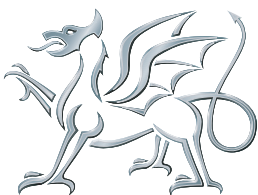


Annual Review of Controls on Imports of Animal Products: April 2007 – March 2008

July 2008

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



The Scottish
Government



Department of
Agriculture and
Rural Development
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Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

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for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury
by Command of Her Majesty
July 2008

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Foreword by Jeff Rooker



I am pleased once again to be able to report on activity during the past year aimed at reducing the risk of disease entering the country via imports of animal products.

The control of imports of animal products remains a major concern for the Government as we fully appreciate the impact that disease outbreaks can have on rural communities and businesses and, in trying to protect animal health, we know how important it is to take a variety of measures both at the border and inland.

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) remains committed to taking effective, proportionate, risk based and intelligence-led enforcement measures to prevent illegal imports, and continues to target the routes that pose the greatest animal disease risk. It is

pleasing to note that while seizures of illegal imports have decreased from the levels achieved in the last two years partly as a consequence of HMRC scaling back to previous levels the additional resources deployed to tackle Avian Influenza risk traffic, there are indications that travellers on high risk routes may be becoming increasingly compliant with the Products Of Animal Origin personal import regulations.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and HMRC continue to undertake a great deal of publicity within the United Kingdom, at the border and overseas. In January 2008 Defra re-launched the Black and Minority Ethnic personal food imports campaign thus continuing to raise awareness of the personal import rules and encourage behavioural change so illegal food products are not brought in to the country. Defra (with HMRC and the Food Standards Agency) has also used a wide range of other communication channels to promote our message.

We will continue to monitor and assess the changing threats from around the world, and work with HMRC/United Kingdom Border Agency to make sure that our enforcement activity is targeted at the current risks.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Rooker". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Jeff Rooker
Minister for Sustainable Food and Farming and Animal Health

Introduction

1.1.1 This is the sixth annual review of controls on imports of animal products into Great Britain (GB) in accordance with section 10A of the Animal Health Act 1981. Northern Ireland (NI) represents a separate disease control regime within the United Kingdom (UK) and has differing challenges and controls regarding imports. Nevertheless, NI is equally committed to tackling the problem of illegal imports. The statistics at Annex 1 include seizures made by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for NI (DARDNI) at ports of entry in NI.

- ‘Animal product’ is not defined in the Act and for the purpose of this review: ‘Animal product’ and ‘Border Inspection Post (BIP)’ have the same meaning as covered by The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2841) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (SSI 2007/1) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/376 (W. 36)) (as amended) and The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (SR 2007/199) (as amended);
- ‘import(s)’ means a product or products of non-European Union (EU) country origin entering GB from outside the EU;
- ‘intra-Community product’ means an animal product entering GB from within the EU.

1.1.2 Legally imported animal products from non-EU countries are checked on entry into the UK to ensure they meet EU veterinary import conditions. Animal Health (AH) is responsible for carrying out the checks where ports do not handle food products. Local Authorities carry out the checks at ports and airports which handle food of animal origin such as meat, fish, eggs, milk and products containing them, and a mix of animal products. Veterinarians carry out checks, except for fishery products when Environmental Health Officers may do the checks. Technical assistants may assist the veterinarians. There are three types of checks:

- Documentary checks – checks on the certification accompanying the consignment;
- Identity checks – checks to ensure that the consignment matches the information given in the document;
- Physical checks – checks on the consignment itself, including checks on temperature, condition, and for microbiological and chemical contaminants.

Once the veterinary checks are completed, notification is provided to Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) to allow customs clearance of the goods.

Checks are carried out in approved facilities at ports or airports. These are known as BIPs. EU legislation lays down the requirements for BIPs and they are inspected periodically by the European Commission (EC) to ensure they meet the required standard. We have introduced a programme of liaison visits by AH to Local Authority operated BIPs to ensure compliance with the required standard. Ports which have no outstanding problems have a reduced frequency of visits by AH.

Introduction

1.1.3 The UK's controls on imported animals and animal products were most recently inspected by the EC in November 2006. The report recognises that improvements have been made in the system for auditing BIPs, and identification of consignments to be presented to the BIP for veterinary checks. The inspectors were also satisfied that effective control measures are in place to target illegal imports and that there is a clear publicity strategy to raise awareness of the personal import rules among the travelling public. The EC did find some areas where improvements can be made and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Food Standards Agency (FSA), HMRC and AH have addressed most of the recommendations and work continues on the remainder. During this year new inspection facilities have been provided at Manchester Airport and Gatwick Airport. Heathrow Airport also began work on new facilities for products not intended for human consumption and these were completed in late Spring 2008.

1.1.4 For intra-Community trade, random checks may be carried out at the point of destination to ensure that consignments meet the requirements. If there is a disease outbreak in another EU Member State, the onus is on that country to implement disease control measures to ensure that animals and animal products which may present a risk do not move out of the appropriate restricted areas.

1.1.5 Work to tackle illegal imports of animal products forms part of the overall Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for GB¹ and its associated implementation plans.

1.1.6 We continue to recognise that we can only successfully tackle illegal imports with a combined effort across all relevant government departments and enforcement agencies, by raising public awareness, by understanding the risks and enhancing enforcement activity to increase the deterrent effect.

Roles and responsibilities

1.2.1 HMRC is responsible for ensuring that commercial imports of animal products are not granted customs clearance unless the goods have undergone the necessary veterinary checks and have been authorised for entry into the UK. HMRC has also been responsible since 11 April 2003 for anti-smuggling controls on illegal imports from non-EU countries at GB points of entry (i.e. where goods are under customs supervision) except in areas designated as BIPs, including postal imports whether at postal depots, ports or airports, and for enforcing controls under CITES. HMRC is not responsible for controlling intra-EU movements except where goods have not been subject to customs control elsewhere on arrival in the EU, such as interline baggage. This is baggage which has been checked through from a non-EU country departure airport to its final destination in the EU but is routed via another EU airport.

1.2.2 In NI, the transfer of responsibility for the detection of illegal imports of POAO to HMRC in 2003 did not take place as in other parts of the UK. Therefore, this remains as a central function of DARDNI, both at BIPs and other points of entry. DARDNI's close working relationship with HMRC facilitates the referral of animal products detected by HMRC in the conduct of examinations for other items (e.g. tobacco and illegal drugs) to DARDNI and vice versa. Inland detection responsibility currently rests with the 26 district councils in liaison with FSA NI in terms of identifying illegally imported animal products which may be either destined for or actually on retail sale.

¹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/strategy/ahws.pdf>

1.2.3 Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) are responsible for animal health policy in England and Wales, and Defra is the central competent authority for veterinary checks and animal health aspects of import controls on POAO. Defra remains the nominated UK management authority for the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) policy, whilst the responsibility for licensing imports, exports and commercial use of listed species of animals, plants and their derivatives transferred to AH with the Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service on 1 April 2007. Responsibility for intra-EU movements of food products is with Defra and the Local Authorities.

