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## **UPDATE ON THE UK'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR TRADE IN LIVE ANIMALS AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS AT THE END OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD ON 31 DECEMBER 2020**

I am writing to update you on the UK's arrangements for international trade in live animals and animal products from 1 January 2021.

The UK has a reputation for safety and quality across the agri-food chain that is maintained and developed through a robust regulatory and assurance framework. Following the Transition Period, the UK will continue to provide the same high level of assurance of its food safety and biosecurity controls and standards to ensure that a smooth and orderly approach to trade can continue. This is reflected in existing European Union (EU) rules and standards being enshrined in UK law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and secondary legislation (Statutory Instruments) made under the Act.

A number of administrative changes are taking place at the end of the Transition Period, reflecting that the UK will operate its own trade regime from 1 January 2021. Certain changes relate specifically to the Northern Ireland Protocol, which was agreed between the UK and EU in 2019. Under the terms of the Protocol, Northern Ireland will continue to apply the EU's rules for SPS and marketing standards following the Transition Period. This means that Northern Ireland and Great Britain (comprising England, Wales and Scotland) may be subject to different rules for SPS and marketing standards; details of these are set out in the Annexes as appropriate.

This letter sets out key changes that will apply to:

- Food labelling and health marks
- Export health certificates
- Pre-notification for border control purposes
- Market access arrangements for imports to the UK
- Marketing standards for eggs, poultry meat, beef and veal.

Annexes to this letter are as follows:

**Annex A: UK exports of food products of animal origin (POAO) to non-EU countries: UK identification and health marks**

**Annex B: UK exports and imports of pre-packaged food: changes to food labelling**

**Annex C: UK exports and imports of animals and animal products from non-EU countries: Export Health Certificates (EHCs)**

**Annex D: Imports of live animals, animal products and high risk food not of animal origin into Great Britain from non-EU countries: Replacement of TRACES with IPAFFS for pre-notification**

**Annex E: UK imports of animals and animal products from non-EU countries: listing of approved countries, commodities and establishments**

**Annex F: UK imports of eggs and certain types of poultry meat, beef and veal from non-EU countries: marketing standards regulations**

**Annex G: UK points of contact**

I would appreciate your assistance in cascading all messages in this letter to the relevant Competent Authorities in your country / territory as well as to ports and border control posts to help avoid any disruption to trade.

I would appreciate if you could confirm receipt of this letter by contacting [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk). Please could you also confirm acknowledgement that exports from the UK to your country will be subject to a period of transition with regard to packaging and health/identification marks, as set out in Annexes A and B.

You can also use the [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk) email address for any comments or questions you may have regarding this letter and its Annexes.

Yours sincerely

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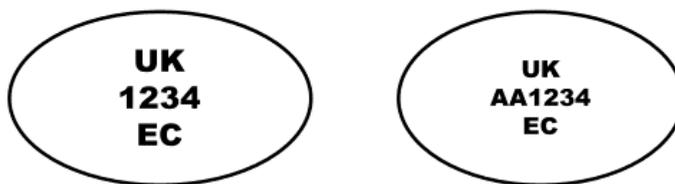
## **Annex A: UK exports of food products of animal origin (POAO) to non-EU Countries: UK identification and health marks**

Following the Transition Period (ending 31 December 2020), the form of the health and identification marks applied to products of animal origin (POAO) produced in the UK will change.

### **1. Existing health and identification marks**

The health and identification marks for POAO for export from the UK to non-EU countries are currently in this format:

