

EXPORT OF MEAT/MEAT PRODUCTS TO TONGA - 7937EHC
NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS AND EXPORTERS

IMPORTANT

These notes provide guidance to Official Veterinarians (OVs) and exporters and should have been issued together with export certificate 7937EHC. These Notes for Guidance (NFG) are not intended to operate as a standalone document but in conjunction with certificate 7937EHC.

OVs AND EXPORTERS ARE ADVISED THAT CERTIFICATE 7937EHC HAS NOT BEEN FORMALLY AGREED WITH THE AUTHORITIES IN THE IMPORTING COUNTRY.

Exporters are therefore strongly advised to verify the requirements of the importing country by contacting the veterinary authorities, or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment. They should attempt to obtain an import permit and check this certificate against the requirements of the import permit.

If the health requirements do not match or no import permit is available, the exporter may choose to proceed with the export using certificate 7937EHC, however this decision and any consequences thereof are taken strictly at the exporter's own risk.

1. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

Export health certificate 7937EHC may be used for the export from the United Kingdom to Tonga of fresh/frozen meat and meat products derived from animals of the porcine, ovine, caprine and bovine species slaughtered in and originating from the United Kingdom and/or a Member State (MS) of the European Union (EU).

Exporters and certifying OVs must take particular note of the disclaimer at paragraph 7.

2. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN (OV)

In Great Britain, this certificate may be signed by a Veterinary Officer of the Department or by an Official Veterinarian (OV) appointed to the appropriate panel for export purposes by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Scottish Government or the Welsh Government and holding the appropriate valid Official Controls Qualification (Veterinary) (OCQ(V)) authorisation.

In Northern Ireland, this certificate may be signed by an Authorised Veterinary Inspector (AVI) appointed as an OV to the appropriate export panel for export purposes by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

OVs must sign and stamp the health certificate with the OV stamp in ink of any colour other than black.

A certified copy of the completed certificate must be sent to the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) Customer Service Centre (CSC) at Carlisle within seven days of signing, or in the case of Northern Ireland to DAERA, Dundonald House, Belfast.

The OV should keep a copy for his/her own records.

3. SLAUGHTER FOR DISEASE ERADICATION PURPOSES

Paragraph IV(a) may be certified on the basis of the EU oval mark confirming that the animals from which the meat is derived were healthy and did not originate from area or zone subject to disease control measures due to an outbreak of epizootic notifiable disease to which the species is susceptible.

Meat from establishments where a disease outbreak is suspected or confirmed may not enter the human food chain but must be disposed of by slaughterhouses as a Category 2 animal by-product, i.e. high-risk material containing potential contamination.

Meat from animals in protection or surveillance zones is classed as 'restricted meat'. It must be kept separate from other meat products and must be marked with a special mark instead of normal health or identification marks. Restricted meat cannot be traded with other EU MSs or exported from the EU.

4. FITNESS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Paragraphs IV(b), IV(c) and IV(d) may be certified on the basis of the EU oval mark and evidence that the slaughterhouse, cutting plant, meat products plant (if applicable) and cold store are officially approved and operating in accordance with the General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002 together with Regulations (EC) Nos. 852/2004, 853/2004 and 854/2004 and 2073/2005 (The EU Hygiene Regulations). These Regulations are enforced in all MSs of the EU.

In the UK, the primary food legislation providing the framework for all food legislation in England, Wales and Scotland is The Food Safety Act 1990 (as amended). Similar legislation applies in Northern Ireland.

Enforcement of the General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and implementation and enforcement of the EU Hygiene Regulations is provided through secondary legislation in England by The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (as amended) and parallel legislation in Wales and Scotland. In Northern Ireland it is provided by The Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

5. RESIDUES AND OTHER UNAUTHORISED SUBSTANCES

With regard to veterinary residues, paragraph IV(e) may be certified on the basis of the results of the National Surveillance Scheme (NSS), which implements Council Directives 96/22/EC and 96/23/EC on veterinary residues and to which all EU approved meat establishments are subject.

The above Directives are transposed into national legislation by The Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) (England and Scotland) Regulations 2015 and parallel legislation in Wales and Northern Ireland.

In addition, HACCP requirements described in Regulation (EC) 854/2004 place an obligation on all EU approved meat establishments to ensure compliance with these Directives.

With regard to compliance with microbiological criteria, paragraph IV(e) may be certified on the basis of the microbiological monitoring required by Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005, forming part of the EU Hygiene Regulations.

6. EXPORT OF BEEF PRODUCTS - BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE)

Paragraph IV(f) may be certified on the basis of compliance with European TSE legislation (Regulation (EC) No. 999/2001 (as amended)). The Regulation sets out the requirements for TSE monitoring, animal feeding and the removal of specified risk material and is enforced in all MSs of the EU.

In the UK, enforcement of the above Regulation takes place through the following national legislation:

- **England:** The TSEs (England) Regulations 2010 as amended by The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) and TSEs (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2011 and The TSEs (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013;
- **Wales:** The TSEs (Wales) Regulations 2008 (as amended by The TSEs (Wales)(Amendment)(No.2) Regulations 2008 and The TSEs (Wales)(Amendment) Regulations 2010;
- **Scotland:** The TSEs Regulations (Scotland) 2010;
- **Northern Ireland:** The TSEs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

The UK competent authorities (Defra, the Devolved Administrations, the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland) ensure compliance with the legislation.

7. DISCLAIMER

Whereas 7937EHC takes into account recommendations by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) for trade in this commodity, exporters and certifying OVs are advised that the certificate has not been drafted in accordance with any specific import requirements of the importing country and has not been officially agreed with the authorities of Tonga.

Accordingly, use of 7937EHC for export of fresh/frozen meat or meat products to Tonga is at the exporter's risk.

It is the responsibility of the exporter to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country if these are available. If official advice is provided by authorities in the importing country or an import permit provided, the exporter must copy these to the APHA CSC at Carlisle when applying for the certificate.

If the advice or the permit do not match the assurances provided on 7937EHC, the exporter should contact the APHA CSC at Carlisle via the link below or, in the case of Northern Ireland, DAERA at Dundonald House, Belfast for further advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/animal-and-plant-health-agency/about/access-and-opening>