



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

FAQS: Importing organic produce into Great Britain

Will the regulations for importing organic produce remain the same?

Yes, the rules for organic produce imported from third countries will remain the same as they were when the UK was a member of the EU, but GB will use an interim paper-based import system. GB imports will require a GB Certificate of Inspection (COI).

The requirement to produce a COI will not apply to organic products from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland until 1 January 2022.

Northern Ireland will continue to use the EU's TRACES NT (now IMSOC) system to import organics products.

See Annex A for detailed information on key movement scenarios.

What does the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) mean?

As part of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, we have agreed EU-UK equivalence for the purpose of trade in organics.

Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) recognises the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland as equivalent for the purpose of trade in organics. Food and feed certified as organic in the EU, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein will continue to be accepted as organic in GB.

The EU has recognised the UK for the purpose of exporting organic products to the EU. Food and feed certified as organic in GB will continue to be accepted as organic in the EU.

Organic equivalence is captured at Annex TBT-4 of the TCA (which will be renumbered as Annex 14) and includes the following categories:

- A. Unprocessed plant products
- B. Live animals or unprocessed animal products - Includes Honey
- C. Aquaculture products and seaweeds

D. Processed agricultural products for use as food

E. Processed agricultural products for use as feed

F. Seeds and propagating material

More information is provided under the appropriate sections below.

Full details can be found in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, Annex TBT-4, starting at page 507 (or Annex 14 in future versions of the TCA).

Due to new regulations coming into force in the EU from 1 January 2022 we have agreed to reassess this organic equivalence by 31 December 2023.

What organic products can be imported into GB from the EU, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein?

Imported organic products shall be:

- unprocessed agricultural or aquaculture products produced in the Union; or
- processed agricultural products for use as food or feed that have been processed in the Union with ingredients that have been grown in the Union; or
- processed agricultural products for use as food or feed that have been processed in the Union with ingredients that have been imported into the Union in accordance with the Union laws and regulations.

As a temporary measure, organic products imported from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland to GB will not require a certificate of inspection (COI) until 1 January 2022.

From 1 January 2022, organic products imported from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland to GB will require a COI. You'll use the interim manual GB organic import system. To request the forms for the manual GB organic import system, contact your organic control body.

Where should the importer be based?

If the goods are imported into GB, the importer should be established in GB and registered with a GB Control Body.

Will a Certificate of Inspection (COI) be required for goods imported from non-EU countries?

Yes, as part of the import process, an endorsed GB COI should be sent to the Port Health Authority (PHA)/ Local Authority (LA), usually by courier.

The PHA/ LA can endorse a copy if the original hasn't arrived in order to clear the goods, though the original will need to be endorsed within 10 working days for the consignment to be sold on as organic.

Do I need to register to start using the paper-based import system?

No, the paper GB COI and associated guidance can be used from 1 January 2021 without any registration. Anyone who intends to import organic food or feed into GB needs to be certified with an [approved UK organic control body](#).

What paperwork is needed when goods from outside GB enters by transit?

If the goods are imported into GB via transit across the EU, they will need a GB COI, . The COI will need to be endorsed when they arrive either at a GB border control post (BCP) or by local trading standards. If the consignment needs a physical check or testing, it will need to enter GB via a port that is able to carry out these checks.

Do organic goods need to enter GB at specific entry points?

Organic goods are usually checked at a GB BCP: the point of entry may differ depending on the type of commodity and whether the consignment needs a physical check or testing. If you are unsure, please check the guidance on gov.uk.

Do organic goods moving between GB and NI require a COI?

There is no change to the movement of organic goods from NI to GB.

You do not need a COI if you're moving goods from NI to GB.

Under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol, EU Organic Regulations apply in NI as they do in the EU.

The movement of organic goods from GB to NI must be accompanied by a valid COI using the EU's TRACES NT/IMSOC. You do not need to pay for a COI as these costs are covered by the [Movement Assistance Scheme](#).

There is also an arrangement in place which allows authorised traders such as supermarkets and their trusted suppliers to move some goods without the need for official certification until 1 October 2021.

For those traders who are now authorised, the NI Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Daera) have issued guidance on the requirements for goods movements. Read [Daera's guidance](#) on organic food and feed in NI.

Contact your control body to:

- approve your business on TRACES NT/IMSOC for exports
- stay up to date

Will the trade tariffs be the same as they are now?

Please refer to tariff guidance on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Will there be any additional checks at port for livestock products being imported from third countries?

Please refer to importing guidance on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

How have third country control bodies been made aware of the paper-based GB import procedure?

Defra has contacted third country control bodies to let them know what regulations and procedures are in place for exporting to GB as of 1 January 2021.

What happens if an organic consignment arrives in GB without an endorsed COI?

If an organic consignment arrives without an endorsed COI (either the original or a copy), the consignment cannot be cleared as organic.

The goods must be either:

- a) re-labelled, removing all reference to organics
- b) re-exported as non-organic OR
- c) destroyed.

Can imported products from third countries use the EU organic logo at the end of the transition period?

The logo and its use are controlled by the EU. Products can continue to use the EU logo where the products meet the EU requirements for the use of the logo.

Annex A: Movement of organic goods into the UK

Scenario	Country of origin of goods	Importer (who financially buys the goods from the third country)	Country of arrival	Country of end destination	Type of COI	1 January 2021 process
1.	Third country (excluding EU, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland until 1 January 2022)	GB	GB – goods imported directly into GB and customs cleared	GB	GB COI	GB COI manual/paper-based system, checks will need to be carried out at the first point of entry into GB or by Local Trading Standards.
2.	Third country	GB	EU/ NI – goods then transit through the EU/ NI to GB, NO customs clearance in the EU/ NI	GB	GB COI	GB COI manual/paper-based system, checks will need to be carried out at the first point of entry in GB or by Local Trading Standards.
3.	NI	GB	GB – goods are imported from NI into GB	GB	No COI required	COIs are not required.
4.	GB	NI	NI – goods are exported from GB to NI	NI	EU COI	EU COI on TRACES NT/IMSOC, cleared in NI.
5.	Third country	NI	GB – goods then transit through GB to NI, NO customs clearance in GB	NI	EU COI	EU COI on TRACES NT/IMSOC, goods cleared at the first point of entry in the EU/ NI.

6.	EU	NI	GB – goods then transit through GB to NI, NO customs clearance in GB	NI	No COI required	COIs are not required
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