



Introduction

Imports of Products of Animal Origin are controlled throughout the EU. This guide provides importers with information about the control system and provides details of where to source further information.

Information about the [importation of live animals](#) is not covered by this guide you should contact Animal Health for more information.

What is a Product of Animal Origin?

A Product of Animal Origin (POAO) is a product that is derived from animals such as meat, fish and honey and also includes products that may have come into contact with animals such as hay and straw. A full list of controlled products can be found in Commission Decision [2007/275/EC](#). Products containing POAO (composite products) may also be covered such as a meat pizza. Finished products such as cake and chocolate are not covered.

Why are imports controlled?

Imports of animal products are controlled through a system of checks aimed at making sure that the products from outside the EU meet Community standards in terms of animal and public health. These checks are commonly referred to as vet checks. Checks must be carried out before the goods are customs cleared.

Where are checks carried out?

Checks are carried out at a Border Inspection Post (BIP). The BIP is a designated part of the port and is sometimes referred to as a designated point of entry into the Community. A full list of the [BIPs in the UK](#) is available on the Defra website.

You will need to check that the UK/ EU port where you are planning to ship your goods is a BIP. Goods arriving at a port which is not an approved BIP or not approved for that product cannot be redirected to an approved BIP, they will be treated as an illegal import and refused entry into Europe.

Who carries out checks?

Checks are carried out by Local Authority Veterinary Surgeons and Environmental Health Officers. A few BIPs are staffed by Animal Health; these BIPs are only able to handle consignments Not for Human Consumption.

Who owns the BIP?

Most BIPs are owned by the port operator, you may be charged for using the BIP and for transporting and unpacking your goods for inspection – presenting the goods for checks. The Local Authority/ Animal Health are responsible for ensuring that the BIP is maintained in a condition suitable for carrying out the checks. All BIPs have to be approved by the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission.

A port can only be designated as a BIP if it meets the approval requirements laid down in Commission Decision 2001/812/EC. The BIP requirements relate to the provision of facilities for the checking of products and application of procedures for controlling their import.

Legislation for imports of animal products

European Council Directive 97/78/EC is the main piece of European legislation which sets out the principles of veterinary checks on imports, it is brought into UK law by:-

[The Products of Animal Origin \(Third Country Imports\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Products of Animal Origin \(Third Country Imports\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2007](#)

Equivalent regulations exist for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Import conditions

Products can only be imported from third countries that have been approved by the Commission. Products must also originate from an approved premise and comply with animal and public health conditions. You can check for [approved establishments](#) on the Commissions website.

Import conditions are laid down in specific decisions by country and product. These import conditions must be complied with for a consignment to be permitted free circulation within the EU. You can check import conditions that may apply to your product online. There are [Importer Information Notes](#) on the Defra website which provide information about importing POAO. However information about importing [Fishery Products and Bivalve Molluscs](#) is on the Food Standards Agency website.

As a general rule all products of animal origin intended for human consumption will require health certification issued by the competent authority of the exporting country containing declarations of compliance with the public and animal health criteria laid down in the import conditions.

What is a CVED?

The Common Veterinary Entry Document (CVED) is a document that shows that the necessary checks have been carried out on entry into the EU and can be found in Commission Regulation 136/2004.

Part 1 of the CVED should be completed by the importer or his agent and submitted to the BIP as **pre-notification**. There is no longer any time limit on the submission of this information; however it must be in advance of the arrival of the goods (before they are landed). The submission of the Part 1 information can be made electronically using the TRACES system or by providing a copy to the BIP.

Blank CVEDs are available on the [TRACES system](#).

The checks that have been carried out at the BIP will be marked on the CVED, together with the final decision about the checks – the document will then be signed and stamped by the inspector. The original CVED will be returned to the importer/agent and must travel with the load to the first establishment where it should be retained.

Who needs to see the CVED?

Consignments of products of animal origin cannot be removed from the BIP until all veterinary checks have been completed and any fees required, paid. The CVED is used by HMRC as proof that the satisfactory checks have been carried out.

Local Authority officers working inland may ask to see a copy of the CVED as proof that the veterinary checks have been carried out. You should retain the CVED at the first establishment where further handling of the goods is carried out. E.g where the consignment is split or subject to further processing.

What checks will be carried out on my consignment?

Documentary Check The documentary check is the assessment of the CVED, public and or animal health certificates and accompanying commercial documentation, which may include bills of lading, invoices and packing lists.

