



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

IMPORTS AND EU POLICY TEAM

OVS NOTE 2020/14

1 May 2020

TEMPORARY CONTINGENCY OFFICIAL CONTROL MEASURES TO BE TAKEN AT BORDER CONTROL POSTS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Purpose

To provide updated advice on the action that should be taken by officials at Border Control Posts during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Background

A number of OVS notes have been issued about special measures that can be adopted during the Covid-19 outbreak. Following further risk assessments this OVS note provides advice on:

- [Annex I - scanned documents \(new\)](#)
- [Annex II - Remote checks \(no change in policy since OVS note 2020/13 – minor amendment for clarity\)](#)

Action for OVSs

To note the contents of this OVS note.

Contact point for enquiries

Email: Defra: ImportsTradeinAnimalsandProducts@defra.gov.uk

FSA: Imported.Food@food.gov.uk

Imports and EU Trade Team

Scanned documents (new policy)

1. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to minimise the disruption to the flow of food and feed imported into the EU and UK, the Commission has implemented [Regulation \(EU\) 2020/466](#), which allows for temporary easements to certain aspects of the delivery of official controls. Article 4 of the Regulation allows for official controls to be performed on electronic copies of official certificates and attestations that are presented to the competent authority (CA).
2. Border Control Posts (BCPs) designated for products of animal origin including fish and fishery products for human consumption (POAO), animal by-products (ABP) and high-risk food and feed not of animal origin (HRFNAO) **may accept scanned or electronic documents directly from the central competent authority (CCA) of the exporting third country** or subject to certain requirements, **from operators** as a temporary contingency measure during the COVID-19 outbreak.
3. Defra and the FSA have **agreed to accept scanned/e-documents for:**
 - POAOs (other than those derived from porcine animals);
 - ABPs (other than unprocessed ABPs of porcine origin);
 - Certain HRFNAO (commodities listed in Annex 2 of [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#))
4. This measure **excludes the following commodities** for which original documents are still required:
 - Germinal products;
 - Porcine meat (including fresh/frozen meat, minced meat and meat preparations);
 - Fresh unprocessed animal by-products derived from porcine animals¹
5. Scanned signed TRACES CHED/CVEDs or other accompanying documents can be accepted by BCPs from importers (or their agents) for the duration of the lockdown related to COVID-19 in the UK.

¹ This policy also excludes live animals (other than live fish).

6. Regarding documents that are required from the exporting third country, electronic copies of Export Health Certificates and further documents may be accepted, provided that one of the following three scenarios applies:

Scenario 1: Scanned copies are sent by email directly from the third country competent authorities to the BCP. Copies may be provided by the operator to the BCP if it is clear in the chain of correspondence that they can verify the copy of the certificate was sent from the competent authority originally; **OR**

Scenario 2: For third countries using the TRACES platform, certificates and other relevant information can be completed and attached in the TRACES system, OR

Scenario 3: If none of the above scenarios apply, then scanned copies should be sent from the operator to the BCP. The operator must copy in the third country competent authority (see [Annex I \(A\)](#) for contact details). If a BCP receives scanned documents from an operator originating in a country that is not listed in Annex I (A), it is advised that the BCP contacts Defra or FSA for further advice.

In addition, the BCP should carry out a risk assessment based on the following criteria, all of which need to be met, in order to accept the copies of documents from the operator:

- Consignments may not originate from countries under current safeguard measures for the commodity of concern;
- Consignments may not originate from an establishment under re-enforced checks for the commodity of concern (also known as Intensified Official Controls);
- Operators for which the BCP have concerns about their past reliability and risk profile (e.g. previous lack of cooperation with official controls or payments). BCPs should also assess any new operators based on intelligence from other BCPs.

7. BCPs should request a declaration from the operator to agree to submit original documents as soon as possible. Ten (10) working days should be the guide timescale. If no documents are received within this time period, the BCP should contact the CCA in the exporting third country to seek the original documents. If after a further 10 working days nothing has been received from the CCA, then the BCP should contact either Defra or the FSA, depending on the commodity.
8. Should a BCP require additional assurances in relation to any documents, then the BCP must contact the CCA of the exporting third country. If the BCP receives no reply within five (5) working days, the BCP may consider any supporting information provided electronically by the operator to the BCP and must also copy in the named responsible person at the CCA of the exporting third country.
9. BCPs should track operator compliance by recording the number of consignments that are received with copy documents supplied by the importer. This will ensure that all outstanding original documents can be followed up in due course.
10. In the case of germinal products, porcine meat (including fresh/frozen meat, minced meat and meat preparations) and unprocessed ABPs of porcine origin not accompanied by original certificates, the BCP should contact Defra to request a policy decision on a case by case basis.
11. The situation will be monitored on a weekly basis by Defra and FSA in liaison with BCPs. Questions around individual cases will be dealt with by Defra and FSA imports teams. Further high-risk imports may be added to the list and thereby excluded from this policy, meaning that original documents will be required. Any changes to the international disease risk as a result of this policy will be escalated to the Coronavirus Special Animal Policy Group (APG) and the FSA's Immediate Response Group (IRG) for an immediate review of the wider policy.
12. This temporary measure will remain in place until 31 May 2020, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2020/466, when it will be further reviewed. Any changes to the policy will be announced via an OVS note to BCPs.

Defra will update the list regularly

<p>Argentina</p>	<p>Gaston Maria Funes gmfunes@magyp.gob.ar please also copy : emorales@agricola-ue.org and brojas@agricola-ue.org mobile 0475983333 Office 026403333</p>	<p>For animal and animal products, the scanned certificates will be sent from: expoue@senasa.gob.ar</p>	
<p>Australia</p>	<p>Joanna Grainger +32 486 137 513 Joanna.Grainger@dfat.gov.au Kieran Macdonell +32 486 137 543 Kieran.Macdonell@dfat.gov.au</p>	<p>Veterinary export certificates will be sent from: foodexportdocumentation@agriculture.gov.au Any facilitation letters will be sent from either foodexportdocumentation@agriculture.gov.au or exportstandards@agriculture.gov.au</p>	<p>For sanitary (health) certificates for meat, animal by-products and food exports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Export health certificates will be generated and printed for the authorised officer to sign and initial and the embossed official stamp will be applied before scanning of the paper certificate • The scanned copy of the original paper certificate will have a blue official stamp added. Each of these official stamps has an identification number to allow for certificate traceability, however this number does not match that of the embossed official stamp • The scanned copy of the original paper certificate will be transmitted electronically to the relevant BCP from the department mailbox - foodexportdocumentation@agriculture.gov.au • The original paper certificate will be sent to the EU BCP as soon as is technically feasible

Belarus	Third Secretary Ms Alesya Birillo be.trade@mfa.gov.by		
Brazil	<p>Contact person (Brasília):</p> <p>Mr. Oscar Afonso da Silva Júnior Coordinator General Coordination of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues (CGSF) Department of Technical, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Issues (DTSF) Secretariat for Trade and International Relations (SCRI) Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) E-mails: oscar.junior@agricultura.gov.br / temassanitarios.dpb@agricultura.gov.br Phone.: +5561 3218-3580 Mobile (WhatsApp): +5561 981263804</p>	<p>Alternate contact person (Brussels):</p> <p>Mr. Guilherme Antonio da Costa Júnior Agricultural Attaché Mission of Brazil to the European Union Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) E-mails: guilherme.costa@agricultura.gov.br / ggguilherme@hotmail.com Phone: +32(0)26450107 Mobile: +32(0)493153230 WhatsApp: +5561 81344714</p>	<p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For issues regarding international health certificates (CSI): hc.dipoa@agricultura.gov.br; - For issues regarding international animal health certificates: dsa.gab@agricultura.gov.br. - For issues regarding phytosanitary certificates: dsv@agricultura.gov.br / carlos.goulart@agricultura.gov.br; - For issues regarding certificates of origin and free sale of wines and beverages; and for international plant health certificates (CSIV) for peanuts: dipov@agricultura.gov.br;
Chile		<p>Phytosanitary only:</p> <p>Through the URL: http://multipuerto.sag.gob.cl/visitante/busquedaFito.asp, NPPOs can be verified in order to guarantee the authenticity of certificates</p>	
Costa Rica	Alejandro Patifio Cruz Trade and Customs Attaché Mission of Costa Rica to the European Union /OECD Affairs/ WCO Affairs		

	<p>Avenue Louise 489, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique Tel: +32 476 910 724 /During COVID- 19 Emergency in case you need to reach me by phone, please contact me at: +506 783 682 68 alejandro.patino@come x go.cr/www.comex.go.cr</p>		
Dominican Rep.	<p>Mr. Leonel Mateo Hernández</p> <p>lmateo@dominicanemb assy.be Counsellor for Economic and Commercial Affairs at the Embassy (Brussels).</p>		
Ecuador	<p>Isabel Alborno Subjefe de Mision Embajada del Ecuador ante el Reino de Belgica Mision del Ecuador ante la Union Europea Av. Louise 363, piso 9, 1050 Ixelles Telf.: (32) 2 648 4495 www.cancilleria.gob.ec</p> <p>ialborno@cancilleria.go b.ec</p>	<p>AGROCALIDAD has developed a platform to check authenticity of their certificates:</p> <p>https://sistemas.agrocalidad.gob.ec/sizse/publicAgr/publicCertFitSvAgr.asp</p> <p>In case of any doubt, question or necessary verification: relaciones.internacional es@agrocalidad.gob.ec</p>	
Japan	<p>Animals and Livestock Products Masatsugu Okita (Mr) Email: animal_health88@maff. go.jp Tel:+81-3-3502-8295 Director, International Animal Health Affairs Office Animal Health Division Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau</p>	<p>Fish and Fisheries Products</p> <p>Inomata Hideo (Mr) Director, Fishery Products Trade Office, Fisheries Agency of Japan export- certificate@maff.go.jp +81-3-3501-1961</p> <p>Alternative addresses:</p>	<p>Plants and Plant Products Hirofumi Uchida (Mr.) E-mail: ippc_contact@maff.go.j p Tel:: +81-3-3502-5978 IPPC Official Contact Point Director, International Affairs Office Plant Protection Division Food Safety and</p>

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North Macedonia	<p>Mbaresa Istrefi Shakjiri Counselor Mission of North Macedonia to the EU +32491367777 Rue de la Loi 38, 1040 Etterbeek Brussels, Belgium</p> <p>Mbaresa.Saqiri@mfa.gov.mk</p>		
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Paraguay	Mr. Víctor Acevedo Certifications Coordinator in SENACSA Email: vacevedo@senacsa.gov .py Mobile phone: +595982212581	The Central Office of SENACSA will send the scanned copies from the email address: digecipoa@senacsa.gov .py.	
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United States	Gerda Vandercammen U.S. Mission to the EU Foreign Agricultural Service Tel: +32 (0) 468 43 70 06 (during COVID telework period) Gerda.Vandercammen @usda.gov AguseuBrussels@usda. gov		
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Performance of documentary, ID and physical checks – remote checks

1. BCPs may perform remote documentary and identity checks. Such checks may be carried out using available technology (e.g. video links via Facetime/Skype/CCTV etc). Identity checks can also be done remotely in real time using cameras or smartphones. Please note, the frequency of documentary and identity checks cannot be reduced and must continue to be 100% across all commodities.
2. Physical presence at BCPs can be reduced to the minimum by having one OVS present at the BCP to coordinate remote work.
3. According to Article 49(2) of Regulation (EU) 2017/625, OVSs may perform physical checks remotely (via camera/smartphone) on animal products with assistance from non-OVS staff. As a temporary measure, non-OVS staff may perform these duties based on their knowledge and experience rather than formal training. The lead OVS must assess them as having suitable practical experience and knowledge and must deem them competent. As in accordance with Article 3 of Regulation [2020/466](#), such staff must be required to follow the instructions of the OVS for the performance of official controls and other official activities.
 - If the non-OVS staff is deemed competent by the lead OVS, they may perform physical checks independently of the OVS's direct supervision for POAOs other than fresh meat and edible meat offal, germinal products and animal by-products.
 - If the non-OVS staff is deemed competent by the lead OVS, they may assist with physical checks with OVS supervision for fresh meat and edible meat offal.
4. BCPs must keep Defra informed of the intended measures they will apply.