

IMPORTANT NOTE

These notes provide guidance to Official Veterinarians (OVs) and exporters and should have been issued to you together with export certificate 7629EHC. These Notes for Guidance (NFG) are not intended to operate as a standalone document but in conjunction with certificate 7629EHC.

Exporters are 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.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) have reviewed their health requirements for the import of beef from the United Kingdom in the light of the changes in BSE status of Scotland and Northern Ireland. The United Kingdom now comprises two separate zones in respect of BSE status in accordance with the OIE Terrestrial Code. England, Scotland and Wales are controlled BSE risk whereas Northern Ireland is currently recognised as having negligible BSE risk.

AVA have also provided their detailed classification of the types of beef cuts and offal that can be imported which depends on the BSE risk status of the country/zone in which the cattle were born and raised. Also, they have provided their own definition of specified risk material (SRM) which is the same regardless of whether the cattle were born and raised in countries/zones with controlled and negligible BSE risk.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) must be in place in slaughterhouses to separate/segregate cattle born and raised in countries/zones of differing BSE risk status, and for such separation/segregation to be maintained downstream until the meat is certified for export. Support Health Attestations (SHA) may be arranged to provide the necessary assurances for this along the supply chain.

2. SCOPE OF CERTIFICATE

Export health certificate 7629EHC may be used for the export from the United Kingdom to Singapore of the following categories of beef and beef products derived from cattle that were born and raised in the United Kingdom and/or the Republic of Ireland (ROI). The ROI is a country recognised as having a controlled BSE risk status.

The types of beef cuts and offal that can be certified depends on the BSE risk status of the country/zone in which the cattle were born and raised (see below for definitions):

If derived from animals born and raised in countries with BSE controlled risk status, the following can be certified for export

Cattle over 30 months of age: beef cuts - deboned only;
Cattle under 30 months of age: beef cuts - bone-in or deboned.

Export of bovine offal and processed beef to Singapore from BSE controlled risk countries/zones is **not permitted**.

If derived from animals born and raised in countries with BSE negligible risk status, the following can be certified for export

Cattle of any age: - beef cuts bone-in or deboned;
 - Beef offal
 - Processed beef

"Beef Cuts": Eligible beef cuts include skeletal muscle cuts and other parts of the carcass. Carcass is defined as the body of an animal after slaughter and dressing e.g. bones and marrow, connective tissue (tendon, ligament, cartilage, sinew) ear, fat, feet/trotter, head (including jowl meat), skin/rind, tail, trimmings, snout.

"Offal": Includes 'Green offal' - intestines (includes rectum, oesophagus and stomach) and 'Red offal' - diaphragm, heart, kidneys, liver, tongue, spleen, trachea and larynx.

"Processed beef": The definition of processed beef has not been fully clarified by AVA. Before making arrangements to export any such commodity to Singapore, exporters are advised to contact the AVA or a trade representative to ensure that the commodity in question is eligible for export to Singapore.

"Meat preparations": AVA do not consider meat preparations derived from beef, for example beef burgers and beef sausages, as eligible for import on domestic food safety grounds. Blood and blood products are also ineligible for import for the same reasons. Accordingly, export of the above and similar commodities to Singapore is currently **not permitted**, irrespective of their origin from BSE negligible or controlled risk countries or zones.

3. ORIGIN OF CATTLE FROM WHICH THE EXPORTED MEAT IS DERIVED

The AVA have agreed that animals killed in the United Kingdom may be born and raised either in the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland (ROI). This is due to the pattern of trade in cattle between Northern Ireland and the ROI and takes into account that the ROI is approved for the export of beef to Singapore in accordance with the same import requirements as the UK.

4. IMPORT PERMIT

Prior to making arrangements to export beef and/or beef products to Singapore, exporters are advised to contact AVA Singapore for up to date information on requirements for any import permits or other documentation.

5. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN

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 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 APHA CSC at Carlisle within seven days of signing, or in the case of Northern Ireland to DAERA, Dundonald House, Belfast.

