

FSA recommendation on import controls on beef and poultry meat and meat products from Brazil

Recommendation from FSA following Brazil's request for a review of import controls on Brazilian beef and poultry meat and meat products.

Background

On 17 March 2017 Brazilian media reported a police investigation into fraud in the main meat producing states in Brazil (dubbed 'Carne Fraca') affecting some key companies and official inspection staff. Following an urgent request by the European Commission, the Brazilian authorities provided information on the fraudulent activities. Some food producing establishments, listed by the European Union (EU) to export meat and meat products were involved in the police investigation. The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply (MAPA) suspended the activities in all of them and the EU took legal action to delist those establishments involved which had previously been approved for EU exports.

The European Commission carried out an audit of the official controls and certification system for beef and poultry in 2017. The audit identified shortcomings in Brazil's national food safety control systems. Based on the audit findings the EU applied reinforced import controls for Brazilian exports of beef, poultry meat and meat products in March 2017. These import controls remain in force both in the EU and in the UK.

In August 2021, following a request from Brazil to review the import controls, the UK agreed to initiate an assessment of the Brazilian official control system and its effectiveness in implementing the official controls needed to provide the necessary guarantees as required by Great Britain's legislation.

FSA recommendation

The report of the audit recently conducted by the UK indicates the Brazilian authorities have taken significant steps to rectify their national food safety control systems following recommendations from EU audits due to 'Carne Fraca'. After seeking additional information from Defra about these steps, to help in the decision-making process by understanding what they meant for food safety, the Food Standards Agency agrees with the decision to lift enhanced import controls on beef and poultry and to lift the restriction on Brazil to list poultry and beef establishments for export to Great Britain.

Whilst there have been 36 Border Notifications and 17 Intensified Official Controls for Products-of-Animal-Origin since January 2021, reverting to the default level of checks means imports from Brazil will continue to be subject to risk based checks at the border and where necessary intensified official controls can be put in place if non-compliant consignments are found.