#### **Health and Identification Marks Applied Before the 31 December 2020**



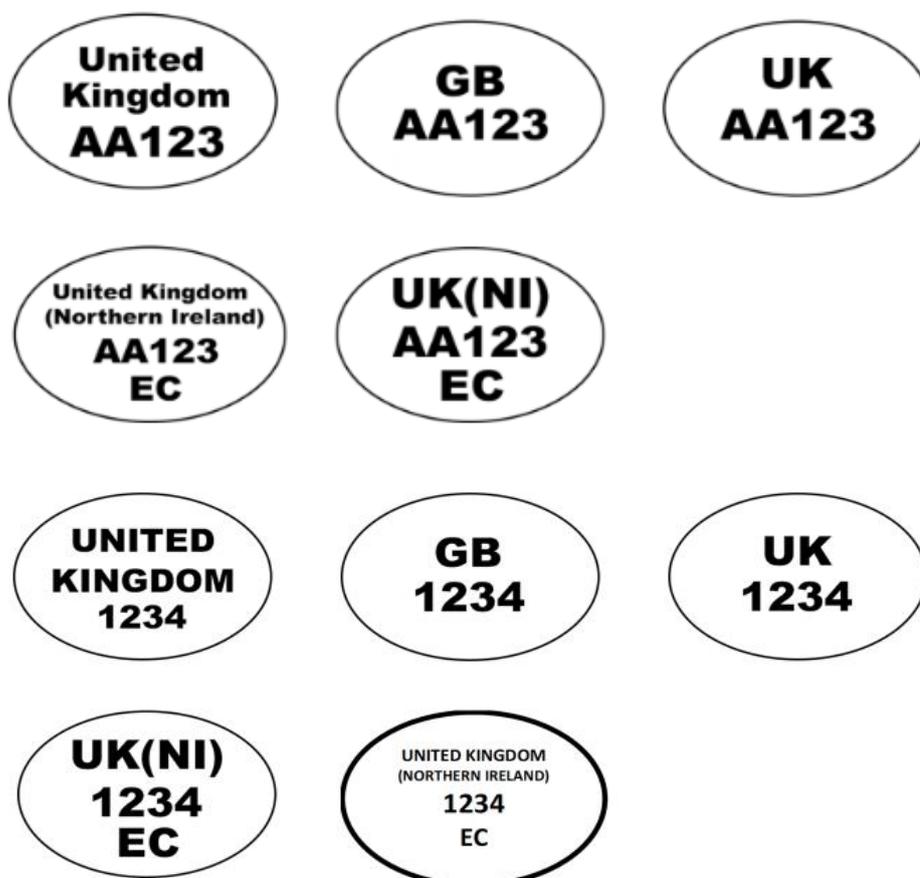
### **2. Future health and identification marks**

Health and identification marks applied after the transition period will be presented in the following formats:

#### **Health Marks Applied after the 31 December 2020**



## Identification Marks Applied after the 31 December 2020



### 3. Key changes

#### For POAO produced in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales):

- the 'EC' suffix will be removed from health and identification marks
- the marks will carry the full country name 'United Kingdom' or an abbreviated code 'GB' or 'UK'.

#### For POAO produced in Northern Ireland:

- the health and identification marks will continue to display the 'EC' suffix
- The marks will carry the full country name 'United Kingdom (Northern Ireland)' or an abbreviated code, 'UK(NI)'

In all cases, the approval number of the establishment, which provides the traceability required, will remain unchanged.

### 4. Exemption for eggs for human consumption and hatching eggs

Eggs in shell for human consumption and hatching eggs produced in the UK do not need to carry the UK identification/health mark outlined above and will continue to be marked in the same way as they are now. However, in some cases, such exported eggs may carry an additional ISO code (GB, GBR or 826) either instead of, or in addition to, the current marking. This may be because such eggs have been batch marked before the exact export destination is decided. Similarly, hatching eggs may also carry the word 'hatching'.

In all cases, eggs in shell for human consumption and hatching eggs produced in the UK will guarantee the same high standards and quality following the transition period.

## **5. Period of transition for goods on the market**

You may continue to receive products carrying the 'UK/EC' health and identification marks (see point 1 above) for a significant period of time. These marks continue to be valid marks, and relate to products produced in the UK before the end of the Transition Period. As the supply chain depletes itself of old stocks which bear these health and identification marks, you will see a gradual change to the new health and identification marks (see point 2 above).

All consignments and products certified using any form of the health and identification mark in the United Kingdom, with or without the 'EC' suffix, continues to be a guarantee of our continuing high standards and quality delivering official controls.

Further UK guidance on health and identification marks is accessible through the following link:

[www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/guidance-on-health-and-identification-marks-that-applies-from-1-january-2021](http://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/guidance-on-health-and-identification-marks-that-applies-from-1-january-2021)

## **Annex B: UK exports and imports of pre-packaged food: changes to food labelling**

Following the Transition Period, certain requirements for food labelling will change. This applies to all pre-packaged food products.

### **1. Changes to labelling for food imported to the UK (Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

#### **Food placed on the market in both Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

Packaging will need to display an address for both Great Britain and the EU, or a single address in Northern Ireland. A single address in Great Britain will not be sufficient.

#### **Food placed on the market in Great Britain only (England, Wales and Scotland)**

This packaging must display the name and address of the UK Food Business Operator (FBO) responsible for the information presented on the label. If the FBO is not established in the UK, the name and UK address of the importer into the UK will need to be provided.

#### **Food placed on the market in Northern Ireland only**

Packaging will need an address in either Northern Ireland or the EU. A single address in Great Britain will not be sufficient.

