

VETERINARY CERTIFICATE FOR FRESH MEAT, INCLUDING MINCED MEAT, OF DOMESTIC PORCINE ANIMALS FOR DESPATCH TO THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA - 7612EHC

NOTES FOR THE GUIDANCE OF OFFICIAL VETERINARIANS AND EXPORTERS

IMPORTANT

These notes provide guidance to Official Veterinarians (OV's) and exporters and should have been issued to you together with export certificate 7612EHC. These Notes for Guidance (NFG) are not intended to operate as a standalone document but in conjunction with certificates 7612EHC.

Exporters are strongly advised to verify the requirements of the importing country by contacting the veterinary authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia or their representatives in the UK, in advance of each consignment.

1. SCOPE OF THE CERTIFICATE

Export health certificate 7612EHC may be used for the export from the United Kingdom to the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM) of fresh meat, including minced meat, derived from domestic porcine animals (*Sus scrofa*).

Fresh meat means all animal parts (including offal) fit for human consumption whether chilled or frozen.

Minced meat is boned meat which has been minced into fragments and that must have been prepared exclusively from striated muscle (including the adjoining fatty tissues) except heart muscle.

2. IMPORT PERMIT

Prior to making arrangements to export, exporters are advised to contact the veterinary authorities in the RNM for up to date information on requirements for any import documentation.

3. CERTIFICATION BY AN OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN

In Great Britain, this certificate may be signed by a Veterinary Officer of the Department or by an authorised 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.

In GB, a certified copy of the completed certificate must be sent to the Animal Plant and Health Agency (APHA) Centre for International

Trade at Carlisle within seven days of signing.

The OV should keep a copy for his/her own records.

4. FORMAT OF THE CERTIFICATE

In accordance with the requirements of the Veterinary Authorities of the Republic of North Macedonia, the layout and numbering of certificate 7612EHC follow the template of Intra-Trade Animal Health Certificates (ITAHCs) produced by the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES).

5. COMPLETION OF PART I - DETAILS OF DISPATCHED CONSIGNMENT

1.2.a - Intentionally blank

1.3. - Central Competent Authority

Enter 'Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs'

1.4. - Local Competent Authority

Enter the name of the local office of the APHA or DAERA in whose administrative area the establishment from where the fresh meat to be dispatched is located.

1.6 - Intentionally blank

1.7. - Country ISO Codes

ISO 3166 is the International Standard for country codes and codes for their subdivisions.

The ISO Code for the whole of the United Kingdom is 'GB' and this should be entered at Box I.7. Box I.8, both sections, should be marked as N/A (not applicable).

The ISO Code for North Macedonia is 'MK' and is entered at Box I.9. The certifying OV should make enquiries to verify the destination North Macedonian Regional Code, which should be entered in Box I.10.

1.11. - Place of Origin

Enter the details of the dispatch establishment in this box.

1.12. - Intentionally blank

1.15. - Identification

The registration number of transport vehicles, flight number or name of the vessel must to be provided. In case of unloading and reloading, the consignor must inform the BIP of entry into the RNM.

1.19. - Commodity (HS) Code

The Harmonised System (HS) Code is a commodity classification system in which articles are grouped into various categories. It is used as a basis for customs tariffs and for international trade statistics.

The HS Codes to be entered in this box for the various categories of fresh meat of porcine origin exported to the RNM are as follows:

0203 fresh meat - chilled or frozen;

0206	fresh or chilled edible swine offal;
0209	pig fat, free of lean meat, and poultry fat, not rendered or otherwise extracted, fresh, chilled, frozen, salted, in brine, dried or smoked;
1501	pig fat (including lard), other than that of the above heading 0209.

Further advice on use of HS Codes can be found from the website <https://www.findhs.codes/> or by contacting the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle.

I.20. - Quantity

Indicate total gross weight and total net weight.

I.28. - Identification of the Commodities

Under the heading 'Nature of Commodities' indicate 'carcase whole', 'carcase-side', 'carcase-quarters', 'cuts', 'trimmed offal' or 'minced meat'.

For 'Treatment Type'; if appropriate, indicate 'deboned', 'bone-in', 'matured', and/or 'minced'. If frozen, indicate the date of freezing (mm/yy) of the cuts/pieces.

6. References to RNM domestic legislation

References to both RNM domestic legislation and EU legislation equivalence are made throughout the health declarations.

Since March 2002, the European Commission has reported regularly to the EU Council and Parliament on the progress made by the countries of the Western Balkans region, including the RNM. Amongst other things, the most recent progress report reviews the RNM's capacity to implement European standards in matters relating to food hygiene.

The report concludes that RNM legislation remains to be aligned with the *acquis* on hygiene and food supervision and currently operates at a level below EU standards.

OVs should note that personal familiarity with RNM legislation is not a requirement in order to certify the health attestations. Therefore, if the meat has been marked with the official EU oval health mark, the attestations may be certified on the basis that the meat already meets a higher standard than that demanded by RNM legislation and, for the purposes of this certificate, may be regarded as being equivalent (whereas in reality it has been superseded).

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATION (EC) NO 178/2002

Paragraph II.1. refers. Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002 provides a framework for food and feed law within the EC and imposes obligations both on Member States and on food and feed business operators. It applies to all stages of production, processing and distribution of food and feed, but does not apply in the domestic situation.

Enforcement of the General Food Law Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and implementation and enforcement of the EU Hygiene Regulations is provided through secondary legislation in England by The Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013 (as amended) and parallel legislation in Wales and Scotland. In Northern Ireland it is provided by The Food Hygiene Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. Food hygiene legislation is implemented and enforced by the Food

Standards Agency (FSA)/Food Standards Scotland (FSS). Their Manuals for Official Controls detail the requirements.

8. **EU REGULATIONS 852/2004, 853/2004 AND 854/2004 (AS AMENDED)**
(THE EU 'FOOD HYGIENE PACKAGE')

Sub-paragraphs II.1.1, II.1.2, II.1.5, II.1.6, II.1.9 and, in the case of minced meat, II.1.4, may be certified on the basis of the application of the oval health mark or identification mark on the exported meat or packaging thereof, indicating that the slaughterhouse, cutting plant, manufacturing premises (if applicable) and cold store are officially approved and operating in accordance with the above Regulations and, in the case of premises operating in the UK, the FSA/FSS Manual for Official Controls.

The Animal Welfare attestation at paragraph II.3 may be similarly certified on the basis that Regulation 854/2004 requires OVs 'to verify compliance with relevant Community and national rules on animal welfare, such as rules concerning the protection of animals at the time of slaughter and during transport'.

9. **TRICHINELLA STATEMENTS**

Paragraph II.1.3 refers. The most appropriate of the 3 statements/options should be certified, based on the following guidance:

Background Information

Regulation (EC) 854/2004 requires the carcasses of swine (domestic, farmed game and wild game), solipeds and other susceptible species to be examined for trichinosis. Commission Regulation 2075/2005 lays down the technical details of Trichinella testing.

Regulation (EC) 216/2014 amends Regulation 2075/2005 and sets out requirements for Trichinella testing together with derogations and conditions for 'controlled housing'.

Under Regulation (EC) 216/2014 samples must be collected from carcasses of the following porcine animals:

- breeding domestic swine (sows and boars)
- wild boar (any age) (whether wild or farmed)
- all pigs that have not been reared in controlled housing conditions (this information will be captured on the FCI accompanying the pigs to the slaughterhouse)

Meat from domestic swine that has been subject to a freezing treatment under official control is exempt from testing.

Completing the certificate

Paragraph II.1.3 (first indent) may be certified if the carcasses of the pigs have been subjected to a test for the larvae, with negative results, as required by Commission Regulation (EC) 2075/2005 (as amended). Samples for tests are sent to Biobest Laboratories but they can also be tested by on-site laboratories provided these have been approved by the UK National Reference Laboratory (APHA Bury St Edmunds). Further detail can be found in the FSA Manual of Official Controls at Section 5:

Paragraph II.1.3 (second indent) may be certified if the pigmeat intended for export is held frozen at a time/temperature combination that is known to inactivate the larvae. Details of the acceptable time/temperature combinations can be found in the FSA Manual of Official Controls.

Paragraph II.1.3 (third indent)

A group of holdings which apply controlled housing conditions is termed a 'compartment'. All holdings applying controlled housing conditions in an EU Member State may be considered as one compartment.

If the pigs have been reared in controlled housing conditions (this information will be captured on the FCI accompanying the pigs to the slaughterhouse), then this option can be certified. 'Controlled Housing Conditions' means a type of animal husbandry where pigs are kept at all times under conditions controlled by the food business operator with regard to feeding and housing. This includes a range of measures that reduce the risk of the pigs being infected with *Trichinella*. The definition does not exclude pigs that have outdoor access, provided that the outdoor access does not present a risk of introducing *Trichinella* into the holding.

10. MICROBIOLOGICAL CRITERIA AND RESIDUES

Paragraph II.1.7 may be certified on the basis of compliance with microbiological monitoring criteria as required by Commission Regulation (EC) No 2073/2005.

Paragraph II.1.8. may be certified on basis of the results of the national surveillance scheme (NSS) for residues, which covers all EU-approved meat establishments. The NSS implements Council Directives 96/22/EC, 96/23/EC and Regulation (EC) 854/2004, which are transposed into national legislation by The Animals and Animal Products (Examination for Residues and Maximum Residue Limits) (England and Scotland) Regulations 2015 and parallel legislation in the other devolved administrations.

11. OFFICIAL DISEASE CLEARANCES

In the case of animals originating from the UK, sub-paragraphs II.2.1(a) (first indent), II.2.1(b), II.2.3(b), II.2.3(c) and II.2.5 may be certified on behalf of the Department provided written authority to do so has been obtained on form 618NDC from the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle or the issuing office of DAERA in Northern Ireland.

OVs should delete all of sub-paragraphs II.2.1(a) (i) and II.2.1(a) (ii) for animals originating from the UK.

In the case of animals not originating from the UK, please refer to paragraph 12 below.

12. ORIGIN OF ANIMALS FROM WHICH THE EXPORTED MEAT IS DERIVED

Sub-paragraph II.2.2 refers. Meat and meat products exported to the RNM may be derived from animals born and reared in the UK and/or animals legally imported into the UK from other countries. In the latter case, the imported animals must meet the health attestations

described in the certificate **and** the requirement that, at the date of import into the UK, the country of origin was authorised to export this fresh meat to the Republic of North Macedonia.

In the case of animals originating from the UK, OVs may certify this paragraph on the basis of their personal knowledge of purchasing and operational patterns of the food business operator (FBO) and exporter. OVs may also wish to obtain written declarations from the FBO and/or exporter confirming that the residency conditions of this paragraph have been met.

In the case of non-UK animals, OVs must carry out appropriate checks to ensure the following requirements have been met:

- the animals were legally imported
- the animals have been resident in the UK for at least three months before slaughter
- the animals meet the disease declarations contained in sub-paragraphs II.2.3 with regard to any outbreak of foot and mouth disease, rinderpest, African swine fever, classical swine fever and swine vesicular disease in the country or region of origin
- the country or region of origin was authorised to export fresh meat to the Republic of North Macedonia.

It is likely that carrying out certain of these eligibility checks will not be a straightforward matter. Official Veterinarians are advised not to certify these conditions unless they are in full possession of all the relevant details and are confident to do so.

As these checks may take some time, the OV is advised to check that the plants involved have collected information on this point before the planned export so that necessary documentation and assurances can be provided at the time that the export is planned.

Further advice may be obtained from the APHA Centre for International Trade at Carlisle or, in the case of Northern Ireland, DAERA, Dundonald House, Belfast.

13. VACCINATION OF ANIMALS AGAINST NOTIFIABLE DISEASES

Sub-paragraph II.2.3(a) refers. In the case of meat derived from animals originating from the United Kingdom, this paragraph may be certified on the basis that vaccination of animals against the diseases mentioned in sub-paragraph II.2.1 of the certificate is not permitted in the United Kingdom.

14. PROHIBITION ON FEEDING OF CATERING WASTE

Sub-paragraph II.2.3(d) refers. The feeding of catering waste to domestic pigs in the UK is prohibited by Article 4 of The Animal By-Products (Enforcement) Regulations 2013 and by equivalent legislation in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

For animals originating from the UK, the remainder of the paragraph may be certified on the basis that they originate from holdings that are registered with the appropriate competent authority.

In the case of animals originating from outside the UK, the OV should carry out appropriate checks to ensure that this paragraph may be certified.

15. CONTACT WITH WILD CLOVEN HOOFED ANIMALS SINCE BIRTH

Sub-paragraph II.2.4(a) refers. Even in the case of meat derived from pigs on UK holdings, absence of contact of animals with wild cloven hoofed animals since birth is not a straightforward matter to certify.

In the case of pigs produced exclusively in indoor units with good biosecurity measures in place to prevent entry of wild deer and feral wild boar, OV's may be confident to certify this paragraph on the basis of personal knowledge of the units or on the basis of support documentation from veterinarians supervising them who are in a position to provide the necessary assurances.

However in the case of pigs born on outdoor units, the provision of such assurances may be difficult, if not impossible, where there are known local populations of wild deer and feral wild boar.

OVs should exercise great care in certifying this paragraph and are advised only to do so if they are fully confident in their own knowledge, or that of the supervising veterinarian, that this statement can be verified to the best of their knowledge and belief. However, if the third option for Trichinella (paragraph II.1.3 refers) is certifiable and evidence available/produced that the pigs have been kept in controlled housing/compartments since birth, then there is no need to make further inquiries in this regard to satisfy due diligence.

16. TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS TO THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE

Sub-paragraph II.2.4(b) may be certified on the basis of the certifying OV's knowledge of the operational conditions as regards transport from the farms of origin in the United Kingdom and compliance with relevant livestock movement legislation.

17. 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#centre-for-international-trade-carlisle>

or, in the case of export from Northern Ireland, from the DAERA Trade Administration Team for meat and dairy exports by e-mail at: vs.implementation@daera-ni.gov.uk or by telephone 028 77442 060.