



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

General information for imports of live animals and germplasm

Import Information Note (IIN) GEN/1

January 2024

Contents

1. Important Information.....	2
2. Commodity Import Conditions.....	2
3. Pre-notifications of imports	3
4. Veterinary checks	3
5. Transits.....	4
6. TOM risk categories for live animals and germplasm from the EU	4
7. E-signed PDF Versions of Health Certificates from the EU	4
8. EFTA countries and Greenland	5
9. Great Britain and Crown Dependencies.....	5
10. Northern Ireland.....	5
11. Controls on non-native species.....	6
12. Endangered species	6
13. Welfare of Animals during Transport.....	7
14. Death of animals in transit	7
15. Safeguard measures.....	7

16. Special arrangements for New Zealand	8
17. Rabies risks	8
18. Legislation.gov.uk	8
19. Contact for further information	10

1. Important Information

Import Information Notes (IINs) are technical documents containing import requirements and are for use by importers and border officials.

Please be aware that import conditions may be updated due to changes in policy or legislation. Please ensure that you check the current version of the IIN as well as the IIN specific to your commodity [online](#).

Importers should note that the information given relates only to animal health and public health conditions of import. It does not give guidance on other conditions that may need to be met.

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).

Please note that any links to legislation provided in this document are for information purposes only and may not be the most recent version.

References to imports into Great Britain in any Import Information Note also includes imports into the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

References to trading partners includes non-EU, EU and EFTA countries.

The Border **Target Operating Model** (TOM) is the new approach to importing into Great Britain that will be progressively introduced from the end of January 2024. Guidance on the TOM can be found here:

[The Border Target Operating Model: August 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-border-target-operating-model-august-2023)

2. Commodity Import Conditions

For commodity specific import requirements, such as permitted countries of origin and health certification/documentation, refer to the relevant live animal and genetic material Import Information Note.

[APHA Vet Gateway: IIN Imports of live animals and genetic material \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://apha.defra.gov.uk/imports/animals-and-genetic-material/)

3. Pre-notifications of imports

You must notify the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) of imports of live animals and germplasm to Great Britain (GB). Please use the Import of products, animals, food and feed system (IPAFFS).

You must submit your notification in IPAFFS at least one working day before your consignment is due to arrive. You can submit your notification up to 30 days in advance. You must also upload any documents that will accompany your consignment (e.g. health certificates) to the IPAFFS notification.

Further information regarding IPAFFS is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

4. Veterinary checks

Currently, imports from the EU and certain imports from Greenland, Faroe Islands and EFTA countries do not need to enter Great Britain via a BCP and are not subject to veterinary checks at the border. APHA will continue to carry out identity and physical checks on EU imports of live animals and germplasm at their destination based on assessments of biosecurity and public health risks until further notice.

You can find additional information on imports from EFTA countries and Greenland in section 8.

- Consignments from trading partners (other than the EU, and some imports from Greenland and EFTA countries) may only be imported through an approved Border Control Post (BCP).
- The person responsible for the consignment must give notice of the proposed entry of the consignment at least one working day before arrival (with a derogation to 4 hours before arrival if there are logistical constraints).
- The notification shall be made to the inspection staff at the BCP using the import of products, animals, food and feed system (IPAFFS). Further information regarding IPAFFS can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
- Any other electronic means agreed with the BCP to inform about the intended arrival of a consignment in advance are not to be considered as an official pre-notification.

Following satisfactory checks at the BCP (for which a charge is levied), consignments may then circulate freely within Great Britain. If the consignment does not meet the import requirements, the consignment may be rejected and either re-exported or destroyed.

- [Further guidance on veterinary checks on live animals](#)

- [Border Control Posts](#)

The [Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011](#) (TARP 2011) (applicable in England) and EU Exit amendments to TARP 2011 can be found [here](#).

5. Transits

Information regarding transits can be found on GOV.UK:

[Transiting animals and animal products through Great Britain - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

6. TOM risk categories for live animals and germplasm from the EU

From 31 January 2024, to import live animals and germplasm from the EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) states into Great Britain, you'll need to:

- find the Target Operating Model (TOM) risk category for the commodity you're importing.
- follow the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) rules for that import risk category.

