Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

What to expect on day one of a 'no deal' scenario: Importing and exporting plants and plant products

Key considerations for importing and exporting plants and plant products to and from the UK if there's no Brexit deal

Overview

Leaving the EU with a deal remains the UK Government's top priority. This has not changed. However, a responsible government must plan for every eventuality, including a no deal scenario. The Government is continuing with our no deal preparations to ensure the country is prepared for every eventuality. It is the responsible thing to do.

Our plant health biosecurity arrangements protect industry and the environment from pests and diseases. We will continue to protect plant health biosecurity during and after our exit from the EU. Our work to prepare for EU Exit will ensure that biosecurity standards will continue to be met in ways that support trade and the smooth flow of goods.

What processes will change and what will a no deal scenario mean for the industry and my organisation?

UK import regime on Day 1:

The majority of plants and plant products entering the UK from the EU are considered low risk and will continue to enter the UK without requiring any plant health controls, as currently. UK plant health inspectors will continue to carry out routine inland surveillance.

The current EU plant passport regime will no longer be applicable to trade in plants between the UK and the EU.

The plants currently managed under EU plant passports will require a phytosanitary certificate issued by the national plant protection organisation (NPPO) in the member state of export.

The UK importer will need to notify the relevant UK plant health authority in advance of the consignments arrival into the UK from the EU. There is no set notice period, notice can be given at any time up to the point that the consignment enters the UK.

Consignments of plants and plant products from EU countries will not be stopped at the UK border for plant health checks. The relevant UK plant health authority will carry out documentary and identity checks remotely but no physical inspection will be performed. A risk-based inland surveillance programme is in place which will include plants and plant products imported from the EU.

No EU consignments of plants or plant products will need to be checked at a Place of First Arrival (PoFA), as this system applies only to certain regulated goods imported from third countries via the EU.

There will be no change to the UK's third country import controls of plants and plant products on Day 1 of a no deal scenario.

What will EU exporters need to do to export goods currently managed under the EU plant passport regime?

Exporters will need to take account of their trade with the UK. If they currently export goods managed under the EU plant passport regime to the UK, they will need to obtain a phytosanitary certificate from the relevant plant health authority in their country before sending the goods to the UK.

Exporters will need to provide copies of the phytosanitary certificate and any relevant documents to the receiving importer in the UK.

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Exporting plants from the UK to the EU:
When the UK leaves the EU, the EU will apply third country controls on imports from the UK[1], including controls on all plants for planting, certain wood, wood products or bark and all wood packaging material.

The UK NPPO will ensure that UK exports of regulated plants and plant products comply with EU third country requirements when issuing phytosanitary certificates as they do now for third countries.

Wood Packaging Material:
Wood packaging material (WPM) moving between the UK and the rest of the EU can currently move freely without checks or controls.
WPM includes:
- pallets
- crates
- boxes
- cable drums
- spools
- dunnage

If the UK leaves the EU with no deal, all WPM exported from the UK to the EU and all WPM being imported from the EU to the UK must meet ISPM15 international standards by undergoing heat treatment and marking.

All WPM may be subject to official checks either upon or after entry to the EU.
Checks on WPM will continue to be carried out in the UK on a risk-targeted basis only. The plant health risk from WPM imported from the EU is not expected to change as a result of an EU exit.

What do EU businesses need to do now? 5 Steps:
1.Read their local NPPO's guidance on importing plants and plant products from 3rd countries and on importing wood and timber products. The UK will be treated as a third country by the EU.
2.Read the guidance that has been developed for UK businesses outlining Day 1 changes which can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-and-exporting-plants-and-plant-products-if-theres-no-withdrawal-deal
3.Consider the volume of trade you do with the UK and any potential supply chain impacts that changes may have.
4.Take account of the commodities you are trading with the UK. If you are exporting goods currently managed under the EU plant passport regime, you will need to follow the process outlined on the previous pages to export these goods to the UK with a phytosanitary certificate in a no deal scenario.
5.If you currently export goods to the UK that originate in third countries but transit through the EU to the UK, you will need to speak to your plant health authority about the requirements for such goods.

[1] The EU stated its intention to treat the UK as a third country in a 'no deal' scenario in their technical notice released in March 2018, which can be found here: https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/plant/docs/notice_brexit_plant_health.pdf

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