

Importing cereals

Guidance on licensing, labelling, packaging, chemical safety when importing cereals.

General information

Imports of cereals and cereal products from third countries must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene standards and procedures as food produced in GB. This applies to cereals such as:

- oats
- barley
- bran
- rye
- wheat
- millet
- corn
- soya
- flour
- rice

Products made from them must also meet these standards such as:

- pasta
- noodles
- breakfast cereals
- cereal bars

You do not normally need a health certificate to import these products.

Food industry guides

For more information on Flour Milling, you can read our [Food Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Flour Milling](#) through The Stationary Office's website.

Import licences

You may not need a health or hygiene licence to import food, but many foods from third countries require licences for trading purposes and may be subject to quotas.

The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) provides further [information regarding import licenses online](#).

Basmati rice

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) [provides guidelines on the use of Basmati Rice](#) on their website.

Food colourings, flavourings and sweeteners

Some cereal products may contain food colourings, flavourings or sweeteners. Although these may be approved by the food authority in the country of origin, some of them may not be approved in GB.

For information on food flavourings, sweeteners, colourings and preservatives, please contact the Food Standards Agency (FSA)'s Food Additives team [through our online form](#).

Labelling

GOV.UK provide [general information on food labelling](#) on their website.

For advice on the labelling of specific products, please contact your local authority's [Trading Standards Department](#) or [Environmental Health Department](#).

Advertising nutrition and health claims

For information on advertising nutritional and health claims on foods, please contact DH customer service centre through its [contacts page](#).

Organics

DEFRA provides [information on importing organic products](#) (live or unprocessed agricultural products, processed agricultural for use as food or feed and vegetative propagating material and seeds for cultivation) from third countries.

Packaging

Food contact materials and articles, including those used for food packaging, are controlled by retained UK law. This legislation is particularly thorough in its control of plastic materials and articles intended for food use.

For information on the safety of packaging please contact the Food Contact Materials team [through our online form](#).

Food hygiene

For general enquiries on food hygiene please contact the [Food Hygiene Policy team](#) by email.

Pesticides

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD), [provides guidance on pesticides](#) on their website.

Import restrictions

There are some other import restrictions/requirements that can apply to cereal products of which importers need to be aware and these are as follows:

'Higher-risk' products

Imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin that are considered to be 'higher-risk' can only enter GB through specific ports and airports which are authorised Border Control Posts (BCP) where official controls will be carried out. A 'higher-risk' product is feed or food that is either known to be, or is, an emerging risk to public health.

Rice and rice products from China

Retained UK law contains emergency measures, in place governing the import of specific rice products originating in or consigned from China due to unauthorised genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Under these measures, consignments of rice products from China can only enter GB through specific ports or airports which authorised Border Control Posts (BCP) for GMOs, where official controls will be carried out.

If you should need advice about laboratory testing for rice or rice products from China please contact your trade association or the relevant Port Health Authority in the first instance.

If information on GM related rice queries is required please contact [GM inquiries](#) by email.

Aflatoxins

There is retained UK law covering aflatoxin contamination in cereals and cereal products such as breakfast cereals.

For advice on this legislation and aflatoxin testing requirements please contact the Mycotoxins team [through our online form](#).

Further information for business operators can be found on our [Mycotoxins webpage](#).

Fusarium toxins

There is retained UK law covering fusarium toxin contamination in cereals and cereal products such as breakfast cereals.

For advice on this legislation and fusarium toxin testing requirements please contact the chemical contaminants team [through our online form](#).

Products of animal origin

If you are importing any cooked rice or noodles that contain:

- eggs
- fish
- shellfish
- meat
- any cereal bars that contain any honey or dairy products (including dried milk powder)

You should know that different, stricter rules apply for the import of foods that are or that contain any products of animal origin. Among other requirements, this will require certification of the product, the premises that produce the product being listed in the UK and veterinary checks at the BCP on entry to GB.

Our [imported food team](#) can provide further information on products of animal origin in cereals.