The TOM categorises live animals, germinal products, products of animal origin (POAO) and animal by-products (ABPs) as high risk, medium risk or low risk. Each category has different requirements.

More information on how to find the TOM risk category and the requirements for each TOM risk category can be found at the link below.

[Import risk categories for animals and animal products imported from the EU to Great Britain, from 31 January 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

7. E-signed PDF Versions of Health Certificates from the EU

Consignments originating in an EU Member State may enter Great Britain without being accompanied by the original paper Health Certificate. This arrangement is only applicable to EU Member States who use the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES NT) to generate Export Health Certificates for live animals and germplasm consignments which are currently subject to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls. It may also apply to Member States whose national systems have the capacity to interface with, and send certificates to TRACES NT.

8. EFTA countries and Greenland

The UK government recognises that Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein implement EU veterinary legislation in relation to the movement of animals and animal products.

Therefore, animals and animal products from Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein must comply with the same requirements and controls applying to live animals and animal products from EU Member States. This also applies to Iceland for products of animal origin for human consumption, composite products and aquaculture.

Furthermore, in relation to imports from Faroe Islands this also applies to fishery products and aquaculture only. In relation to imports from Greenland this applies to fishery products and fish by-products only.

9. Great Britain and Crown Dependencies

Trade movements between Great Britain, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are treated as national movements. However imports from the Crown Dependencies (CDs) must be in accordance with an [Import Licence](#) and consignments must comply with the conditions in the licence which may require the consignment to be accompanied by a health certificate.

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>

10. Northern Ireland

Movements from Northern Ireland

Unfettered market access applies to qualifying Northern Ireland goods moving from Northern Ireland into Great Britain. You can find additional information on movements from NI to GB [here](#)

Existing controls continue to apply, and therefore these movements must be in accordance with an [Import Licence](#) and consignments must comply with the conditions in the licence which may require it to be accompanied by a health certificate.

Movements to Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland continues to apply EU law and EU requirements as laid down by the Northern Ireland Protocol. Please seek advice from DAERA on the import requirements for direct imports to Northern Ireland.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-importing-animals-and-animal-products>

11. Controls on non-native species

It is the importer's responsibility to check whether the species is listed as a species of special concern under the retained EU Regulation before importation takes place.

The commercial import of animals that are listed as a species of special concern under this regulation are prohibited by [law](#).

Please check the list of invasive alien species of special concern on Gov.UK via this link:

[Invasive non-native \(alien\) animal species: rules in England and Wales - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/invasive-non-native-alien-animal-species-rules-in-england-and-wales)

There are 30 species of invasive non-native (alien) animal that are listed as of special concern because of their:

- invasiveness
- ability to establish in several nations across Europe

They cause severe problems for native animals and the environment. You must therefore comply with [Regulation \(EU\) 1143/2014](#) on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species.

Please check the species you are proposing to import are not included in this list.

In addition, the importer must comply with the following requirements relating to importing certain animals into GB:

- Comply with CITES (please see [GOV.UK](#))
- Comply with Plant Health rules regarding the import of certain invertebrate species. Many non-native invertebrates have the potential to be plant pests in the UK and are therefore prohibited under plant health rules.

12. Endangered species

The import of some species of animals may require export and import certificates under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). CITES permits must be issued in advance of import and they can take up to **15 working days** to process. Applicants should be aware of this when applying for their permits. Those species

requiring CITES permits must be moved in compliance with CITES guidelines for the transport and preparation for shipment of live animals.

- [GOV.UK website – CITES pages](#)

For further information please contact the APHA – CITES team:

Centre for International Trade - Bristol
Horizon House
Deanery Road
Bristol
BS1 5AH

Tel: +44 (0) 3000 200 301

Email: wildlife.licensing@apha.gov.uk

13. Welfare of Animals during Transport

Importers are reminded that they must comply with rules on the welfare of animals during transport. For information on the rules see GOV.UK.

