

Prepare for Brexit – November 2020

Welcome to the 2nd Prepare for Brexit document created specifically for the potato sector.

The purpose of the document is to inform the industry of the pressing matters affecting the sector. However, it must be stressed that several issues continue to be the subject of ongoing negotiations with the EU and are currently unresolved.

The information contained within this document is intended to assist, rather than act as a definitive legal guide. It is based upon current knowledge and understanding. If in doubt, refer to official government publications and to specialist advisors.

Exporting of Potatoes

The end of the transition period will bring significant changes regardless of whether agreement on future relations is reached. Come 1st January 2021, the UK will no longer be part of the EU's Single Market and Customs Union and will become a "3rd country" (a non-EU member state).

The EU currently exclude the import of potatoes into member states from all non-approved 3rd countries. Therefore, from 1st January 2021 potatoes cannot be exported from the UK to the EU until 3rd country equivalence has been approved.

Importing of EU Seed Potatoes

It has been confirmed by DEFRA that ministers of all four UK administrations have agreed that EU seed potatoes will continue to be marketable in England and Wales for an additional six months from 1st January 2020. This applies to the certification status i.e. the UK will recognise EU certification as equivalent for this six month period. Any imported varieties will need to be on the GB or NI Variety List.

(The UK National List will become separate GB and NI Variety Lists from 1st January, to start with each containing all varieties on the UK National List as of the 31st December 2020).

Scotland will continue to operate its voluntary arrangement with industry on sourcing seed potatoes locally to maintain Scotland's higher phytosanitary status.

The new plant health controls will apply from 1st January 2021.

Northern Ireland

At the end of the transition period, the Northern Ireland Protocol will take effect. The Protocol is a practical solution to avoid a hard border with Ireland whilst ensuring the UK, including Northern Ireland, leaves the EU as a whole.

However, this means the movement of seed and ware potatoes from GB into Northern Ireland will no longer be permitted beyond the end of the transition period. Engagement is still ongoing between UK Government and the EU to find solutions for potatoes from GB to be permitted into the Northern Ireland market after the 31st December 2020.

DEFRA have confirmed potatoes on the Northern Ireland market before 1st January can freely move between Northern and the Republic of Ireland after 1st January 2021. Therefore, any potatoes taken into Northern Ireland prior to the 31st December from GB can stay in Northern Ireland beyond the 1st January 2021 and move freely to Republic of Ireland afterwards.

After the 1st January 2021, the export of Northern Ireland certified seed potatoes can continue to EU member states under current EU Plant passport arrangements. Trade from Northern Ireland to GB can continue after 31st December using EU plant passport labels as an interim measure while subsequent arrangements are being finalised. Phytosanitary Certification processes will continue to be implemented as they do at present for exports to Countries outside the EU. The rules for NI businesses importing seed and ware potatoes from EU member states and previously approved third countries will remain unchanged.

For further information on the Northern Ireland Protocol and the latest updated GB to NI guidance, please visit; [Moving-goods-under-the-northern-ireland-protocol](#)

Canary Islands

DEFRA have confirmed the Canary Islands are currently treated as a 3rd country for plant health purposes, despite being part of Spain. Therefore, from a plant health point of view there are no anticipated changes for exports to the Canary Islands from 1st Jan 2021, as the UK are already exporting to the Canary Islands on a 3rd country basis.

DEFRA Webinars for traders of plants and plant products between GB and the EU/NI

In the run up to the end of the Transition Period, Defra would like to invite you to several upcoming plant and plant product focussed webinars to provide answers to questions you may have. There are several webinars planned towards the end of November and into early December. Please click [here](#) to register for any of the below webinars:

- Imports of plants and plant products, EU to GB: **Mon 30th Nov: 10 – 10:45am**
- Exports of plants and plant products, GB to EU: **Tues 1st Dec: 9am – 9:45am**
- Movement of plants and plant products, GB to NI: **Wed 9th Dec 3pm – 3:45pm**

General export and import information: DEFRA have a new Q&A that can be viewed on the plant health portal [here](#)

Plant varieties and seeds: DEFRA have some dedicated import and export information available [here](#).

Defra led workshop on exports of plants for planting and fresh produce post transition period: DEFRA are hosting a planned feasibility session on the 2nd December from 9am – 12pm where they will share all you need to do for the end of the transition period to export Plants for Planting and fresh produce from GB to the EU. To sign up the event, please use the following Eventbrite link; <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/exports-feasibility-testing-session-plants-for-planting-and-fresh-produce-tickets-129989444929>