The OV should also keep a copy of the signed certificate for his/her own records.

6. AGE AND ORIGIN OF ANIMALS FROM WHICH THE EXPORTED MEAT IS DERIVED

Paragraphs IV(a) and IV(d) refer. **Support documentation (SHA) or IT system capability is required to enable these paragraphs to be signed** (i.e. that the meat was derived from animals that were born/raised in a BSE controlled risk or a BSE negligible risk country or zone and aged over 30 months, or less than 30 months, at slaughter).

The certifying OV must carry out the necessary spot checks to verify the support documentation (SHA) or outputs from the IT system. This may be on the basis of their knowledge of the SOPs/operational conditions at the slaughterhouse as regards the farms of origin of the animals from which the exported meat is derived and the checking and verification of documentation accompanying the cattle to the slaughterhouse to verify the country /zone of origin and age of the animal.

OVs must be completely satisfied that cattle originating from farms located in the ROI meet the certified age requirement, they were born and raised in the ROI and have been legally traded into the UK.

OVs are further advised to obtain written confirmation from the farms of origin verifying that the requirements of these paragraphs have been met. OVs should also check that the cattle traded from the ROI are accompanied by the appropriate Intra-Trade Animal Health Certificates (ITAHCs) issued by TRACES.

The TSE Regulations require a red striped label to be applied to carcasses from animals over 30 months old, but Singapore requires meat to be deboned if from animals born and raised in a country/zone of controlled BSE risk status, so this alone cannot be used as evidence of age in downstream FBOs. Traceability documentation back to the animals of origin will have to be made available to the OV on request, to facilitate verification of compliance with AVA requirements.

Further advice may be obtained from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Customer Service Centre (CSC) at Carlisle via the following link:

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

or, in the case of export from Northern Ireland from DAERA at Dundonald House, Belfast.

7. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CLEARANCE

OVs may certify paragraph IV(b) and sub-paragraph IV(c)(i) of the certificate on behalf of the Department provided written authority to do so has been obtained on form 618NDC from the APHA CSC at Carlisle or from the issuing office of DAERA. OVs should delete sub-paragraphs IV(c)(ii) and IV(c)(iii).

8. **BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE) STATEMENTS**

Paragraphs IV(e), IV(f), IV(g) and IV(h) may be certified on the basis that these are requirements of the UK TSE legislation. The UK competent authorities (Defra, the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland) ensure compliance with the legislation.

All specified risk material (SRM) described in the footnote to paragraph IV(h) must be removed from the meat intended for export to Singapore as required by the Singapore Import Requirements. This is regardless of the fact that only some of this material is not considered to be SRM under UK legislation for negligible BSE risk zones e.g. tonsils from all cattle regardless of age and vertebral column from OTM cattle.

9. **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EXPORT OF DEBONED BEEF CUTS - APPLICABLE ONLY TO CATTLE BORN AND RAISED IN COUNTRIES/ZONES WITH A CONTROLLED BSE RISK STATUS**

Paragraph IV(d) refers. The requirements of this paragraph, together with others, are included in an additional list of import conditions from AVA with regard to BSE controls. Many of the additional conditions required by AVA are already the subject of UK Regulations and are met in full by UK establishments under the supervision of the UK competent authorities.

Import conditions that are not laid down in UK legislation will be implemented through Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) at the approved establishments (slaughterhouses and cutting plants). These SOPs will be monitored and enforced by the certifying OV and by the FSA / FSS / DAERA inspection team.

Please refer to **Annex A** of these notes for further guidelines regarding the SOPs to be implemented in approved establishments prior to exports taking place.

10. **APPROVAL OF SLAUGHTERHOUSES AND CUTTING PLANTS BY AVA SINGAPORE**

Paragraphs IV(i) and IV(k) refer. All UK slaughterhouses and cutting plants must have received prior approval from AVA before exports can take place.