1.2.4 AH has a presence in most busy ports and airports. It is able to support other enforcement bodies and provide a line of communication with Defra headquarters. AH is also able to provide advice on identifying products and can advise on disposal arrangements, disinfecting etc. AH is also responsible for veterinary checks on POAO at BIPs that take only products not for human consumption. AH is responsible for dealing with service delivery work relating to the import of POAO, such as responding to external enquiries about the requirements for imports from non-EU countries, and for intra-Community trade.

1.2.5 The FSA is responsible for public health aspects of food imported into the UK. The FSA has particular responsibility for policy issues for imports of fishery products, bivalves and food which is not of animal origin. The FSA has responsibilities for assisting and co-ordinating local enforcement activities of Local Authorities, both inland and at ports, in this aspect of their duties.

Defra bi-lingual leaflets produced in 9 different languages, as referred to in section 2.2.4



1.2.6 The Meat Hygiene Service (MHS) is an executive agency of the FSA, and operates controls at licensed meat cutting and processing plants. These include random checks on non-EU country meat and intra-Community products, to ensure compliance with public and animal health legislation.

Understanding the risk

1.3.1 The endemic nature of animal diseases in many countries around the world results in a continuous but low risk of them reaching the UK through illegal routes. All POAO seizures are treated as an animal or public health risk and destroyed, by incineration, in the shortest possible time.

The risk of disease relates to the possibility that animals may consume infectious material in illegal imports. Very small amounts of infectious material may cause disease and are likely to form only a very small proportion of any illegal import. There is thus very little chance of finding infected material by testing samples. Discovering whether any individual seizure is infected is unlikely to contribute significantly to the way that the restrictions relating to imports are enforced.

1.3.2 Defra continues to monitor the occurrence of major animal disease outbreaks worldwide as an early warning to assess the risk these events may pose to the UK, and help inform our delivery partners' enforcement activities.

1.3.3 Defra publishes routine monthly reports as well as Preliminary Outbreak Assessments (POAs) and Qualitative Risk Assessments (QRAs) when required, which are regularly distributed within Government, posted publicly on Defra's website², and published in the Veterinary Record.

1.3.4 When Defra becomes aware of a new animal disease outbreak in another country, we may carry out a POA, which may conclude that a full QRA is justified. When there is official notification of a new disease incident in an EU Member State, a country on the border of the EU, or one of the UK's non-EU country trading partners then it is likely that measures will be taken to manage the increased threat.

1.3.5 In 2007/08 Defra conducted 37 POAs on outbreaks of diseases such as African Horse Sickness, African Swine Fever, Bluetongue, Classical Swine Fever, Foot and Mouth Disease, H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (AI), Low Pathogenic AI, Lumpy Skin Disease, Newcastle Disease, Peste des Petits Ruminants, Rabies and Swine Vesicular Disease. Further to these, 2 more detailed QRAs were undertaken related to the evolving situation with regard to the outbreaks of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic AI around the world. Defra veterinary and policy officials continue to meet with HMRC colleagues to discuss changes in the global disease situation and help plan future enforcement activity.

1.3.6 The FSA is responsible for public health with respect to food, including imported food controls and co-ordinates work with the Department of Health, the Health Protection Agency and Defra through groups such as the UK Zoonoses Group and the Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance Group. Government advice to UK consumers is that illegal imported food, including meat and bushmeat, should not be eaten because it has evaded official controls designed to verify compliance with food safety standards and could therefore pose a danger to human health. The FSA believes that the main risks to public health from illegal imported meat are those associated with well-known food pathogens, which will be destroyed by cooking, and have concluded that a formal risk assessment is not warranted. To determine whether any additional advice is required, a study was commissioned to give an overview of the microbiological risks associated with illegal imports of meat, which was put to the independent Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food (ACMSF). The ACMSF's Ad Hoc Group on Imported Foods considered this study, information on controls to prevent illegal imports, and research on species

² <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/index.htm>

Introduction

identification of seized meat. The Group concluded that the risk of foodborne illness from consumption of bushmeat appeared to be very low, and that the risk of foodborne illness from cross-contamination was also minimal. In addition, normal cooking would probably destroy any viruses and bacteria present although there was no data available to verify this. The Group also concluded that there was a lack of quantitative data relating to the microbiological risks associated with bushmeat.

1.3.7 The purpose of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF), established in 1979, is to provide EU Member States with an effective tool for exchange of information on measures taken to ensure food safety. The FSA uses the RASFF system to inform, and prompt for action to be taken, by the EC or other EU Member States, including when food products from non-EU countries which breach public and animal health safety requirements are rejected. RASFFs are divided into 'alert' and 'information' notifications. The EC has a procedure in place to alert non-EU countries about problems affecting food. This system automatically alerts Port Health and Local Authorities at the border (ports and airports) enabling them to target their checks on imported food. The FSA will also, where appropriate, contact non-EU countries via their Embassies. Between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008, the UK issued 449 notifications via RASFF.

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

The Animal Health Act 1981 (as amended by the Animal Health Act 2002) requires a return to be made against 5 headings as given below:

Review of activities of enforcement agencies directed to the prevention of the introduction of disease

Enforcement

2.1.1 HMRC is committed to taking effective, proportionate, risk based and intelligence led enforcement measures to prevent illegal imports. HMRC's enforcement regime is risk based and takes account of the latest animal disease risk assessments put together by veterinary experts from Defra on the current global and regional outbreak situation. Resources are targeted on those entry routes that pose the greatest threat of disease. HMRC also use a range of other risk indicators to target illegal imports including:

- Historical data on the types of POAO seized, high risk routings, typical methods of concealment and any other risk trends;
- Any other relevant risk information from other national, EU and non-EU country enforcement agencies;
- Specific intelligence on suspect importers and/or consignments;
- Results from operational checks carried out to detect POAO.

2.1.2 HMRC has continued to deploy approximately 100 fully trained enforcement staff plus specifically trained POAO detector dogs, commensurate with the original funding made available to HMRC. HMRC's additional checks on traffic from countries reporting H5N1 infection, that had seen deployments effectively doubled in 2006/07, were scaled back at the start of this year to their original level. In addition, all HMRC frontline enforcement staff are employed as multifunctional anti-smuggling staff with a responsibility to tackle a range of risks at the border, including POAO. Enforcement staff are deployed on a mobile and flexible basis and are supported by the use of detector dogs and X-ray scanning equipment located at major ports and airports.

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

Meat seized from a passenger from Ghana and honey seized from a passenger from Turkey



2.1.3 HMRC issue warning letters and POAO leaflets to all travellers from whom products are seized, and by recorded delivery to those receiving items in the post, to make them aware of the rules. HMRC note their central records in case the same person is subsequently found with illegal imports. HMRC has also issued press releases on significant seizures and successful prosecutions.

2.1.4 Since responsibility for anti-smuggling controls on POAO transferred to the former Customs and Excise in 2003 and thereafter in 2005 to HMRC, 11 people have been successfully prosecuted for illegal imports offences under the POAO Regulations, with fines ranging from £100 to £400 and one offender receiving a 28-day custodial sentence. Since 1 April 2005, the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO) has taken over responsibility for prosecuting these offences and the latest conviction, related to 69kg of smoked fish imported in baggage on a flight from Ethiopia in October 2007, resulted in a £300 fine plus £65 costs. HMRC also concluded 6 cases by way of compounding using their powers under Section 152 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, rather than referring them to RCPO for a decision as to whether to institute criminal proceedings or not.

