

The Food Standards Agency

Floors 6 & 7, Clive House

70 Petty France

London

SW1H 9EX

11 March 2024

Dear Sir or Madam,

Proposed amendment to assimilated Regulation 2019/1793

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Food Standards Scotland (FSS) have undertaken a science and evidence-based review of the imported food and feed commodities contained within the Annexes to assimilated Regulation 2019/1793 and write to inform you of the outcome of this.

Background

Regulation 2019/1793 sets temporary increases of official controls and emergency measures governing the entry into Great Britain (GB) of food and feed from certain countries. The Regulation deals with imported high-risk food and feed not of animal origin, ensuring that such commodities when imported into GB undergo risk-based checks.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA), which has responsibility for imported food safety in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland, in conjunction with Food Standards Scotland (FSS) who have similar responsibilities in Scotland have established a four-country working group to review imported food legislation. This working group determines whether existing controls are effective, should be reduced or applied to new commodities that present a risk to health.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that the legislation remains focussed on those imported food and feed commodities which pose the greatest risk to consumers. The review of the Regulation is delivered by the FSA and FSS through an enhanced risk analysis process.

The outcome of the risk assessment will inform our advice and recommendations to Ministers. If agreed, any amendments to the legislation would apply in England, Scotland, and Wales.

Detailed risk analysis for commodities and countries have been considered by an internal team of experts from the FSA and FSS. The expert group have proposed changes to the existing Annex I and II. Certain commodities that no longer pose a risk to public health will be removed from the lists while others will increase or decrease in their checking frequency depending on the level of risk posed.

Proposed amendments

We can now inform you that after our review, we propose to make recommendations to Ministers for the Annexes to be amended. Food safety is a devolved matter, and the decisions will be made by Ministers in each devolved country. Where Ministers have agreed to accept our recommendations, secondary legislation will be required in each nation to amend the Regulation to amend the rules governing imports of certain commodities from Türkiye outlined in the table below: Annex I commodities are subject to an increased level of official controls. The Annex sets out the identity and physical checks, including sampling and laboratory analysis, frequency for the various commodities. In addition, Annex II commodities must be accompanied by an official certificate as well as results of pre-export sampling and analysis.

Commodity	Hazard	Risk Management Recommendation
Grapefruits	Pesticide residues	New addition to Annex I with 10% frequency of identity and physical checks.
Sesamum seeds	Salmonella	New addition to Annex I with 10% frequency of identity and physical checks.
Tahini and halva from Sesamum seeds	Salmonella	New addition to Annex I with 10% frequency of identity and physical checks.

Next Steps

The FSA and FSS will shortly be opening public consultations on the proposed amendments to run concurrently in England, Scotland, and Wales for a 6-week period. You are of course very welcome to use this forum to make comments on the proposals. It will be published on the FSA and FSS websites in due course.

Once the consultation period closes, the FSA and FSS will prepare a response to any comments received.

Any amendments to assimilated Regulation 2019/1793 would require a Statutory Instrument to be drafted and laid before Parliament. If this receives Ministerial backing, it is likely to take effect in late 2024. The amended measures will be notified to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in line with our international transparency obligations.

Commitment

We are committed to ensuring that food imported into the UK is safe for consumers and would welcome the opportunity to engage with colleagues from Türkiye in the future to share ideas and inform best practice.

Yours sincerely,

David Lowe

David Lowe

Head of Imports, Food Standards Agency

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. McKeown'.

Sam McKeown

Head of Food and Feed Safety Policy, Food Standards Scotland