Establishments wishing to become approved for export to Singapore must first be audited by the FSA / FSS / DAERA for compliance with the agreed export conditions and submitted by the relevant competent authority to DEFRA for recommendation to AVA for approval. Exports from the establishment may commence only after AVA have confirmed that it appears on the list of approved establishments. Country lists may be found using the search facility via the following link to the AVA website:

<http://www.ava.gov.sg/tools-and-resources/accredited-overseas-meat-and-egg-processing-establishment>

It is the responsibility of the exporter to ensure prior to export that all slaughterhouses and cutting plants included in Section II of the certificate are included in the list of UK establishments approved by AVA Singapore. Cold stores and re-wrapping centres **do not** require such listing.

Further advice regarding approval of existing premises and new approvals may be obtained from the APHA CSC at Carlisle via the following link:

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

or, in the case of export from Northern Ireland from DAERA at Dundonald House, Belfast.

11. FITNESS FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Paragraphs IV(j), IV(k) and IV(m) may be certified on the basis of the UK fitness for human consumption 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 UK Food Hygiene legislation.

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

12. RESIDUES AND OTHER UNAUTHORISED SUBSTANCES

With regard to veterinary residues, paragraph IV(l) may be certified on the basis of the results of the UK National Surveillance Scheme (NSS) for veterinary residues and to which all officially approved meat establishments are subject.

The applicable legislation is 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 the UK Food Hygiene legislation place an obligation on all officially approved meat establishments to ensure compliance with this legislation.

13. DISCLAIMER

This certificate is provided on the basis of information available at the time and may not necessarily comply fully with the requirements of the importing country. It is the exporter's responsibility to check the certificate against any relevant import permit or any advice provided by the competent authority in the importing country.

If these do not match, the exporter should contact the APHA CSC at Carlisle, via the link below:

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

or, in the case of Northern Ireland, DAERA at Dundonald House, Belfast.

EXPORT OF BEEF CUTS AND OFFAL FROM UK TO SINGAPORE**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN APPROVED SLAUGHTERHOUSES AND CUTTING PREMISES****Description of Additional Import Conditions**

As stated in paragraph 9 above, AVA requires additional import conditions for export of beef cuts from the UK with regard to BSE controls. The majority of these are met in full by UK establishments under the supervision of the UK competent authorities.

Those import conditions that are not met by domestic legislation are as follows:

- *cattle born and raised in countries/zones with a controlled BSE risk status and those born and raised in countries/zones with negligible risk status must be identified as such, and slaughtered separately, for the purpose of controlling and removing SRM.*
- *Adequate hygienic precautions must be taken between slaughter of cattle from negligible risk and controlled risk countries/zones. Where possible, slaughter of cattle from a negligible risk zone should take place first thing in the production period. If not, then appropriate hygienic controls must be in place prior to resumption of processing of cattle from negligible risk countries/zones after a period of processing of cattle from a controlled risk country/zone. The same applies to the processing of cattle 30 months old or under (UTM) and cattle over thirty month (OTM) from a controlled risk country /zone.*
- *dressed carcasses from cattle 30 months old or under (UTM) from a controlled risk country /zone may be chilled, stored and processed along with carcasses from cattle of all ages from a negligible risk country/zone, as long as OTM carcasses in the latter category are clearly identified (not necessarily by a red striped label) to ensure vertebral column (considered SRM by Singapore even if from negligible risk country/zone) is removed for exports to Singapore.*
- *cattle 30 months old or under (UTM) and those over 30 months old (OTM) born and raised in countries/zones with controlled as well as negligible BSE risk status must be separately identified as must be their carcasses/meat for the purpose of removal of SRM and in the case of cattle from controlled risk countries/zones to ensure that meat from OTM cattle carcasses is fully deboned prior to export.*

An SOP to address the above must be drafted by the FBO and agreed with the FSA/FSS/DAERA OV.

The SOP must describe in detail the additional controls the FBO will put in place to provide assurance to the certifying OV that the above conditions have been met. The SOP should also include detail of monitoring, record keeping and verification activities that the FBO will conduct to provide this assurance. It should include reference to training of all relevant staff prior to implementation of the SOP.