2.1.5 In NI, DARDNI staff are present on a full time (24/7) basis in Belfast and Larne ports, the port of Warrenpoint, George Best Belfast City Airport and Belfast International Airport. In addition, a profiled and risk based programme of attendance at the City of Derry airport and the 70 small ports, harbours and marinas around the NI coastline continues.

DARDNI continually reviews the profile and prevalence of relevant animal diseases, using information available from both the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) and Defra in the form of dedicated risk assessments. The risk profile generated, in combination with retrospective evaluation of previous seizures made, enables the deployment of DARDNI staff in the direction of prioritised flights and sailings. In addition, combined examination exercises with HMRC may be undertaken.

During the report period the total number of case files opened was 7, with one successful prosecution, three received warning letters, one had insufficient evidence and no further action could be taken, one found not to be in the public interest and the final one is still under investigation. This year's report has commenced with 3 pending case file reports for action.

In NI, DARDNI has successfully trialled the use of a detector dog, and is to secure the permanent service of a dog during 2008/09.

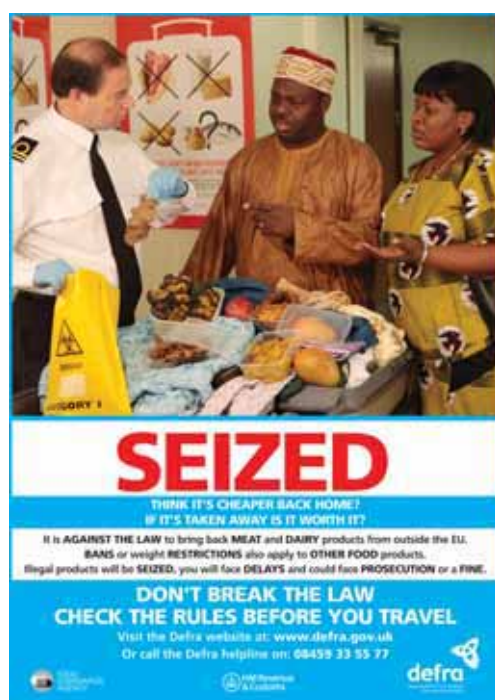
Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

2.1.6 The FSA launched at the end of March 2008 the web-based Guidance and Regulatory Advice on Import Legislation (GRAIL) database. GRAIL is available to anyone with access to the internet. The system currently provides the user with a searchable database of up-to-date imported food legislation and guidance relating to the import of products of non-animal origin and fish and fishery products into the UK. It is however planned to expand GRAIL's content to include all POAO.

The availability of GRAIL will ensure that up-to-date information on imported food controls is readily accessible to all food law enforcement officers. The benefits of this approach include more consistent and effective enforcement of controls, both at point of entry and inland, and the potential for trade and exporting countries to be more proactive about ensuring they comply with import controls.

2.1.7 Defra, HMRC, the FSA and AH continue to meet regularly to discuss progress, resolve any issues or to improve on guidance to enforcement officers.

Defra press adverts produced for 9 different communities, as referred to in section 2.2.4



Raising Awareness

2.2.1 There continues to be a joined-up approach across Government Departments on the overall communications strategy to help raise travellers' awareness of the rules on personal imports of POAO. A variety of public awareness raising mechanisms are deployed with Defra leading on inland audiences and HMRC amongst travellers (i.e. those intending to travel). HMRC also lead on publicity at points of entry into the UK and at points of departure from the UK.

Defra publicity

2.2.2 10 January 2008 saw the re-launch of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) personal food imports campaign 'Don't break the law, check the rules before you travel', managed by a specialist publicity agency. The re-launch included media interviews with the Minister for Food and Farming, Lord Rooker, and journalists from BEN TV and OBE TV, which reach the African and Caribbean communities in the UK, and Channel 5, which reaches Bangladeshi audiences, together with an interview with the newspaper *Sing Tao*, which is aimed at readers from the Chinese community.

2.2.3 This campaign reminds people that it is illegal to bring meat and dairy products for personal use back into the UK from countries outside the EU and that there are also restrictions on bringing back other food products, including fish, shellfish, honey, eggs and certain types of fruits and vegetables.

The campaign's aims are to:

- Reduce the amount of illegal food brought into the UK from travellers arriving from countries outside the EU;
- Increase awareness of the rules and regulations that are in place to restrict personal food imports amongst our target audiences;
- Encourage people to change their behaviour so that they don't bring in illegal food products.

The campaign is focussed on three key messages:

- Why the personal food imports laws and regulations exist – to prevent the entry of animal and plant diseases into the UK;
- The implications of breaking the law – illegal products will be seized and destroyed by customs, you will face delays, and you could face prosecution or a fine;
- Availability in the UK – the campaign seeks to emphasise that most of the illegal products that are being brought in are available in the UK, so there's no need to take the risk;

Research shows that for some cultures bringing back food is a longstanding tradition. This is reflected by seizure rates, which show that significant amounts of illegal food products are seized from people travelling from certain countries. Due to this the target audiences for this campaign are Black African (predominantly from Ghana and Nigeria), Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Chinese, Middle Eastern, Indian, Pakistani and Turkish.

2.2.4 The cross-media campaign includes new bi-lingual leaflets, television and press adverts and significant community outreach activity. All activity is specifically tailored to the target audience. Posters and leaflets are available in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Turkish and Urdu. The television advertising went live on BEN TV and OBE TV (African and Caribbean audience) and Channel 5 (Bangladeshi audience) from week commencing 17 December 2007 until March 2008.

2.2.5 The outreach activity took place at key locations across the country, including community supermarkets, places of worship and shopping centres with a team of trained staff who speak the appropriate languages. The outreach team visited over 30 locations including London, Birmingham, Bradford, Liverpool, Oldham, Manchester and Newcastle. Activity was timed so

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

that it coincided with popular times for travelling such as Chinese New Year, Easter and half-term holidays.

Following evaluation of the previous campaign, we also produced some merchandise (branded travel wallets and pens) that could be given to members of the public to act as a permanent reminder to contact Defra for advice and to work alongside the bi-lingual leaflets.

Defra press adverts produced for 9 different communities, as referred to in section 2.2.4



2.2.6 Over 25,000 leaflets and over 650 posters were distributed in 2007/08 to community groups/centres, places of worship, travel agents, high commissioners and visa offices, as well as to approximately 6,000 Doctor's surgeries. 1,227 high street shops, including local supermarkets and other appropriate retail outlets, accepted campaign materials. 1,295 branded travel wallets were also distributed to travel agents.

2.2.7 Defra's website includes a searchable database of products for personal imports and countries, which is a useful source of information for travellers. It is regularly updated as the rules change.

2.2.8 Television fillers are public awareness/information messages that promote health, safety or welfare and are played in free donated airtime. They are a unique and very cost-effective route to broadcast to our audiences. Since its release in November 2004, the Defra television filler "I Packed My Bags" has generated over £1.5 million in equivalent paid advertising space, with a significant number of showings on stations such as Islam Channel and Zee TV as well as regional TV stations. This has been adapted for use as an in-flight video for incoming passengers to the UK to encourage them to surrender illegal goods to HMRC on arrival. The television filler is also being adapted by the EC for use by other EU Member States.

Defra and HMRC publicity

2.2.9 Defra and HMRC have continued to conduct a targeted online advertising campaign at peak travel periods aimed at UK travellers who research and book trips abroad on the internet, targeting people who were searching for destinations outside the EU, and using innovative and 'eye-catching' images to encourage users to click through to the Defra website. Messages were also provided on e-mail confirmation print-outs. This year's campaign commenced on 1 December 2007, utilising travel internet sites including Expedia, Lastminute, BAA, Travelocity and Lonely Planet and ran until 31 March 2008. Over 123 million impressions were served. Advertising also

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took place on Google, which displayed messages on the page and a link to the Defra website when certain keywords were used in the search facility.

HMRC publicity

2.2.10 HMRC has continued to provide leaflets summarising the rules for personal imports of animal products for travellers at ports and airports. In addition, the leaflets are distributed to the public at travel exhibitions and other events providing guidance on customs rules to the travelling public. These leaflets were refreshed and updated in January 2008. They are available in 9 dual language variants (including Turkish, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Chinese) to help explain the rules to non-English speakers. Laminated POAO rule cards in 10 different languages are also available to assist customs officers when speaking to arriving travellers.

2.2.11 HMRC has continued placing posters and running advertising at high visibility sites at ports and airports alerting travellers to the POAO rules. This year has also included appropriate messages on Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) screens displayed in baggage halls at the new Heathrow Terminal 5 and at check-in desks and other public sites at Birmingham Airport. Advertising has also been run which displayed messages on computer terminal screensavers in airport departure lounges across the UK.

2.2.12 A bookmark advert publicising the rules was placed in the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) members handbook which is distributed to approximately 5,000 travel agents in the UK. In addition, 1.9 million ticket wallets advertising the UK restrictions on bringing back animal products were distributed to travel agents for issue to customers with their tickets.

2.2.13 HMRC produced two radio fillers (one 40 seconds long, the other 20 seconds long) in March 2007, which were broadcast on UK radio stations, using unsold advertising airtime slots.

Defra, HMRC and FSA publicity

2.2.14 HMRC, Defra and the FSA have continued working on a partnership marketing programme to create, develop and manage beneficial relationships with commercial organisations to publicise the rules and help raise awareness of POAO messages and regulations, particularly to returning UK residents at relevant points in their travel journey. This included the development of an educational documentary style film on checks on personal and commercial food imports which ran on the digital channel BEN TV, aimed primarily at West African audiences. In March 2008, we also received coverage in the Sun newspaper and online. POAO case studies by country have also been provided to commercial partners to help generate editorial coverage (e.g. coverage of foods from China in *Sing Tao Times*) to increase awareness and understanding of EU import rules for animal products.

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HMRC bi-lingual leaflets produced in 9 different languages, as referred to in section 2.2.10



DARDNI publicity

2.2.15 DARDNI has continued to raise the profile of the threat of introduction of disease from POAO in the following ways:

- Production of leaflets and posters giving information to the travelling public on which POAO items can and cannot be brought back to NI;
- Active surveillance beyond risk based searching, in the form of questioning passengers regarding awareness;
- Issuing press releases, reminding the public not to bring back illegal POAO personal imports when returning from holidays;
- An appearance on local television by DARDNI staff, highlighting the issues and risks associated with the illegal importation of POAO;
- Development of relevant advertising on plasma screen displays at points of entry advising passengers of the rules on POAO personal imports;
- Placement of relevant advice on DARDNI website;
- The holding of meetings with stakeholder groups where problem trends have been identified (e.g. students and representatives of Chinese community).

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Defra stand outside a Bangladeshi supermarket in Birmingham during the outreach activity, as referred to in section 2.2.5



Stakeholder involvement

2.3.1 The Imported Food Project Group (chaired by the FSA with Defra and HMRC also attending) meets bi-annually to discuss developments and engages with key regulatory stakeholders including the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS), the Association of Port Health Authorities (APHA), the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) and Port Health and Local Authorities.

2.3.2 Inspectors from AH who are involved with veterinary checks work, including checks on compliance at BIPs, meet twice a year. The aim of these meetings is to discuss current problems and disseminate best practice. Defra attend these meetings to provide policy advice. AH also provides update training for Portal Official Veterinary Surgeons (OVSs) at least twice a year. Initial training for Portal OVSs is a distance learning package followed by a short practical course at a BIP.

2.3.3 Defra continue to attend meetings with stakeholders to inform them of activity on import controls, such as a well received presentation to the National Farmers' Union regional meeting in June 2007.

2.3.4 Defra and HMRC have been leading the way in encouraging greater co-operation between customs and veterinary authorities in other EU Member States including input at working groups of both DG SANCO and DG TAXUD – the Directorates General of the EC for Health and Consumer Protection, and Taxation and Customs Union respectively. We have received good feedback from other EU Member States at these groups about the progress the UK has made in relation to good co-operative working relationships and on our publicity activity, including the television filler that was adapted for use on airlines.

HMRC participated in and acted as rapporteur for a DG TAXUD working group looking at customs controls across the EU to combat the spread of AI. This Group concluded that the EU can best be protected against threats to public and animal health by a co-ordinated approach both nationally and across the EU. It also produced best practice guidelines designed to help EU Member States develop customs control strategies using risk management principles.

2.3.5 The Government has continued reviewing the policy for financing the costs of exotic animal disease outbreaks. The overriding objective of sharing animal health and welfare responsibilities between industry and Government is to achieve better management of animal disease risks so that the overall risks and costs are reduced. This work has the potential to fundamentally change the relationship between industry and Government to the benefit of both. Through the sharing of responsibilities, industry will be able to take greater responsibility for its own decisions and will have greater ownership of the risks. In addition, responsibility sharing will provide opportunities for improved regulation and a reduction in the regulatory burden in future. Government will benefit from increased industry involvement in decision making, which should mean a greater ability to respond and deliver outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

A series of workshops on Responsibility and Cost Sharing were held across England during February and March 2008. Further information is available³.

A consultation on "Responsibility and Cost Sharing for Animal Health and Welfare: Next Steps – Your Views Matter"⁴ was published on 11 December 2007. The deadline for responses was 15 April 2008. A summary of responses can be seen with the consultation. A news release has been issued⁵. A further consultation on more detailed proposals is expected in Autumn 2008.

Statistics on illegal products

2.4.1 The number of seizures of illegal imports of POAO totalled 24,956, approximately a 29% decrease compared with 2006/07. This is reflected in the reduction in the number and weight of seizures by HMRC from the levels achieved in the last two years, when HMRC significantly enhanced their deployments to tackle the emerging threat of AI, as outbreaks were reported in countries with significant traffic to the UK. Whilst HMRC continue to target the routes that pose the greatest animal disease risk, they have scaled back these deployments to the original planned levels prior to the additional deployments in 2005/06 and 2006/07.

2.4.2 Most seizures continue to be less than 20kg, with average weights as well as numbers falling from many regions. Whilst seizures follow the typical pattern of small family groups, business people and students travelling to the UK for the first time, passengers on high risk flights are increasingly found to be compliant with the POAO regulations. Anecdotal feedback suggests that increased awareness of the regulations and tightened air security measures such as baggage restrictions are having a positive effect on discouraging illegal imports.

2.4.3 Statistics relating to total seizures, in this and previous years (where records are available) are set out in Annex 1.

Legislation: powers

2.5.1 The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2841), as amended by The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/1605), is the principal regulation relating to imports of products. It gives effect to Directive 97/78/EC laying down principles governing the organisation of veterinary checks on products entering the EU and also Commission Regulation (EC) No. 745/2004 (as amended by Commission Regulation (EC) No. 132/2008) laying down measures

³ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/sharing/workshops.htm>

⁴ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/ahw-nextsteps/index.htm>

⁵ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/071211b.htm>

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

with regard to imports of POAO for personal consumption. It also gives effect to the responsibility of HMRC to enforce controls on prohibited goods at points of entry. In exercising their responsibility, HMRC draws down its powers from the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 under which it has wide-ranging powers, including powers of search, seizure and arrest.

Similar regulations apply in Scotland:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (SSI 2007/1);

as amended by:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007 (SSI 2007/304);

and Wales:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/376 (W. 36));

as amended by:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/1710 (W. 148));

and Northern Ireland:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (SR 2007/199);

as amended by:

- The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (SR 2007/314).

In addition:

- The EC Wildlife Trade Regulations (Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97) came into force in June 1997, implementing CITES within the European Community, replacing Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3626/82. This Regulation restricts the movement of and/or trade in endangered wild flora and fauna, and requires EU Member States to designate Customs offices for imports and exports of all CITES specimens, set out in the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Designation of Ports of Entry) Regulation 1985.

This has largely been superseded by the Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) legislation. Defra is looking to revise and update Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Designation of Ports of Entry) Regulations where post public consultation considerations are now underway with a view to laying amending legislation in Spring 2009.

Legislation: effectiveness

2.6.1 Very little legislation relevant to controls on imports of animal products is made under the Animal Health Act 1981. The Importation of Animal Products and Poultry Products Order 1980 (SI 1934), as amended in 1984 (SI 2920) is extant and applies to all animal products (derived from mammals or birds) which are not subject to the provisions of The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2841) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (SSI 2007/1) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/376 (W. 36)) (as amended) and The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (SR 2007/199) (as amended). This includes some hides and skins, and certain products for human consumption and not for human consumption.

2.6.2 The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (England) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/2841) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Scotland) Regulations 2007 (SSI 2007/1) (as amended), The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/376 (W. 36)) (as amended) and The Products of Animal Origin (Third Country Imports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (SR 2007/199) (as amended) create an absolute offence and provide for a fine not exceeding £5,000 and/or up to 3 months' imprisonment on summary conviction, and an unlimited fine and/or up to 2 years' imprisonment on indictment.

2.6.3 HMRC may also refer to the RCPO for consideration as to whether to institute criminal proceedings or not, offences of smuggling prohibited and or restricted items under section 170 of the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979. The maximum penalty for these offences is imprisonment for up to 7 years and/or unlimited fines.

Future action

Enforcement strategy

2.7.1 The UK Border Agency (UKBA) was launched on 1 April 2008, as a shadow agency of the Home Office, bringing together the Border and Immigration Agency, UK visas and HMRC's detection work at main points of entry to and exit from the UK.

Around 4,200 HMRC frontier Detection staff plus Risk and Intelligence Services staff who support their frontier targeting work transferred to UKBA management structures. However, these staff will remain employees of HMRC in 2008/09 pending introduction of primary legislation to allow UKBA officers to exercise customs functions at the border during 2009.

2.7.2 Discussions on respective border policy and enforcement roles and responsibilities are ongoing between HMRC and UKBA but for 2008/09 the current level of Detection resources allocated to POAO enforcement activities will be maintained. UKBA will also be responsible for delivering the POAO seizure targets set for the next 3 years under the Departmental Strategic Objective 3 of reducing the risk of illicit import and export material that might harm the UK's physical and social well being. Current SLA arrangements will continue for 2008/09.

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

2.7.3 Defra, HMRC and UKBA will continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss various issues including animal disease risks and enforcement priorities for 2008/09.

UKBA will continue to deliver an enforcement strategy that targets anti-smuggling activity on the highest risk traffic and to review deployment of resources and react favourably in response.

2.7.4 Defra will continue to work with Animal Health/Local Authorities and HMRC/UKBA to ensure compliance with EU and GB rules for the commercial importation of POAO from outside the EU, through BIPs.

Understanding the risk

2.7.5 Defra will continue to monitor the international disease situation, producing assessments as necessary to help inform enforcement activity.

2.7.6 Defra will undertake further work on risk with HMRC/UKBA to ensure that their enforcement efforts are targeted to where the greatest risk lies.

Raising public awareness

2.7.7 Defra, HMRC and the FSA will meet at regular intervals to review the publicity strategy for 2008/09, taking into account successes and lessons learned from 2007/08 and any changing priorities as the year progresses. Defra and HMRC/UKBA will maintain ongoing public awareness campaigns in the UK and abroad as part of a joint publicity strategy. This will be kept under review/researched and refreshed to ensure we are reaching key target audiences and making best use of the resources available.

2.7.8 A new Defra-led television filler "Don't bring me back" is currently being produced to support the re-launch of the BME personal food imports campaign 'Don't break the law, check the rules before you travel', and we are looking to market the filler to TV channels from July 2008. This filler will replace the current filler "I Packed My Bags" that has been running since 2004. Fillers usually have a shelf life of 3 – 4 years, so it is appropriate timing to refresh ours.

2.7.9 Defra and HMRC/UKBA will continue to explore opportunities to work with commercial partners to reach our general public audience both in the UK and overseas.

2.7.10 Defra will maintain a joined up approach across Government in this area.

International co-operation and information exchange

2.7.11 We continue to support all efforts to encourage closer co-operation between customs and veterinary authorities in other EU Member States. HMRC will seek opportunities to facilitate the exchange of intelligence and other risk information to detect illegal imports.

2.7.12 Defra will continue to work at EU and international level to influence other EU Member States and non-EU countries and minimise the risk of introducing disease into the UK.

2.7.13 In November 2008, the EC shall be arranging European Veterinary Week involving all EU Member States under the overarching theme of biosecurity at farm level and at the borders. The agreed aims for initiatives connected with biosecurity at the borders are to:

- Reduce the amount of illegal food brought into the EU by travellers arriving from countries outside the EU;

Review of controls on imports of meat and other animal products

- Increase awareness of the rules that are in place to restrict personal food imports;
- Encourage people to change their behaviour so that they do not bring in illegal food products.

Defra are pleased to be able to contribute to this initiative – this is an excellent opportunity to communicate key messages on biosecurity both at farm level and in international trade.

Defra's current communications campaign complements those key aims proposed above and we are therefore proposing to integrate any activities taking place during that week within our wider personal food imports campaign strategy.

Working in partnership with stakeholders

2.7.14 Defra will continue to work with stakeholders to assist in the development of its policies.

2.7.15 All enforcement partners will review the current SLA and revise it as necessary for 2008/09, particularly in relation to the new UKBA.

Monitoring progress

2.7.16 The Government will continue to monitor the effectiveness of all these activities.

Funding

2.7.17 HMRC/UKBA will continue to fund its enforcement activities in line with Departmental Strategic Objectives. Funding continues to be available for Defra to examine the risks and help increase public awareness, and for the FSA for work on inland controls.

Statistics on imports of illegal products

Background

Statistics relating to total seizures, in this and previous years (where records are available) are set out in this Annex.

For the purposes of these statistics 'illegal' refers to POAO seized as items from individuals being in contravention of the personal concessions permitted or commercial consignments that have sought to evade correct entry procedures by not being declared at a BIP. It also includes items voluntarily surrendered by passengers at ports and airports.

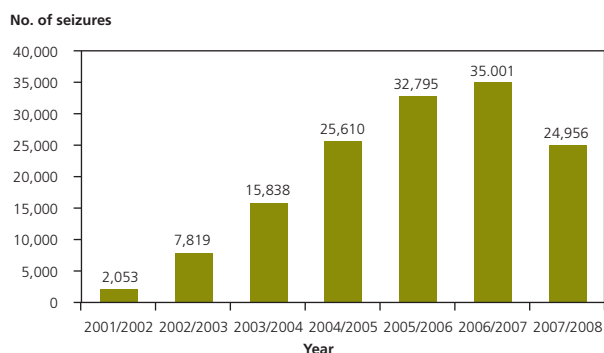
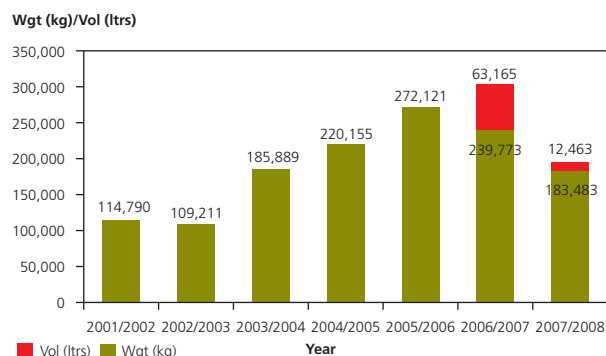
Data on HMRC seizures is maintained by HMRC on their Detection Control Information Service (DCIS) database. Up until 31 March 2006, the balance of the seizure data is retained on the Illegal Import of Animal Product Seizures (ILAPS) database held by Defra and from 1 April 2006, on an Excel spreadsheet.

Tables 1 and 2 (and Graphs 1 and 2) show the number, weight and volume of seizures from non-EU countries by HMRC at points of entry (and by staff funded by Defra until 11 April 2003), those made by DARDNI at points of entry in NI and those made by inland Local/Port Health Authorities where they were able to establish that the illegal products came from non-EU countries.

On occasions more than one POAO product at a time will be seized (e.g. meat, fish, dairy and honey). This is referred to as a 'multiple seizure'. Up until 31 March 2006 (see Tables 3a and 3b), this was only recorded as one seizure against the product of highest weight although the weight of the other products seized was included in the weight recorded for that category. However, the number of seizures by product for 2006/07 and 2007/08 in Tables 3c and 3d reflect the number of times each product was seized including those from a 'multiple seizure'. This means that the sum total of the number of seizures for each of the four product categories will be higher than the overall seizure total for 2006/07 and 2007/08. However, the total number of seizures remains directly comparable to the figures for previous years (see Table 1 and Graph 1).

Period	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)
01/04/01 - 31/03/02	2,053	114,790	N/K
01/04/02 - 31/03/03	7,819	109,211	N/K
01/04/03 - 31/03/04	15,838	185,889	N/K
01/04/04 - 31/03/05	25,610	220,155	N/K
01/04/05 - 31/03/06	32,795	272,121	N/K
01/04/06 - 31/03/07	35,001	239,773	63,165
01/04/07 - 31/03/08	24,956 ⁶	183,483	12,463

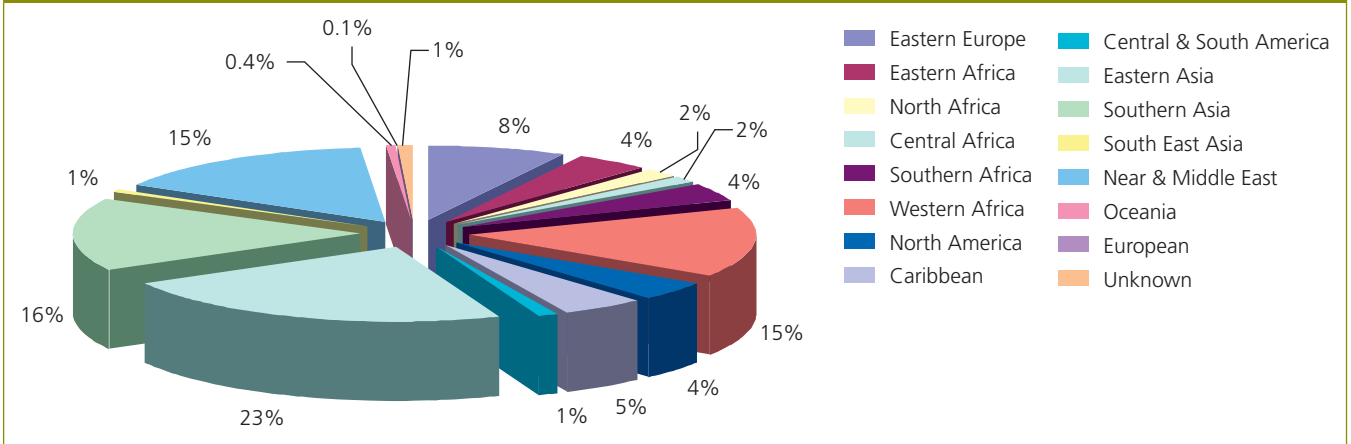
⁶ Of this number approximately 5% were made in freight and cargo. These seizures account for approximately 43% of the total weight of seizures, and approximately 16% of the total volume of seizures

Graph 1 for Table 1: Total number of POAO seizures per year (2001-2008)**Graph 2 for Table 1: Total weight and volume of POAO seizures per year (2001-2008)****Table 2: POAO seizures, weight and volume by region (2007-2008)**

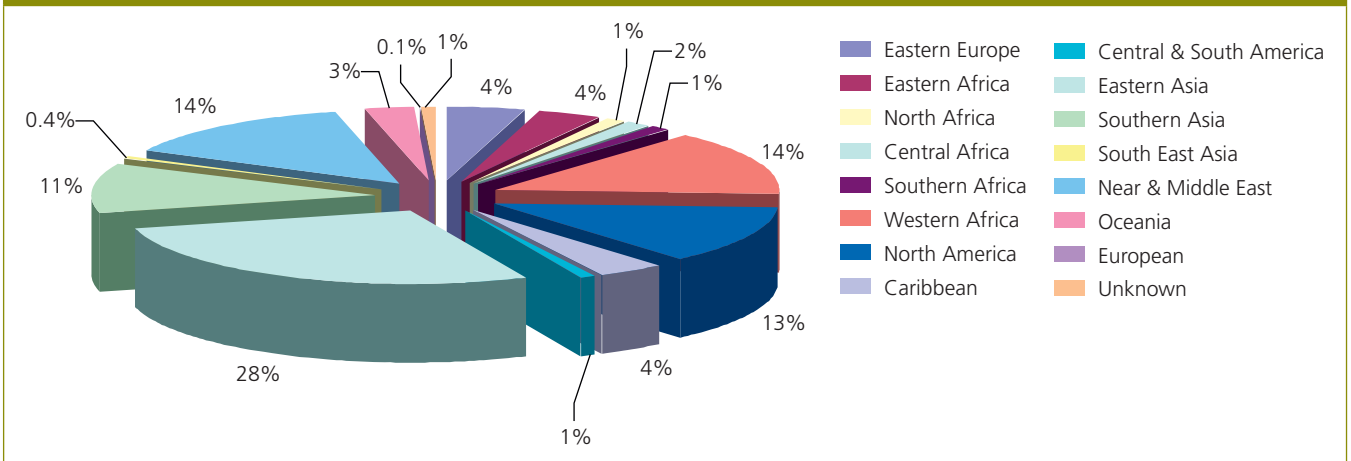
Region ID/Name	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)
1 Eastern Europe	1,945	7,928.20	1.50
2 Eastern Africa	1,069	7,085.25	0.00
3 North Africa	428	1,812.64	908.50
4 Central Africa	373	2,794.17	0.00
5 Southern Africa	953	1,769.96	0.50
6 Western Africa	3,759	25,993.66	6.50
7 North America	1,051	23,670.75	239.07
8 Caribbean	1,145	6,950.46	2,400.00
9 Central & South America	283	1,284.60	0.00
10 Eastern Asia	5,735	51,131.02	1,449.80
11 Southern Asia	3,890	20,076.85	129.80
12 South East Asia	188	707.46	0.00
13 Near & Middle East	3,823	25,726.48	7,326.04
14 Oceania	94	4,806.61	0.00
15 European	17	151.33	0.00
16 Unknown	203	1,593.74	1.10
Totals	24,956	183,483.18	12,462.81

Annex 1

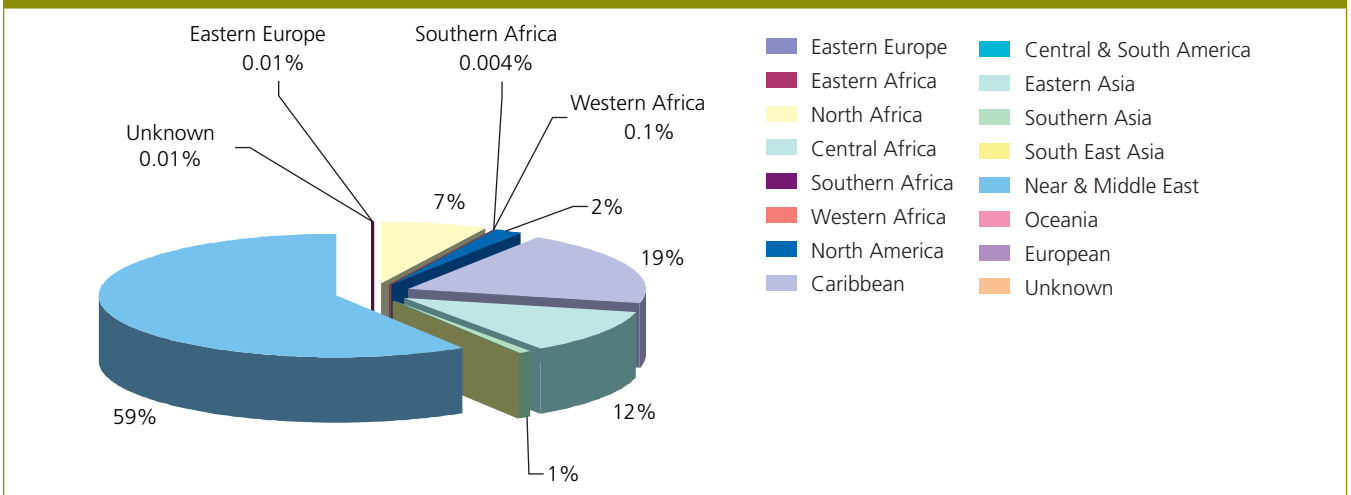
Pie Chart 1 for Table 2: POAO seizures by region (2007-2008)⁷



Pie Chart 2 for Table 2: Weight of POAO seizures by region (2007-2008)⁷



Pie Chart 3 for Table 2: Volume of POAO seizures by region (2007-2008)⁷



⁷ The percentages do not add up to 100% due to roundings up and down.

Table 3a: POAO seizures, including weight, by product (2001-2003) - old reporting format

Period	Meat		Fish		Dairy		Multiple		Other	
	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)
01/04/01-31/03/02	1,242	18,955	353	32,691	63	3,784	361	55,791	34	3,569
01/04/02-31/03/03	2,986	31,301	1,837	21,267	759	19,807	2,172	36,170	65	666

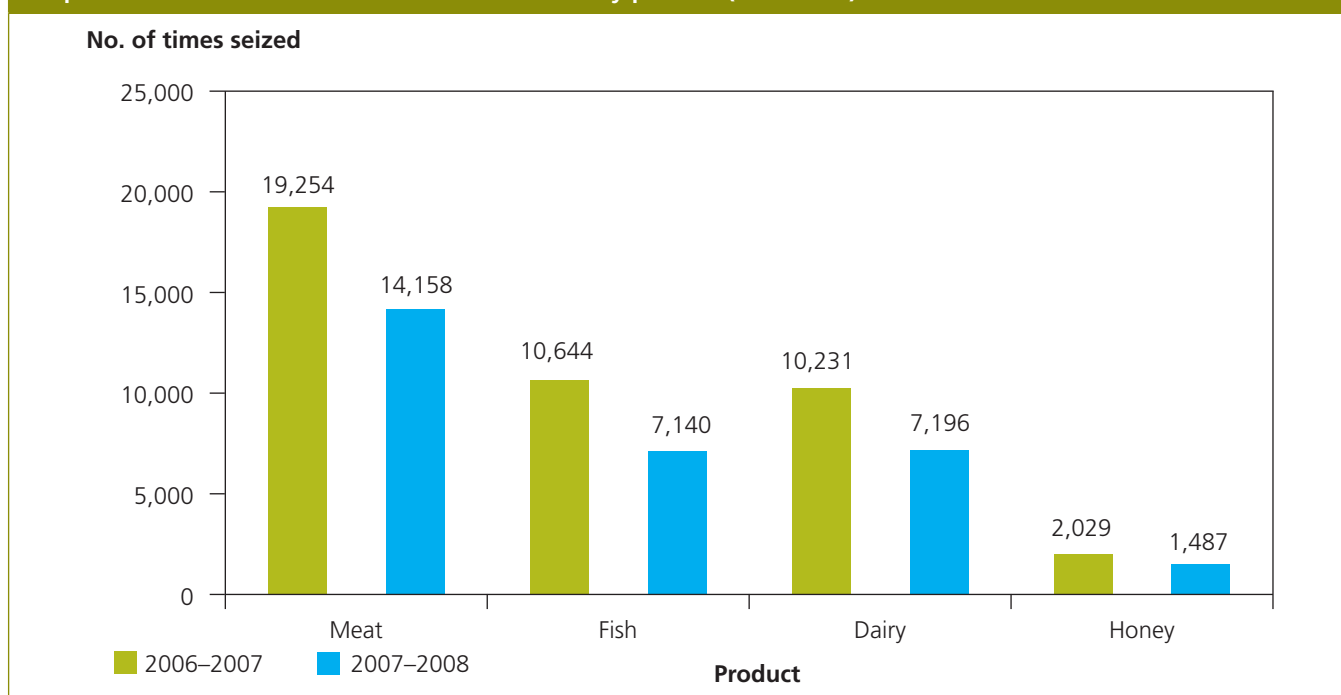
Table 3b: POAO seizures, including weight, by product (2003-2006) - old reporting format

Period	Meat		Fish		Dairy		Honey	
	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)	No. of seizures	Wgt (kg)
01/04/03-31/03/04	6,810	72,734	5,325	76,179	3,168	28,052	535	8,924
01/04/04-31/03/05	10,987	78,664	8,322	85,757	5,127	40,685	1,174	15,049
01/04/05-31/03/06	14,826	106,135	9,740	100,840	6,759	48,011	1,470	17,135

Table 3c: Number of times POAO seized, including weight and volume, by product (2006-2008) – new reporting format

Period	Meat			Fish			Dairy			Honey		
	No. of times seized	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)	No. of times seized	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)	No. of times seized	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)	No. of times seized	Wgt (kg)	Vol (ltrs)
01/04/06-31/03/07	19,254	90,326.72	20,867.00	10,644	65,545.11		10,231	67,717.64	42,298.08	2,029	16,183.86	
01/04/07-31/03/08	14,158	76,718.40		7,140	47,030.44		7,196	48,232.96	12,462.81	1,487	11,501.38	

Graph for Table 3c: Number of times POAO seized by product (2006-2008)



Annex 1

Table 3d: Number of times POAO seized, including weight and volume, by region (2007-2008)

Region ID/Name	No. of times seized, Wgt (kg) and Vol (ltrs)	Meat	Fish	Dairy	Honey	Totals
1 Eastern Europe	No. of times seized	1,576	122	553	142	
	Wgt (kg)	5,355.49	255.06	1,847.39	470.26	7,928.20
	Vol (ltrs)			1.50		1.50
2 Eastern Africa	No. of times seized	577	107	492	224	
	Wgt (kg)	2,782.73	824.23	2,169.10	1,309.19	7,085.25
	Vol (ltrs)			0.00		0.00
3 North Africa	No. of times seized	228	101	117	86	
	Wgt (kg)	707.99	616.45	292.99	195.21	1,812.64
	Vol (ltrs)			908.50		908.50
4 Central Africa	No. of times seized	132	295	7	12	
	Wgt (kg)	582.24	2,156.21	9.31	46.41	2,793.17
	Vol (ltrs)			0		0.00
5 Southern Africa	No. of times seized	839	106	38	1	
	Wgt (kg)	1,147.80	551.25	70.61	0.30	1,769.96
	Vol (ltrs)			0.50		0.50
6 Western Africa	No. of times seized	1,334	2,466	455	184	
	Wgt (kg)	5,082.84	16,410.15	3,906.49	594.18	25,993.66
	Vol (ltrs)			6.50		6.50
7 North America	No. of times seized	516	92	501	19	
	Wgt (kg)	3,219.34	1,413.57	18,889.22	148.62	23,670.75
	Vol (ltrs)			239.07		239.07
8 Caribbean	No. of times seized	781	312	267	30	
	Wgt (kg)	2,902.94	1,663.75	2,266.71	117.06	6,950.46
	Vol (ltrs)			2,400.00		2,400.00
9 Central & South America	No. of times seized	196	17	118	17	
	Wgt (kg)	808.00	105.62	324.09	46.89	1,284.60
	Vol (ltrs)			0.00		0.00
10 Eastern Asia	No. of times seized	4,415	1,715	751	57	
	Wgt (kg)	37,711.09	10,982.82	1,440.99	996.12	51,131.02
	Vol (ltrs)			1,449.80		1,449.80
11 Southern Asia	No. of times seized	1,484	1,352	1,680	134	
	Wgt (kg)	4,834.30	8,335.86	6,195.50	711.19	20,076.85
	Vol (ltrs)			129.80		129.80

Table 3d: Number of times POAO seized, including weight and volume, by region (2007-2008) (continued)

Region ID/Name	No. of times seized, Wgt (kg) and Vol (ltrs)	Meat	Fish	Dairy	Honey	Totals
12 South East Asia	No. of times seized	140	48	30	4	
	Wgt (kg)	443.55	211.41	47.28	5.22	707.46
	Vol (ltrs)			0.00		0.00
13 Near & Middle East	No. of times seized	1,761	350	2,109	558	
	Wgt (kg)	7,261.09	3,000.90	10,291.15	5,173.34	25,726.48
	Vol (ltrs)			7,326.04		7,326.04
14 Oceania	No. of times seized	58	9	23	13	
	Wgt (kg)	2,752.54	120.01	272.12	1,661.94	4,806.61
	Vol (ltrs)			0.00		0.00
15 European	No. of times seized	7	3	8	1	
	Wgt (kg)	64.18	61.82	24.83	0.50	151.33
	Vol (ltrs)			0.00		0.00
16 Unknown	No. of times seized	114	45	47	5	
	Wgt (kg)	1,062.28	321.33	185.18	24.95	1,593.74
	Vol (ltrs)			1.10		1.10
Totals	No. of times seized	14,158	7,140	7,196	1,487	
	Wgt (kg)	76,718.40	47,030.44	48,232.96	11,501.38	183,483.18
	Vol (ltrs)			12,462.81		12,462.81

Glossary of Commonly Used Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABTA	Association of British Travel Agents
ACMSF	Advisory Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Food
AH	Animal Health
AHWDG	Animal Health and Welfare Directorate General
AI	Avian Influenza (more commonly known as “bird flu”)
APHA	Association of Port Health Authorities
BIP(s)	Border Inspection Post(s)
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CIEH	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
CITES	Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species
DARDNI	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland
DCIS	Detection Control Information Service
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GB	Great Britain
GRAIL	Guidance and Regulatory Advice on Import Legislation
HMRC	Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs
ILAPS	Illegal Import of Animal Product Seizures
LACORS	Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display
MHS	Meat Hygiene Service
NI	Northern Ireland
OIE	Office des International Epizooties
OV(S)	Official Veterinary Surgeon(s)
POA(s)	Preliminary Outbreak Assessment(s)
POAO	Products Of Animal Origin
QRA(s)	Qualitative Risk Assessment(s)
RASFF	Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed
RCPO	Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office

SI	Statutory Instrument
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SR	Statutory Rules
SSI	Scottish Statutory Instrument
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System
UK	United Kingdom
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency
WAG	Welsh Assembly Government
WAG-RA	Welsh Assembly Government – Department for Rural Affairs

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