



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Guidance: Importing organic products from third countries into Great Britain

This guide explains the roles and responsibilities at each stage of the process for importing organic goods from third countries into Great Britain.

It does not apply to organic products imported from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland until 1 July 2022 however imports will need to meet the requirements of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)

Consignments that enter the EU/ NI and transit to Great Britain will need to be checked at the first point of entry into Great Britain.

Step to take	Who is responsible?
1. Get certified by an approved UK organic control body and check which Ports, Local Authorities/ Local Trading Standards can carry out organic checks. (Some may differ depending on the commodity type and other checks require i.e. organic feed.)	Anyone who intends to import organic food or feed
2. Complete the GB Certificate of Inspection (COI) – the exporter then emails the COI to their control body.	Third country exporter, agent or importer
3. The control body verifies that the consignment is organic and endorses the goods by signing and stamping box 18 of the COI. A PDF can be used for this.	Third country control body
4. The control body emails the endorsed PDF COI to the destination address/ GB importer.	Third country exporter or agent
5. Let the GB Port Health Authority/ Local Authority know when the organic consignment will arrive by phone or email – at least 6 hours in advance for air freight or Roll on Roll off (RoRo), and 24 hours in advance for other means of transport.	GB importer or agent

6. Send the COI, and shipping documents to the PHA via email.	GB importer or agent
7. If the consignment is to be split, the importer mentioned in box 11 of the COI must submit an extract of the COI to the relevant PHA/ LA.	GB importer
8. Check the documents and carry out any necessary physical checks or testing. If the consignment passes, endorse by signing and stamping box 20 of the COI, or box 13 of the extract COI, and clear the goods for onward movement. <u>The signature and stamp may be electronic.</u> If the consignment does not pass, the goods must be either: a) re-labelled, removing all reference to organics b) re-exported as non-organic, OR c) destroyed.	GB Port Health Authority/ Local Authority
9. If the goods are cleared, indicate the number of the COI in the customs declaration for free circulation.	GB importer or agent
10. Collect the goods, sign box 21 of the COI (or box 14 of the extract COI) and ensure the importer receives the endorsed COI. The consignee of a batch must keep the extracts of the COI for at least 2 years.	GB first consignee
11. Keep the endorsed COI and copies of the endorsed extracts of the COI on file for at least 3 years	GB importer
12. Check COIs during routine inspections of importers	GB organic control body

Adhering to the regulations:

- If you are the importer, ensure that all organic imports from third countries meet the requirements laid out in retained Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008.
- If you are the control body, ensure that the importers and exporters are licensed and that the products are covered under the retained Commission Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008.

Definitions:

'importer': means the natural or legal person who presents a consignment for release for free circulation into Great Britain, either in person, or through a representative;

'first consignee' means the natural or legal person to whom the imported consignment is delivered and who will receive it for further preparation and/or marketing.