Identity Check All consignments are subject to identity checks which involves the verification that the product, health marks, stamps and other necessary product and or package information conforms to the declaration on the health certificates and accompanying documentation.

Physical Check Consignments must also be physically checked. The physical check may include sampling the product to look for pathogenic micro-organisms or illegal contaminants such as veterinary drugs residues or heavy metals. From time to time, BIPs may be instructed by the European Commission via their national governments, to vary the rate of checking and type of sampling because of known problems in the exporting country. Physical Checking Frequency Commission Decision 94/360/EC prescribes the level of physical checks for certain products. In general the minimum number of consignments to be subjected to a physical check are 20% for meat, meat products, fish, fishery products, 50% for poultry meat, honey, dairy products, and at between 1% and 10% for most products of animal origin that are not intended for human consumption (balai products).

The European Union has negotiated equivalence agreements with New Zealand and Canada. Imports from these countries are subject to lower physical checks and the charges levied for imports may be at a reduced level.

What is the charge payable for the checks

There is a standard minimum charge to cover the cost of veterinary checks. This must be paid before the consignment can be released for free circulation. Where the cost of inspection is more than the standard minimum charge, the actual cost can be levied. Further charges for laboratory examination or analysis may also be levied.

Satisfactory checks

Following satisfactory completion of checks at a BIP, products may be released by HMRC for free circulation into the Community. Consignments may also be released for purposes other than human consumption or removal under customs control to another member state where the product will be finally cleared.

Unsatisfactory Checks

Products failing to satisfy import conditions may be re-exported to a country outside the EEA. However, if the consignment is deemed to be a risk to human or animal health, or where the person responsible for the consignment fails to comply with a direction to re-export, it must instead be sent for destruction by incineration. All costs for destruction are to be met by the person responsible for the consignment.

Where, following veterinary checks on a product, a notice is served requiring that product is to be re-exported or destroyed an appeal may be brought to a Magistrates Court. This right must be exercised within one month of the notice being served. Judicial Review is still the only form of redress available for some enforcement notices under the Regulations. On receipt of a notice, recipients are advised to contact their legal advisers if they think they may wish to appeal against the notice.

Smuggled Imports

The responsibility for enforcing the controls in relation to illegal imports at ports has been assigned to HMRC. Local Authorities are responsible for this activity inland.

Personal Imports

The rules on personal import allowances are complicated, generally meat, milk, and their products are banned from entering the United Kingdom from most Non-EU countries. Certain [allowances](#) are permitted from particular countries, details of which are available on the DEFRA website.

Contacts

If you have any queries about the importation of goods into the UK there are a number of different places that you can go to for help.

Animal Health, an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is responsible for imports of products of animal origin and can be contacted by:-

Email ahitchelmsford@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone 01245 358383

The Food Standards Agency, Imported Food Division has a useful website as well as a helpline and is the best contact for Public Health and Fish policy queries.

Website:- <http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/>

Helpline:- tel: 020 7276 8018

Email:- imported.food@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Your Local **Port Health** team can be contacted on:-

APHA has information and guidance on their website as well as contact details of all Local Authority Port Health teams on www.porthhealth.co.uk

Businesslink have created a series of [guides to assist importers](#) which can be found at www.businesslink.gov.uk

Checklist for Importing Products of Animal Origin

1. Before you purchase goods that are a POAO you should ensure:-
 - The country/ establishment of origin is permitted to export to the EU
 - You are aware of any specific production/ certification/ labelling/ testing requirements
2. Before arranging shipping ensure that:-
 - the required health certification has been prepared by the veterinary authority in the exporting country and that any required tests have been carried out
 - the port of destination is a BIP and that it is approved to handle your goods
3. When you arrange for the goods to be transported, make sure that any transport conditions in the legislation/ on the health certificate are met.
4. Before the goods arrive at the EU port, submit Part 1 of the CVED document to the BIP, to fulfil the pre-notification requirement.
5. Ensure that health certificates and relevant commercial documentation are provided to the BIP for checking
6. If required arrange for the consignment to be presented to the BIP for inspection
7. Ensure that all fees for the BIP checks including any additional fees for sampling are paid
8. When BIP checks are complete, ensure that the completed CVED is sent to HMRC so that clearance can take place. (Check the BIPs arrangements for this)
Note: - If your goods are not in compliance with the import requirements you will be advised of the problem that has been identified and of the options available to you.
9. Ensure that the original CVED travels with the load and is stored at the first point of distribution.