

## **Importing animals and animal products if there's no Brexit deal**

### **Summary**

How importing animals, animal products and high-risk food and feed would be affected if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

### **Detail**

If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal, find out how this would affect anyone who imports animals, animal products and high-risk animal food and feed into the UK. This currently includes 'products of animal origin (POAO)' and 'specified food not of animal origin (FNAO)'. Changes are likely to affect both so-called 'transit consignments' and consignments originating within EU countries.

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a no deal scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an [overarching framing notice](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-preparations-for-a-no-deal-scenario>) explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

## **Purpose**

This notice sets out how anyone who imports live animals, animal products and high-risk food and feed into the UK would be affected if the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 without a deal.

## **Before 29 March 2019**

The current regime for importing live animals, animal products, and high-risk food and feed into the UK is regulated by EU legislation.

### *For imports to the UK from outside the EU (third country trade)*

Goods are notified to the UK using the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES). Health certificates are required and veterinary checks are carried out on entry to the UK at a Border Inspection Post (BIP), an inspection post approved for carrying out veterinary checks on animals and animal products entering the EU.

Goods originating in countries outside the EU, destined for the UK, which enter the EU to transit onwards to the UK, are normally checked at the first point of entry into the EU. Once they have entered the EU they are subject to normal rules for imports to the UK from within the EU.

### *For imports to the UK from within the EU*

Different rules apply to trade between countries within the EU. Exporting live animals and some very specific animal products (such as germplasm) requires exporters to provide either an EHC or, more generally, an EU-specific version of an EHC, known as an Intra Trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC). For all other animal products, no certification is required and no specific processes need to be followed. Where there are currently no

border checks required for live animals and animal products from the EU, risk-based checks are made at the final destination.

There are additional requirements when transporting live vertebrate animals for commercial or economic activity. For all journeys, the transporter must hold a valid Transporter Authorisation and drivers and attendants must hold a Certificate of Competence. For journeys over eight hours within the EU, vehicles must also have a valid vehicle approval certificate. Transporter Authorisations, Certificates of Competence and Vehicle Approval Certificates must be issued by an EU member state. For journeys over eight hours where farm livestock and unregistered horses will be transported, the transporter must also hold a Journey Log.

### **After March 2019 if there's no deal**

In the unlikely event the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 with no deal in place, the EU will not allow the UK to access the EU import notification system, TRACES. To ensure those involved in importing live animals, animal products and high-risk food and feed could continue to do so, a new import notification system is being developed to take the place of TRACES. The new system will be available for early testing in January 2019 and, in the unlikely event of a 'no deal' scenario, would be fully operational for all users from the day the UK leaves the EU.

For an interim period, the UK would continue to recognise Transporter Authorisations, Certificates of Competence, Vehicle Approval Certificates and Journey Logs issued by other EU Member States. UK-issued documents would only be valid for use in the UK and not in any other EU member state. UK transporters wishing to transport live animals in the EU would need to appoint a representative within an EU member state and apply to their relevant government department to obtain a valid Transporter Authorisation, Certificate of Competence, Vehicle Approval Certificate and, where necessary, a Journey Log.

### *TRACES users*

Anyone currently using the TRACES system would need to start using the new import notification system, together with any updated processes that system may require, ahead of March 2019.

In the unlikely event of a 'no deal' scenario, guidance and training material would be available several months in advance of March 2019, clearly setting out any differences from the existing system, although these will be minimal as it has been developed to replicate TRACES functionality. Representatives from key user groups are involved in the design, testing and preparation of the system.

Updates will be issued to the industry between now and March 2019 to assist users to prepare for any change required in March 2019, and ensure businesses are ready for imports on the day the UK leaves the EU.

#### *Import notifications and import controls*

There would be no change on the day the UK leaves the EU to current import controls or requirements for notifications of imports of live animals and animal products for imports direct from the EU. These imports do not need to be notified on TRACES at the moment and, in order to ensure a smooth transition, the government would not introduce new requirements at the point the UK leaves the EU.

To maintain high levels of food safety, the UK would require importers of high-risk food and feed to pre-notify the Food Standards Agency (FSA) of imports from the EU. Defra and the FSA are working to establish when such a requirement could be satisfactorily introduced. More information will be released later in the Autumn. This requirement would have no direct impact at the border or for port health authorities. Pre-notifications would be made electronically, in advance, by those introducing high-risk foods into the UK, and would be managed by the FSA. No additional controls would be introduced at the border.

There will be no change to current import controls and requirements for notifications of live animals, animal products, and high-risk food and feed imported directly from third countries. The only difference is that importers would need to use the new import notification system, instead of TRACES. Changes would apply to control requirements for imports of third country animal products and high-risk food and feed which move through the EU before arrival in the UK, from March 2019. Importers would need to notify UK authorities using the new import notification system and would be directed to an existing UK BIP where the relevant checks would take place. This requirement would ensure the current level of biosecurity is maintained.

The requirement for live animal imports from a third country, which move through the EU before arrival in the UK, to enter via a UK BIP is being reviewed as all live animals would have been subject to checks at the point of entry to the EU. For live animal imports the importer will be required to notify the UK authorities using the new import notification system.

### *Border Inspection Posts*

There would be an increase in the number of consignments requiring import control checks at a BIP as a result of the need to carry out these checks on transit items that are currently carried out elsewhere in the EU. Those carrying out the checks at the BIP would receive notifications on the new import notification system to support checks and controls. These users will be fully trained to minimise the impact at the border and reduce the chance of delays.

### **Further information**

A list of all existing UK BIPs can be found [here]([https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/bips\\_contact\\_unitedkingdom.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/animals/docs/bips_contact_unitedkingdom.pdf)).

Importers should note that this Technical Notice only addresses the relevant sanitary requirements for imports. Other significant factors such as customs declarations and tariffs are not covered.

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.

The UK government is clear that in this scenario we must respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement. The UK government has consistently placed upholding the Agreement and its successors at the heart of our approach. It enshrines the consent principle on which Northern Ireland's constitutional status rests. We recognise the basis it has provided for the deep economic and social cooperation on the island of Ireland. This includes North-South cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which we're committed to protecting in line with the letter and spirit of Strand two of the Agreement.

The Irish government have indicated they would need to discuss arrangements in the event of no deal with the European Commission and EU Member States. The UK would stand ready in this scenario to engage constructively to meet our commitments and act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland, recognising the very significant challenges that the lack of a UK-EU legal agreement would pose in this unique and highly sensitive context.

It remains, though, the responsibility of the UK government, as the sovereign government in Northern Ireland, to continue preparations for the full range of potential outcomes, including no deal. As we do, and as decisions are made, we'll take full account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein are party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area and participate in other EU arrangements. As such, in many areas, these countries adopt EU rules. Where this is the case, these technical notices may also apply to them, and EEA businesses and citizens should consider whether they need to take any steps to prepare for a 'no deal' scenario.