

Importing high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin into GB

Defining what a high-risk product is, guidance on aflatoxin levels in imported food, current GB restrictions and guidance for importing certain products from defined countries.

All products imported into Great Britain (GB) must comply with our food and feed safety requirements. These laws are put into place to protect public health.

There are certain types of food which are considered high risk, if you are involved with importing them, then you must be aware of this guidance.

If imported products fail to meet the correct standards they will not be allowed into GB. It is important to note that high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFNAO) can only be imported through [Border Control Posts \(BCPs\)](#), where documentary checks must be carried out and physical checks may be required prior to release.

Please note that the import controls on HRFNAO sits outside of the scope of the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) risk categorisation process and all risk-based checks are based on those prescribed in the assimilated controls.

Products may be considered high risk if they contain:

- contaminants - mycotoxins and aflatoxins
- pesticides
- microorganism that present a risk to public health, such as *Salmonella* or *Listeria*

Information on high-risk products, country of origin and the frequency of checks can be found in assimilated [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#) as amended. This Regulation controls imported HRFNAO.

When products are exported from the country of origin into another country before coming to Great Britain, this would be considered as 'triangular trade'. In this instance, the country of origin has not changed and the controls continue to apply.

Please note that when products are exported from the country of origin into another country and are further processed before coming to Great Britain, they become a product of that country and fall out of scope of the HRFNAO controls. In terms of food law 'processing' means any action that substantially alters the initial product. Processing includes: heating, smoking, curing, maturing, drying, marinating, extraction, extrusion or a combination of those processes. In addition, mixing the product with another (non-controlled) commodity would also be considered to be processing.

Products that are controlled at the border, may be permitted, with agreement of the port health authority, to move inland pending the results of laboratory tests. However, arrangements must be put in place to ensure that the consignment remains under the continuous control of the competent authorities and cannot be tampered with in any manner pending the results of the laboratory checks.

Until the results of the laboratory checks are known, the consignment must be stored at a Customs-controlled warehouse or a UK External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF). If you have any questions/queries, please email imported.food@food.gov.uk.

Please follow this link to see the [current list of ETSF operators](#).

Important

It is essential to pre-notify authorities in Great Britain before importing HRFNAO. Importers and import agents must use the online Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) to do this.

[Guidance on the import of high-risk food and feed not of animal origin from the EU to Great Britain](#) is available on GOV.UK

Foodstuffs with current restrictions

These controls exist to protect public health and may either suspend imports or specify conditions of import. In most cases, consignments may only be imported through designated entry points, documentary checks must be carried out and sampling and analysis or examination may be required prior to release. You can find here the list of [foodstuffs with GB import restrictions](#).

Aflatoxin levels in imported food

Aflatoxins are a type of natural toxin which are found in food and are linked with cancer when eaten at high levels. Some spices, nuts, dried fruit and cereals, including cereal products like breakfast cereals, can contain high levels of aflatoxins.

There are limits on the level of aflatoxins that can be in foods imported into GB and some products might need to be tested.

Pesticide levels in imported food

Certain products of non-animal origin from certain third countries are controlled due to the risks of contamination with pesticides residues.

Restricted food stuffs

Please find below a summary of other products that are subject to restrictions.

Soy sauce containing 3-MCPD

Some soy sauce contains a dangerous chemical called 3-MCPD. There are limits on the levels of 3-MCPD that can be present in products imported into GB.

These are:

- soy sauce can contain levels of 3-MCPD no higher than 0.02 mg/kg
- this is for the liquid product containing 40% dry matter, which corresponds to a maximum level of 0.05 mg/kg in the dry matter

Import ban on jelly sweets

There are restrictions on the additives permitted in certain jelly confectionery because there is a risk of choking:

- the use in jelly mini-cups of certain additives specified in Annex II of assimilated [Regulation \(EC\) 1333/2008 as amended](#), and the sale of these jelly mini-cups, is prohibited
- in addition, the use of E425 konjac in all jelly confectionery, including jelly mini-cups, and the sale of such confectionery, is not permitted under Regulation 1333/2008
- these provisions are enforced by way of [The Food Additives, Flavourings, Enzymes and Extraction Solvents \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)

Kava kava import ban

Kava Kava, a member of the pepper family, is as a traditional herbal remedy for the treatment of anxiety. The herb has been banned since 2003. This is because of concerns about its toxic effect on the liver. Kava kava supplements, or foods containing this herb cannot be imported into GB.

Illegal dye in spices and palm oils

Certain spices are at risk of contamination. Food authorities regulate high risk imports. If illegal dye levels are at or above 0.5 parts per million (0.5ppm) they are rejected.

Spices at risk of contamination from illegal dye include:

- dried chilli
- chilli products
- curry powder
- palm oil