#### **Period of transition for imports into Great Britain currently using an EU address**

If you currently import into Great Britain using an EU FBO or importer address, packaging can continue to use this until 30 September 2022 in order to allow for supply chains to deplete. Where necessary, over-stickering may be used to make corrections for placing food on the UK market. This can take place after importation of the food, but must be before the food is placed on the market. Over-stickers must be designed and applied in such a way as to maintain compliance with all other food labelling rules.

### **2. Changes to labelling for food exported from the UK**

#### **Food and ingredients that originate in Great Britain**

Goods that are placed on the market after 1 January will no longer carry the term 'EU' and instead will begin to state 'Origin UK'.

#### **Food or ingredients that originate in Northern Ireland**

Labelling can continue to use the term 'EU' after 1 January, or alternatively may be labelled as 'Origin UK/NI'.

#### **Period of transition for goods on the market**

You may continue to receive food products that bear reference to the EU for some time. This will relate to food placed on the market before the end of the transition period, and will apply until stocks of the food are depleted. Stocks of goods such as frozen, dried or canned goods may continue to be available on the market for a significant period of time.

## **Annex C: UK exports and imports of animals and animal products from non-EU countries: Export Health Certificates (EHCs)**

### **1. EHCs accompanying exports from the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland)**

The EHCs that accompany UK (Great Britain and Northern Ireland) consignments of live animals and animal products to your country, including references to EU legislation, processes and standards, will remain the same from 1 January 2021 unless changes are required by either trading partner.

#### **Unique establishment codes for animal products exported from the United Kingdom**

However, the format of the unique identification codes for UK establishments approved to export animal products to non-EU countries will change on 1 January 2021. From this time, establishment approval numbers on EHCs, where required, will no longer include a 'UK' prefix or 'EC' suffix. Instead, they will be in the format '1234' or 'AB 123'. This means that they will no longer be identical to the health and identification marks displayed on products of animal origin (POAO), which will continue to carry a prefix as set out in Annex A.

### **2. EHCs accompanying imports into Great Britain**

From 1 January 2021, live animals and animal products that you import into Great Britain, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man will need to be accompanied by new EHCs. These are being published online and are accessible at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-certificates-for-animal-and-animal-product-imports-to-great-britain](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/health-certificates-for-animal-and-animal-product-imports-to-great-britain)

#### **Period of transition for EHCs accompanying imports into Great Britain**

As a temporary measure, to allow you time to incorporate the new EHCs into your export systems and to ensure there are no complications for goods that have already departed for Great Britain, our authorities will accept existing EU model EHCs dated up to and including 31 March 2021.

We recognise that each country has different systems that need updating and as we approach 31 March 2021 we will review the need for a further maximum three months' extension. Transitioning to the GB EHCs should be completed as a matter of priority to ensure that the new GB certification is successfully implemented while the temporary measures are in place.

## **Annex D: Imports of live animals, animal products and high risk food not of animal origin into Great Britain from non-EU countries: Replacement of TRACES with IPAFFS for pre-notification**

### **1. Imports into Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales)**

The new Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) will replace the EU TRACES system for pre-notification of imports of live animals, animal products and high risk food not of animal origin (HRFNAO) into Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland).

Pre-notification on IPAFFS must be provided by GB import agents - it cannot be raised by your exporters. You will therefore need to ensure that your exporters liaise with their import agents to raise the relevant pre-notification.

IPAFFS should be used instead of TRACES for pre-notification of live animal imports to Great Britain from 23 November 2020, and must be used for all import pre-notifications from 6am, 7 December 2020.

Further information on IPAFFS is accessible at the following link:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-live-animals-or-animal-products-from-non-eu-countries](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-live-animals-or-animal-products-from-non-eu-countries)

### **2. Imports into Northern Ireland**

The EU TRACES system must continue to be used to provide pre-notification of imports to Northern Ireland.

## **Annex E: UK imports of animals and animal products from non-EU countries: listing of approved countries, commodities and establishments for SPS purposes**

### **1. Continued recognition on 1 January 2021 of the status of countries approved to import live animals and animal products into the UK**

From 1 January 2021, existing EU rules and standards will be enshrined in UK law under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and associated legislation.

This means that the UK will continue to recognise the status of countries, commodities and establishments currently approved to import live animals and animal products into the UK.