- [Welfare of animals during transport](#)

14. Death of animals in transit

If an imported animal dies in transit to, or at a port or airport in Great Britain, the carcass of the animal would need to be disposed of in line with ABP regulations. If any clarification is required with regards to ABP disposal, you can contact your local APHA office.

15. Safeguard measures

Emergency safeguard action can be taken at very short notice to prohibit or restrict the importation of certain animals from certain countries following an outbreak of disease or a public health issue. Information on the latest updates concerning disease outbreaks which may affect imports into the UK can be found on our Topical Issues page on the website.

Further information on the International and UK monitoring of animal diseases may be found on the animal disease monitoring website.

Importers can get the latest news about exotic notifiable disease outbreaks from the APHA subscription service.

- [Topical issues](#)
- [Animal diseases: international and UK monitoring](#)

- [Exotic notifiable disease outbreak subscription service](#)

16. Special arrangements for New Zealand

There are special arrangements in place for imports of some commodities from New Zealand which are provided for in the [UK-New Zealand Sanitary Agreement](#), which covers trade in animals and animal products. Further information is in Annex V of [Decision 2015/1084](#), which provides the certification requirements. Animals and animal products for which full equivalence have been agreed, must be accompanied by the model health certificate published on GOV.UK which complies with the model provided in Annex I of [Decision \(EU\) 2015/1901](#).

17. Rabies risks

This section is only applicable to imports of rabies susceptible species, which is all mammals.

Importers and owners of imported animals are warned of rabies risks and are asked to pay special attention to the health of any imported animal during its first six months in Great Britain. Symptoms of the disease in horses and other equidae are as follows:

- Itching of site of infected wound, the irritation often causing rubbing and biting of the parts, often tearing the flesh.
- Animal becomes alert, ears erect, and moving backwards as if listening intently in all directions.
- Efforts made to break halter and attack manger with teeth, which may become broken (may also attack handler and is capable of inflicting massive wounds). Refuses food and may swallow wood, straw and manure. Genital excitement is common.
- Paralysis first appears in the throat, unable to drink water. Paralysis of the legs soon follows.

If importers see these symptoms, details should be reported immediately to the [local APHA office](#). Rabies is, in any case, compulsorily notifiable to the authorities by law.

18. Legislation.gov.uk

Consolidated legal texts, which integrate the basic instruments of retained EU legislation with their amendments and corrections in a single, non-official document, are available. Each consolidated text contains a list of all legal documents taken into account for its construction.

You can search for consolidated texts by inputting the 'document number' and 'year' and then clicking the option 'All UK Legislation (including originating from the EU)' on legislation.gov.uk.

Once you press 'search', you can find the relevant legislation listed with the full title of the legislation. Once you have selected the legislation, you may see the following message at the top of the page:

"Changes to legislation: There are outstanding changes not yet made to XXX. Those changes will be listed when you open the content using the Table of Contents below. Any changes that have already been made to the legislation appear in the content and are referenced with annotations."

Please note that the consolidated text may not contain the latest amendment to the legislation, as it takes several weeks for this to be updated. EU Exit amendments to legislation may take several months too. We advise to read the legislation alongside the EU Exit amendments made in the below UK laws:

- [The Import of, and Trade in, Animals and Animal Products \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Official Controls \(Animals, Feed and Food, Plant Health etc.\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Official Controls \(Animals, Feed and Food, Plant Health etc.\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Aquatic Animal Health and Alien Species in Aquaculture, Animals, and Marketing of Seed, Plant and Propagating Material \(Legislative Functions and Miscellaneous Provisions\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Animals, Aquatic Animal Health, Invasive Alien Species, Plant Propagating Material and Seeds \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)
- [The Trade in Animals and Animal Products \(Legislative Functions\) and Veterinary Surgeons \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#)

Texts provided in this section are intended for information only. Please note that these texts have no legal value. For legal purposes please refer to the texts published in legislation.gov.uk.

Further information on changes in relation to EU legislation and UK law can be found on legislation.gov.uk. Please continue to use legislation.gov.uk to find EU retained law applicable to Great Britain. Please avoid using the EU Commission website for information on imports into Great Britain.

19. Contact for further information

For further information regarding import requirements, contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency (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.