Veterinary inspectors at Border Control Posts (BCPs) have been told that, when considering the origin of an imported horse, they should make themselves aware of any intermediate stops.

Where concern that stops (scheduled or non-scheduled, open or closed-door refuelling, etc.) have been made in countries that are not approved for exports to Great Britain, they should assume that the import guarantees have been invalidated. Where such a decision is made the options available to the veterinary inspector include return to the country of origin, restricting under quarantine conditions whilst further investigations are carried out or destruction.

If it is impossible to avoid using a route involving such stops then the circumstances should be put **in advance** to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Centre for International Trade - Imports, who will consider whether it would be safe to authorise the route. A qualitative risk assessment will be done based on the available animal health information at the time before coming to a decision.

9. Re-entry of registered horses after temporary export

These requirements only apply to the re-importation into Great Britain of registered horses which are usually resident in the UK and which have been temporarily exported to another country for a period of less than 30, or 90 days depending on which condition applies, in order to take part in racing, competition or other cultural events.

The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the horse has not been outside Great Britain for more than the specified limit nor been in another country which is not in the same group during that time; that the horse has been resident on holdings under veterinary supervision and has not come into contact with equidae of a lower health status except during competitions.

For further information regarding the re-entry of registered horses for racing, competition and cultural events after temporary export, please see Article 20 of Regulation (EU) 2018/659.

10. Special requirements for temporary import of registered horses from countries other than EU member states and Norway

These requirements only apply to registered horses which are normally resident in a country other than EU member states and Norway, but which are being imported temporarily into Great Britain. Such horses are permitted to remain in Great Britain for no more than 90 days. The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from the owner or representative of the owner that the horse will not be resident within Great Britain for more than 90 days.

Where circumstances change and there is a desire to keep such horses within Great Britain either for more than 90 days or on a permanent basis then an application for extension or permanent status, outlining the circumstances, must be put to the APHA Centre for International Trade - Imports before the expiry of the 90 day period.

Each case will be considered on its merits, but it should be made clear here that there should be no expectation that such applications for extension/permanent status will be

granted. Animals which overstay this limit are non-compliant and enforcement action may be taken.

From 14th December 2019, the operator responsible for a registered horse temporarily admitted into Great Britain, as identified in Box I.7 of the Common Health Entry Document (CHED) referred to must ensure that the following conditions set out in Article 17 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/659](#) are met:

(a) the registered horse shall at all times during its temporary admission be accompanied by its original health certificate and by the CHED issued by the BCP of entry into Great Britain;

(b) the registered horse shall remain in Great Britain and on the premises stated in the declaration accompanying the health certificate;

(c) any former prints of the CHED must be surrendered to the competent authority for invalidation or withdrawal;

(d) the registered horse must leave Great Britain through a border control post indicated in the health certificate not later than 89 days following the date of entry into the UK indicated on the corresponding CHED.

The operator shall remain responsible for the movement of the registered horse during its temporary admission in Great Britain, and in particular shall inform:

(a) the competent authority referred to in points (i) and (iii) of Article 16(1)(b) regarding any changes to be made to the movements stated in the declaration accompanying the health certificate;

(b) the BCP of exit regarding the date when the temporarily admitted registered horse is to depart from Great Britain;

(c) the competent authority referred to in points (i) and (iii) of Article 16(1)(b) responsible for the holding regarding the death or loss of the registered horse or any emergency, such as health conditions, requiring veterinary attention beyond the 89 days of temporary admission

11. Special requirements for import of equidae for slaughter from countries other than EU member states and Norway

These requirements only apply to equidae being imported for immediate slaughter from countries other than EU member states and Norway. The requirements of identification of equidae intended for slaughter can be found in point 2 and 3 of article 15 of Regulation (EU) 2018/659. The necessary health certificate must include a signed declaration from

the owner or representative of the owner that the animals have been resident in the country of export since birth or for at least 90 days.

12. Cleansing and Disinfection of Vehicles

After the transport of any hoofed animals, the means of transport and associated equipment must be cleansed and disinfected before it is used again to transport animals. It also specifies that, even if this has been done, the means of transport must be cleansed and disinfected again to reduce the risk of transmission of diseases before the animals are transported.

- [The Transport of Animals \(Cleansing and Disinfection\) \(No. 3\) \(S.I. 2003 No.1724\) \(England\) Order 2003](#)
- [The Transport of Animals \(Cleansing and Disinfection\) \(Wales\) \(No. 3\) Order 2003](#)
- [The Transport of Animals \(Cleansing and Disinfection\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2005](#)

Following the journey, the vehicle must be cleansed and disinfected within 24 hours. It requires any person transporting such animals to remove dead animals, litter and excreta from the means of transport as soon as possible.

13. Post-Import Checks

Equidae imported into Great Britain from other countries may be subject to post-import veterinary and documentary checks. The nature of the checks will depend on the disease risk associated with the imported equidae but may include the collection of samples. Movement restrictions of the equidae and other animals (animals which may have been either in direct or indirect contact with the imported equidae) that may pose a disease risk to Great Britain may be imposed by Official Veterinarians. The veterinary authorities in Great Britain will make a judgement on any further action, including removing any restrictions, which may have been imposed.

14. Contact for further information on import requirements

For further information regarding import requirements, contact the APHA Imports team:

Centre for International Trade - Carlisle
Eden Bridge House
Lowther Street

Carlisle
CA3 8DX
Email: Imports@apha.gov.uk

Telephone: 03000 200 301



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The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government.