

Amendments to Retained Regulation 2019/1793: Controls Applied to Imported Food and Feed not of Animal Origin: summary of stakeholder responses

This consultation was issued on 14th April 2022 and closed on 7th July 2022. It is a joint Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) consultation on proposed amendments to Retained Regulation 2019/1793. This retained EU legislation applies a temporary increase of official controls and special conditions governing the entry into Great Britain of certain food and feed of non-animal origin from certain countries.

Summary of responses

England and Wales

PDF

[View 3: Controls Applied to Imported Food Amendments to Retained Regulation 2019/1793 and Feed not of Animal Origin as PDF \(Open in a new window\)](#) (144.11 KB)

Introduction

The reason we consulted was to seek stakeholder comments and views on proposed amendments to the Annexes of Retained Regulation 2019/1793.

The consultation was published on the FSA and FSS website. Emails were sent to trade bodies, port health local authorities and other interested parties. Prior to the consultation opening, the FSA and FSS wrote to the countries affected by the proposals. We also intend to notify the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in line with our international commitments.

The FSA and FSS are grateful to those stakeholders who responded to the consultation and the table below sets out our responses in order of the date in which they were received.

The key questions on which the consultation sought views were:

- Do you have any comments on the country/commodity recommendations that are being proposed to amend Retained Regulation 2019/1793?
- Are you aware of any impacts of the proposed commodity amendments that have not been identified in this consultation?

The FSA and FSS considered responses to stakeholders' comments are given in the last column of the table. A summary of changes to the original proposal resulting from stakeholder comments is set out in the final table.

A list of stakeholders who responded can be found at the end of the document.

Summary of substantive comments

1. Institute of Food Science & Technology

Comment

It would be useful to understand if there are any significant deviations to EU controls on the same products.

Response

Although this is outside the scope of the consultation, the proposed amendments will entail some divergence from the EU, reflecting our approach to food and feed safety risk analysis. Any divergences from the EU controls maintain the overall purpose shared with the EU of maintaining food and feed safety. The EU frequently review their controls and the relevant legislation can be found at EUR-Lex.

It should be noted that the type of goods imported into the UK are often different to those imported into the EU. The amendments we are proposing are to protect GB consumers and are based upon data collected at GB borders. It should be noted that Northern Ireland will remain aligned with EU controls.

2. Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority

Comment

Consider the addition of Betel leaves from Malaysia to Annex I

Response

This is outside the scope of the consultation. Our risk assessments do not indicate any significant issue with betel leaves imported from Malaysia but we will keep this under review.

Comment

Currently the description in Annex IIa for betel leaves is 'Foodstuffs containing or consisting of betel leaves' including, but not limited to, those declared under CN code 1404 9000. The proposal simply states 'Betel leaves 1404 9000 10'. Most of the imports of products containing betel leaves are imported under CN code 1404 9000 90 so could this be included in the CN code column for betel leaves imports as 'ex 1404 9000 90' otherwise we will not be able to complete import checks on these products.

Response

We have considered this and concluded that the existing 8 digit CN code adequately covers all imports of betel leaves whether processed or not.

Comment

Why is Hazelnut Oil ex 1515 9099 20 included under aflatoxin controls when groundnut oil (1508) isn't?

Response

Our risk assessments do not indicate any significant issue with groundnut oil but we will keep this under review.

Comment

Do controls on Guar Gum from India need to continue?

Response

This falls outside the scope of this consultation but we will be considering the controls on guar gum in a separate review.

Comment

Consider adding the CN code for spice mixes to table 2 of Annex 2 (compound food)

Response

We agree with your observation and will propose the addition of spice mixes to table 2 of Annex II.

Comment

Consider adding ethylene oxide controls to spices from India to Annex I

Response

Thank you outlining your concerns. We are picking up some issues with ethylene oxide but do not have sufficient evidence to support the listing at the moment. However, we will keep this under review.

3. American Pistachio Growers**Comment**

We support the delisting of pistachios from Annex I and agree with the Food Safety Agency's statement, "Based on our assessment of the data it is no longer necessary to have these enhanced controls in place as it shows with a high level of certainty that removal of the controls represents a negligible risk to public health. Therefore, there is no justification to keeping the current measures in place

Response

Thank you for your comments. We welcome the work of the American Pistachio Growers in this area.