The UK will, from this time, manage its lists of approved countries and commodities for import into Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) independently from the EU. Northern Ireland will, however, remain aligned with the EU's lists under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

For additions, deletions or changes to your country's approved establishments please contact: [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk)

### **SPS trade assurance for imports of live animals and animal products into the UK**

From 1 January 2021, the UK will assess and inspect trading partners who apply for market access to Great Britain to ensure that import conditions for food and feed safety and standards, animal health and animal welfare are properly met. This will ensure the UK maintains a high level of protection of human and animal health for its citizens and businesses.

SPS trade assurance will be coordinated by Defra on behalf of the UK Government. Different rules will apply in Northern Ireland to Great Britain to reflect that Northern Ireland is aligned with the EU through the Northern Ireland Protocol on SPS matters.

### **2. Contact details for UK SPS Trade Assurance**

Defra can be contacted at [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk) for enquiries relating to:

1. Market Access to the UK for live animals, products of animal origin, germinal products, animal by-products and hay and straw, including for new applications and changes to existing import conditions
2. Co-ordination of inspections following a new application, a review of import restrictions, or following an incident or outbreak
3. Updates to approved establishment lists for imports into Great Britain; and
4. The UK's agri-food regulatory and assurance system.

Enquiries can only be accepted from your Competent Authority; any other enquiries will not be processed.

## **Annex F: UK imports of eggs, certain types of poultry meat, beef and veal from non-EU countries into the UK: marketing standards regulations**

Marketing standards requirements are in addition to, and separate from, the SPS requirements that you must meet.

### **1. Import of eggs in shell into Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales)**

Before eggs in shell for human consumption can be imported into Great Britain from your country, the UK needs to make a determination of equivalence relating to your egg marketing standards. The determination of equivalence includes an evaluation of the rules on labelling and marketing, farming methods and controls and an assessment of whether the requirements contained in the legislation in place in the UK are effectively met by operators in your country.

Please contact [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk) for further information.

### **2. Import of eggs in shell into Northern Ireland**

If you currently import eggs in shell for human consumption into Northern Ireland, you can continue to do so following the Transition Period.

### **3. Import of poultry meat into Great Britain**

If you wish to import poultry meat labelled with certain optional indicators (see below) into Great Britain, these consignments must be accompanied by a certificate signed by your competent authority attesting that the consignment complies with the Poultrymeat Marketing Standards Regulations in force in Great Britain. You must inform us who this competent authority is in advance of the first shipping of such poultry meat.

This requirement applies to poultry meat which carries any of the following labelling terms:

An indication of the farming method:

- fed with ... % ...
- extensive indoor or barn-reared
- free range
- traditional free range
- free range total freedom.

An indication of the chilling method relating to the following methods:

- air-chilling
- air-spray chilling
- immersion chilling.

Please contact [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk) for further information.

### **4. Import of poultry meat into Northern Ireland**

If you currently import poultry meat labelled any of the aforementioned optional indicators into Northern Ireland, you can continue to do so following the Transition Period.

## **5. Import of beef and veal into Great Britain**

If you currently import beef and veal from animals slaughtered at less than 12 months of age into Great Britain, you must inform Defra who your Competent Authority is and they must provide Defra with a list of approved operators for beef and veal labelling by 31 December 2020. Thereafter, any new operator must be notified to Defra by your Competent Authority before it sends its first consignment.

Please contact [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk) for further information.

## **6. Import of beef and veal into Northern Ireland**

If you currently import beef and veal slaughtered at less than 12 months of age into Northern Ireland, you can continue to do so following the Transition Period.

## **Annex G: UK points of contact**

For enquiries relating to SPS trade assurance for live animals and animal products, please contact: [ukassurance@defra.gov.uk](mailto:ukassurance@defra.gov.uk)

To notify the UK of animal disease outbreaks in your country, please contact the UK Chief Veterinary Officer on: [christine.middlemiss@defra.gov.uk](mailto:christine.middlemiss@defra.gov.uk)

For enquiries relating to export health certificates (EHCs) for the export of live animals and animal products from the UK, please contact: [marketaccess@defra.gov.uk](mailto:marketaccess@defra.gov.uk)

For enquiries relating to plant health imports, please contact the UK National Plant Protection Organisation: [uknppo@defra.gov.uk](mailto:uknppo@defra.gov.uk)

For SPS World Trade Organisation (WTO) queries please contact: [uksps@defra.gov.uk](mailto:uksps@defra.gov.uk)

DEFRA's Trade Secretariat function coordinates the implementation of the agri-food elements of UK's trade agreements. For queries relating to trade agreement implementation in agri-food sectors, please contact: [defratradesecretariat@defra.gov.uk](mailto:defratradesecretariat@defra.gov.uk)