

Importing products of non-animal origin

Explains the legal requirements that food businesses who import products of non-animal origin into GB must comply with.

This legislation lists the products of non-animal that have increased levels of controls when importing into GB and sets out the extra steps and processes importers must take at designated points of entry when importing these goods.

Where emergency controls exist, there is usually a requirement for the Port Health Authority to conduct documentary checks and sampling for analysis or examination.

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.

Important

Check controls affecting imports from specific Non-EU countries in [the table of foodstuffs with current restrictions \(August 2020\)](#).

Importing through a suitable port

Most non-POAO may enter through any port, however you must check that the port has the necessary facilities in place to handle the imported produce. Importers should [contact the port](#) or [contact the local authority where the port is situated](#).

These are products likely to be contaminated with aflatoxins (such as nuts), pesticides, Salmonella or radiocaesium.

Importers should be aware that some products from specific countries are subject to emergency controls and can only enter the UK through designated [border control posts \(BCPs\)](#).

You can access a list of UK designated points of [import for high risk foods](#).

Legislation for importing produce of non-animal origin

Food which is intended for human consumption must meet the general food safety legal requirements.

Under [Regulation 178/2002](#) food must not be unsafe, this means:

- injurious to health
- unfit for human consumption
- food containing animal products includes meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products and honey
- food that has no animal content includes fruit, vegetables, cereals, certain bakery products, herbs, spices, mineral water and fruit juices

Apart from the general provisions of Regulation 178/2002, the specific legislation applying to imported food will depend on whether the food is of animal origin or not. [Regulation 2019/1793](#) applies official controls on imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin.

Emergency controls exist for certain food products not of animal origin from specific countries to reduce known human or animal health risks.

Importing trade samples of non-animal origin

Trade samples of food can be imported for test marketing, research and development, or quality assurance purposes. Samples of food that do not contain any POAO can enter GB freely, unless restrictions apply. Where the product is for research purposes (e.g. laboratory tests), a display item, or for commercial approval, and will not be consumed, they may be exempted from the controls. However, this exemption only applies to samples weighing less than 30kg.

If the samples are for taste testing, they must be edible and free from contamination. Even if the samples are given away, it is likely that they will be controlled by food law as there is an 'extended definition of sale' in the Food Safety Act 1990 which covers food given away. For further advice, contact [your local authority's food safety team or environmental health department](#).

Importers must ensure that their goods are safe and legal before they are purchased from producers and imported into GB.

Public Analysts, who are skilled scientists, are available to test that food samples comply with food safety requirements by undertaking chemical analysis and/or by arranging for microbiological examination, although there is no legal requirement for importers to do so.

We have published a list of [Official Food Control Laboratories in the UK](#).

In addition, there are a number of other laboratories in the UK and abroad that would undertake the work that importers may require. The importer could then arrange for the analysis report to form the basis of their quality controls for their supplier.