4. Blacksea Exporters Associations**Comment**

The Blacksea Exporters Association requested that Turkish hazelnuts be removed from the scope of controls because of the significant improvement in the non-compliance rate (reported through RASFF) in recent years.

Response

The FSA and FSS have concluded that there is still a risk with hazelnuts from Turkey. The UK left the EU in December 2020 so improvements in RASFF data is not relevant to the UK anymore. We are reducing the control level and if we obtain further evidence to demonstrate increased compliance, we will consider delisting.

5. The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives**Comment**

In summary, the last RASFF for betel leaves was in 2020 and an investigation was undertaken by

the Department of Agriculture (DOA) as Thailand's Competent Authority and several corrective actions to address this issue were taken. Reports have been produced and sent to the EU's DG SANTE (copy supplied to the FSA).

Response

We welcome your investigations and the intelligence report that you have provided to the FSA/ FSS. We hope that with these measures in place, sampling results at the GB border will improve significantly.

6. Sabir hazelnut

Comment

In summary, Turkish hazelnuts should be removed from controls due to the significant improvement in the non-compliance rate (of RASFF) in recent years.

Response

The FSA and FSS have concluded that there is still a risk with hazelnuts from Turkey. The UK left the EU in December 2020 so improvements in RASFF data is not relevant to the UK anymore. We are reducing the control level and if we obtain further evidence to demonstrate increased compliance, we will consider delisting.

7. Bangladesh Fruit and Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association

Comment

To move betel leaves from Bangladesh from Annex Ila to Annex II at a frequency of between 2-5% identity and physical examination due to high levels of compliance in produce exported to the EU.

Response

The FSA and FSS can only consider compliance levels in produce imported into the UK. We acknowledge the comments made but still considers betel leaves to be a high-risk commodity so feel that GB consumers would be best protected by retaining the higher frequency of checks. With positive sampling results, over time this level will hopefully decrease and/or the controls removed altogether.

8. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Comment

The USDA has submitted supporting information to the FSA via this consultation process.

Response

Following careful consideration, the FSA and FSS confirm the checking frequency of groundnuts will remain at 10%, however we will keep this under review.

9. American Peanut Council

Comment

The American Peanut Council has requested the supporting evidence and risk assessments to be made available for review.

Response

The full supporting evidence and risk assessment will not be released as part of this consultation process. We are considering how we might make available such data in the future.

Comment

The Council was not made aware of any rejections by the UK relating to peanuts.

Response

The UK is working on a system to enable countries to access this information. As an interim measure, the FSA and FSS has agreed to provide Border Notification data to the USDA via the Embassy. This will enable investigations to take place in the US and the necessary remedial action taken.

Comment

The Council wish for separate legislation for peanuts intended for food and those intended for animal feed.

Response

We have noted this request and will consider this point at our next review meeting.

Comment

The Council wish for processed peanuts to be considered separately from raw peanuts.

Response

We have noted this request and will consider this point at our next review meeting.

Comment

The Council provided additional information on the measures they have implemented to ensure the safety of exported products

Response

Following careful consideration the FSA and FSS confirm the checking frequency of groundnuts will remain at 10%, however we will keep this under review.

10. European Federation of the Trade in Dried Fruit, Edible Nuts, Processed Fruit & Vegetables, Processed Fishery Products**Comment**

Request for a public portal with data on non-compliance.

Response

The UK is working on a system to enable countries to access this information.

Comment

Support the de-listing of US pistachios, Chinese goji berries and Turkish dried grapes

Response

The FSA and FSS have noted this comment.

Comment

Request that US peanuts intended as use in feed be treated separately from peanuts for human consumption.

Response

We have noted this request and will consider this point at our next review meeting.

Comment

Commented that the proposed amendments are out of date and there is a suggestion that the amendment is being taken to manage perceived risks associated with the 2020 peanut crop.

Response

The FSA and FSS only make recommendations to amend the legislation where the level of risk has changed (increased/decreased) and we have evidence to support this. It is not in response to perceived risks associated with the 2020 peanut crop.

Comment

Comment about the pressure the amendments will put on the supply chain.

Response

Whilst we acknowledge this comment, the FSA and FSS must ensure GB consumer health is protected.

