



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 50/21

Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) to be extended following review

Date issued: 25 November 2021

Purpose

1. To provide an update to OVs and FCCOs on the outcome of a review of the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS).

Background

2. The GEFS is a membership scheme for exporters of certain products of animal origin with stable supply chains which are packaged for sale to the final consumer. It allows exporters of these products to consolidate them more easily at a single point of dispatch and group products on to a smaller number of EHCs.
3. Defra has reviewed the scheme and made several changes including extending the GEFS – the details are set out below.

Changes to the GEFS

4. The recommendations from the Defra review have been agreed with the Royal College of Veterinarian Surgeons (RCVS) and include the following:
 - The scheme will be extended to 31 December 2023. An annual report will be provided to the RCVS on the operation of the scheme.
 - A proactive desk-based audit process will be introduced to ensure members are complying with the scheme and to obtain more granular information about how the GEFS is used. This audit will not focus on the certification process itself which is already audited separately through APHA certifier audits. We will contact members who are going to be audited.

- The GEFS guidance will be updated to specify that physical supplier inspections must be performed every three months as a minimum, with virtual visits allowed in the intervening period if the certifier is able to satisfy the relevant RCVS Code guidance for remote certification.
- The definition of ‘fully packaged for the final consumer (or to be re-packaged directly at the point of sale)’ will be revised to include goods served in food service environments like restaurants and cafes, as below:

Certain products of animal origin from stable supply chains that are packaged for sale to the final consumer. This includes products that are subsequently:

- *re-packaged directly at the point of sale to the final consumer*
- *unpacked in food service environments and subject to cutting or reheating at the point of sale to the final consumer*

5. These changes will be implemented from 1 January 2022. Details will be included in the updated GEFS guidance which will be published shortly.

Further information

6. If you have any questions about the scheme or the review, please contact:
GEFS@defra.co.uk