

Cereals and cereal products

General information

Imports of cereals and cereal products from countries outside the European Union (EU) must meet the same or equivalent food hygiene and compositional standards and procedures as food produced in the UK or other EU Member States. This applies to cereals such as oats, barley, bran, rye, wheat, millet, corn, soya, flour and rice as well as products made from them such as pasta, noodles, breakfast cereals and cereal bars. You do not normally need a health certificate to import these products.

Import licences

You may not need a health or hygiene licence to import food, but many foods from countries outside the EU require licences for trading purposes and may be subject to quotas. For further information please contact the Rural Payments Agency on 0191 226 5050 or by email at Trader@rpa.gsi.gov.uk

Basmati rice

For guidelines on the use of the name Basmati Rice, please contact the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on 0845 933 5577 or by email at defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk

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 the EU. For information on food flavourings, sweeteners, colourings and preservatives, please contact the Food Standards Agency (FSA)'s Food Additives team on 020 7276 8570 or by email at foodadditives@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Labelling

For advice on the labelling of specific products, please contact your local authority's Trading Standards Department or Environmental Health Department. You can find contact details for these via the following link on our website <http://food.gov.uk/enforcement/yourarea/>

Advertising nutrition and health claims

For information on advertising nutritional and health claims on foods, please contact: DH customer service centre at <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/contact-dh> or 020 7210 4850

Organics

If you are 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 outside the EU, please contact the Organic Imports team at DEFRA at organic.imports@defra.gsi.gov.uk. For information on organic regulation and standards, (including labelling) within the UK please contact the Organic Strategy team at organic.standards@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Packaging

Food contact materials and articles, including those used for food packaging, are controlled by a comprehensive EU harmonised legislation that has been fully implemented in the UK. 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 on 020 7276 8570 or by email at: FoodContactMaterial@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Food hygiene

For general enquiries on food hygiene please contact the Food Hygiene Policy Team by email at foodhygiene.policy@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Pesticides

For information on pesticides safety levels please contact Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) for information on the level for imports, access the link: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/>

Contaminants

A guidance note on the Contaminants in Food (England) Regulations 2013, which make provision for enactment and enforcement of Commission Regulations setting regulatory limits for contaminants in food (nitrate, mycotoxins, metals, 3-MCPD dioxins and PAHs), can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/news-updates/news/2013/oct/regulations>

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

As of 25 January 2010 imports of certain feed and food of non-animal origin that are considered to be “higher-risk” can only enter the UK through specific ports and airports which are designated points of entry (DPEs) 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. Further information for business operators can be found at http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/banned_restricted/highrisknonpoao

For a complete list of foods (not of animal origin) with current EU restrictions, please see the following link on the FSA’s website:

www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/banned_restricted/restricted_foodstuffs

Rice and rice products from China

There are EU 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 the UK through specific ports or airports which are designated points of entry (DPEs) for GMOs, where official controls will be carried out.

Further information for business operators can be found at:

http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/banned_restricted/chinarice

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 Dr David Jefferies on 020 7276 8573 or by email at gm.Inquiries@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Aflatoxins

There is European Commission legislation 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 on 020 7276 8716 or by email at mycotoxins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk. Further information for business operators can be found on the FSA’s Mycotoxins webpage at:

www.food.gov.uk/safereating/chemsafe/mycotoxins/

Fusarium toxins

There is European Commission legislation 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 Mycotoxins team on 020 7276 8716 or by email at mycotoxins@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Products of animal origin

If you are importing any cooked rice or noodles that contain eggs, fish, shellfish or meat, or 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. Amongst other requirements, this will require certification of the product, the premises that produce the product being licensed by the EU and veterinary checks at the point of entry to the UK.

The rules for importing cereal products (such as breakfast cereals, rice or noodles) containing meat, dairy, eggs, poultry products, honey or wild game are dealt with by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) in Carlisle on 01228 403 600 (option 3) or by email at imports@apha.gsi.gov.uk . APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Information on importing products such as rice or noodles that contain shellfish or fish, or their products can be found on our website at http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/imports/want_to_import/fisheryproducts/ . However, if you require further information, please contact the Imported Food Helpline on 020 7276 8018 or by email at imported.food@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk

Imports of feed and food from Japan

As of 27 March 2011 imports of all feed and food originating in or consigned from Japan to the EU are subject to special conditions. This is following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan in March 2011. This will mean that consignments of feed and food can only enter the UK through specific ports and airports where official controls will be carried out. Further information for business operators can be found at: http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/imports/banned_restricted/japan

Imported Food Team, Food Standards Agency, 1st Floor Zone B, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6NH
Email: imported.food@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk
Helpline: 020 7276 8018

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