Comment

Request for information about the rationale behind the measures in particular peanuts from Brazil moving from Annex II to I at a frequency of 10%, and included within Annex I at 20% for pesticides. In addition to peanuts from India increasing from 10 to 50%.

Response

The full supporting evidence and risk assessment will not be released as part of this consultation process. As outlined in the consultation document. The proposals are in response to changes in risk level, the last available RASFF and Border Notification data and other intelligence.

11. Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka**Comment**

The Ministry of Health has implemented legislation in Sri Lanka which requires pre-export testing. Only registered exporters are permitted to send goods to the EU. For this reason, the Ministry has proposed the level of testing to be reduced from 50% to 10%.

Response

It was not clear from the response whether this pre-export testing related to goods sent to the UK or just the EU. We welcome the pre-export testing being undertaken in Sri Lanka but until the level of risk changes in goods imported to the UK, we propose to retain the checking frequency that is proposed and protect GB consumer health. Once the evidence confirms that the level of risk is decreasing, the level of testing will be reduced/removed.

Comment

The Ministry is concerned about the impact of the amendments on the local community.

Response

The FSA and FSS understand this concern but remain committed to protecting GB consumer health.

12. Government Chemist**Comment**

The Government Chemist recommends FSA and FSS ensure UK Official Laboratories have sufficient capability/capacity to undertake pesticide residue analysis at the increased volumes (only one commodity has been delisted for pesticides residues and increased controls are being recommended for 11 commodities), as this will result from the proposed changes to the commodity amendments in this consultation.

Response

The FSA and FSS have noted your comments and are liaising with the relevant authorities

13. Food and Drink Federation (FDF)**Comment**

No specific comments to the consultation but some general comments made on making better use of trusted trader schemes

Response

The FSA is committed to improving the system for controlling imported food at the border. We are currently engaged in a wider Government project which is reviewing border controls and making better use of industry schemes such as trusted trader to help facilitate the faster clearance of goods at the border.

Comment

Differentiating between ready to eat and those that require further processing.

Response

We have noted this request and will consider this point at our next review meeting.

Comment

Is it FSA/FSS's intention to review the lists on a quarterly basis in the same way as the EU or will the review be on a less frequent basis

Response

It is the intention of FSA and FSS to review the lists set out in Annexes I and II on a regular basis not exceeding a period of six months, in order to take into account new information related to risks and non-compliance.

Comment

FDF would like to understand if FSA/FSS will be taking on board any of the amendments to Regulation 2019/1793 as proposed by the European Commission

Response

We do consider what changes have been made by the European Commission as part of our review, but we will not always be controlling the same commodities. This is because the pattern of

commodities imported into the UK and EU differs as does the level of risk. We use data gathered at our borders and elsewhere to inform our legislative controls. There may be alignment in some areas but this will not always be the case.

14. Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC)

Comment

It is not clear what the criteria are for the inclusion of new products, the increased controls or removal and therefore there is no clear transparency for the decisions.

Response

The full supporting evidence and risk assessment will not be released as part of this consultation process. We are considering how we might make available such data in the future.

Comment

Increasing product testing can be significant in terms of disruption and cost

Response

The FSA acknowledges this. UK Port Health and Local Authorities have worked hard to mitigate this. The FSA will continue to explore areas where cost and disruption can be reduced. The FSA and FSS are working cross Government on a project to improve efficiencies at the border and to make better use of data and trusted trader schemes.

Actions to be implemented

The FSA considers that amending Retained Regulation 2019/1793 remains the preferred option.

- The checking frequency of groundnuts from the USA will be retained at 10%; and
- CN code 0910 91 will be inserted into table 2 of Annex II to ensure that mixtures of spices are also included in the controls.

List of respondents

1. Institute of Food Science & Technology
2. Suffolk Coastal Port Health Authority
3. American Pistachio Growers
4. Blacksea Exporters Associations
5. The National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards (ACFS) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
6. Sabir hazelnut
7. Bangladesh Fruit and Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association
8. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
9. American Peanut Council
10. European Federation of the Trade in Dried Fruit, Edible Nuts, Processed Fruit &
11. Vegetables, Processed Fishery Products
12. Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka
13. Government Chemist
14. Food and Drink Federation (FDF)
15. Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC)