



Plant Health – international trade and controlled consignments, 2018-2022

These statistics present an analysis of international trade in plants and plant commodities¹ (including live plants, fruit, vegetables and cereals) – covering both the financial value and the physical scale (mass) of this trade. The release also presents an analysis of the notifications of controlled commodities – i.e., where imports are declared to plant health authorities in order for checks to be undertaken to ensure that traded goods meet required standards. Data cover the period 2018 to 2022 (Forestry Commission data cover 2018/19-2022/23). Geographical coverage is specified at the start of each section.

Key findings



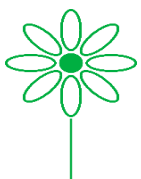
The overall value of trade in plants and plant commodities increased over the period 2018-2022 as did overall net mass, but to a lesser extent. Such trends were not always linear due to the volatile nature of the trade, which can be affected by climate events, pest and disease and other factors.



Between 2018 and 2022 the value and net mass of exports of forestry material increased whilst the value and net mass of exports of plants and planting material decreased. These trends continued between 2021 and 2022 after changes to the collection of data covering exports to the EU.



In 2022, around 60% of the total value and 65% of the total net mass of trade in plants and plant commodities was derived from trade with the EU. The majority of EU trade was imports; accounting for around 87% of EU trade value and 74% of EU net mass.



In 2022, over 479,000 consignments were notified to the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI). This was an increase from over 146,000 in 2020 and over 246,000 in 2021 and was driven by the phasing in of plant health controls on imports from the EU in 2021 and 2022.

¹ Includes raw products and those that can be defined as 'simply processed'. Please see the glossary at the end of this document and the associated quality and methodology report for more information.



In 2022/23, over 3,400 consignments of controlled material were notified to the Forestry Commission, a decrease from over 4,500 in 2021/22.

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Introduction

Plants are environmentally, economically, and socially important, providing a vital contribution to our food and timber supply and to the rural economy. Plants also perform an essential ecosystem service in shaping the landscape and supporting biodiversity and they have been linked to improved health and wellbeing².

The globalisation of trade has facilitated an increase in the volume and diversity of plants and plant commodities which enter the UK. This trade generates economic value but also needs to be regulated (controlled) due to the risk of pest and disease³. Plant health legislation⁴ controls the import and movement of certain plants, trees, seeds, and organic matter - such as soil - and certain plant products, including fruit, potatoes, vegetables, cut flowers, timber, foliage, and grain.

The analysis below explores both the overall UK trade in plants and plant commodities, and also the trade in controlled plant health and forestry commodities which informs the inspections undertaken by the Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate (PHSI) and the Forestry Commission (FC)

² [NHS Forest Evidence](#)

³ [Plant biosecurity strategy for Great Britain \(2023 to 2028\)](#)

⁴ [Plant Health legislation for forestry](#) and [Plant health controls](#)

to prevent plant pests and diseases from entering England and Wales, and, for Forestry Commission, Scotland⁵.

Please note that the three datasets explored in this publication are not directly comparable. There are key differences in how each dataset is compiled and these are outlined further in the accompanying quality and methodology report.

Experimental Statistics

This statistical release is intended as a contribution to increase the wider understanding about trade in these commodities and about plant health. It is designed to provide stakeholders, internal and external to government, with information on the patterns of trade over time for a specific set of commodities. The primary aim is to facilitate discussion and aid decision making around biosecurity.

The release is not intended for the purpose of drawing inferences as to the effectiveness of plant health and forestry inspectorates.

New statistical releases are classified as experimental statistics in order to secure feedback from users – for example about the long-term need for the information (the user value) and the technical fitness for purpose (the quality). The 2023 publication will be the final release to retain the ‘experimental’ label. Future releases will be released as official statistics however feedback from users is continually welcome.

If you have any comments or feedback on this release – or other needs for formal statistics in the policy areas of trade and biosecurity - please contact: sam.grant@defra.gov.uk. Sam Grant, Plant Health Statistics, Horizon House, Deanery Rd, Bristol BS1 5TL.

Further information on experimental statistics can be accessed here: [GSS Guidance on Experimental Statistics](#)

Impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and the effect of EU exit on trade in plants and plant products

It is not currently possible to ascertain what the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and EU exit has been on trade in plants and plants products. This is because trade in plants and plant products is often volatile, due to climate and other factors, but also because changes are still ongoing, for example, changes to data systems and the full implementation of the [Border Target Operating Model](#).

The Office for National Statistics have published reports looking at the impacts of EU exit and the coronavirus on UK trade in goods which provides a high level picture of trade throughout 2020 and through 2021: [The impacts of EU exit and the coronavirus on UK trade in goods](#).

For plants and plant product which require regulatory control the impact of EU exit, particularly imports from the EU to GB, will be ongoing as the UK phases in its checking regime: [Imports of plants and plant products from the EU to GB](#)

⁵ Plant Health is devolved thus Scotland carries out its own plant health inspections.

Trade in plants and plant products

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) compiles statistics on commodities physically leaving and entering the UK, traded with both European Union (EU) Member States and non-EU countries. Non-EU trade is collected from customs declarations. Until 31 December 2020 EU trade data was collected via Intrastat which covered VAT-registered businesses whose annual value of arrivals and/or dispatches exceeded a given exemption threshold⁶.

For goods moving from 1 January 2021, statistics covering exports from Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) to the EU have been compiled directly from customs export declarations made according to the requirements of the Taxation (Cross Border Trade) Act. Intrastat survey returns, however, continue to be collected for goods exported from Northern Ireland to the EU, under the terms of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Both the GB to EU customs export declaration data and Northern Ireland (NI) Intrastat export (dispatch) data are incorporated into the overall UK to EU export dataset. As a result of the changes and differences outlined above, there was a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021.

During 2021 the Intrastat survey continued to operate for all UK (GB and NI) imports from the EU, to mitigate the effects of staging customs controls, and to comply with the Northern Ireland Protocol. From 1 January 2022 imports into Great Britain (GB) (England, Scotland and Wales) from the EU are no longer covered by Intrastat. Customs declarations are used for imports of goods into GB from the EU and this information is used in combination with Intrastat data on imports into Northern Ireland from the EU, to create the overall UK's imports dataset.

Throughout 2021, the introduction of temporary Staged Customs Controls (SCC) allowed GB importers of non-controlled EU goods the opportunity to defer submission of the full customs declaration for up to 175 days after the movement of goods. This had a reducing effect on the number of received customs declarations for EU imports in 2021, most notably in the first few months of the year. It is not possible to distinguish which customs declarations are associated with SCC and therefore remove or adjust the trade statistics.

The Office for National Statistics papers investigating the impact of changes to HM Revenue and Customs data collection:

[Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#)
[Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: further update on Staged Customs Controls](#)

Although not collected for plant health purposes the HMRC data does allow us to examine the patterns of trade for a sub-section of commodities, i.e., raw and simply processed plants and plant commodities, and to group these into categories. The categories covered in this release are:

- Plants and planting material. This category includes bulbs, plants for planting, forest tree seed and cut flowers.
- Food and crops. This category includes fruit, vegetables, cereals, nuts, herbs, and spices.
- Forestry: This category includes timber (unprocessed or simply processed: sliced, planed, or chipped), packing cases, casks, and barrels.

⁶ Information on methodology and quality for HMRC overseas trade data can be accessed at: [Overseas trade in goods statistics methodology and quality report](#)

Table 1: Value of trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, £ million

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(b)(r)	2022(b)(p)		
Imports							
Plants and planting material	1,003	1,005	1,012	1,164	1,643	640	63.8
Food and crops	9,742	9,987	10,572	10,194	12,100	2,358	24.2
Forestry	2,070	1,986	1,945	3,152	3,245	1,175	56.8
Total	12,815	12,979	13,529	14,510	16,987	4,173	32.6
Exports							
Plants and planting material	123	119	96	72	64	-58	-47.5
Food and crops	1,065	1,342	1,272	869	1,372	308	28.9
Forestry	186	189	175	348	392	206	110.5
Total	1,374	1,651	1,543	1,289	1,829	456	33.2
All trade							
Plants and planting material	1,126	1,124	1,108	1,236	1,708	582	51.7
Food and crops	10,806	11,330	11,844	11,063	13,472	2,666	24.7
Forestry	2,256	2,176	2,120	3,500	3,637	1,381	61.2
Total	14,188	14,629	15,072	15,799	18,816	4,628	32.6

(1) data are calendar year

(2) more information on sectors can be found in the glossary at the end of this document.

(b) indicates a break in the time series. In 2021 the break related to changes in the recording of exports, in 2022 the break related to changes in the recording of imports.

(r) indicates revised data

(p) indicates provisional data

Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 1 shows the total value of trade in plants and plant commodities, by sector, between 2018 and 2022.

- The total value of trade in plants and plant commodities has shown year-on-year increases between 2018 to 2022. Only exports of plants and planting material decreased in value (-47.5%), a trend seen across the time period for this sector.
- The value of forestry imports and exports remained high in 2022 following increases in value between 2020 and 2021. The export value of these commodities more than doubled from £186m in 2018 to £392m in 2022.
- Proportionally the increases in the value of trade in plants and planting material and in forestry were considerably higher than the increase in the value of food and crops however food and crops remained the largest sector, accounting for 71.6 per cent of all trade value in 2022, a decrease from 76.2 per cent in 2018.

Table 2: Net mass of trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, '000 tonnes

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(b)(r)	2022(b)(p)		
Imports							
Plants and planting material	358	361	310	356	488	131	36.5
Food and crops	13,077	12,729	13,974	13,166	13,364	287	2.2
Forestry	4,521	4,669	4,642	5,121	4,595	74	1.6
Total	17,955	17,759	18,926	18,643	18,447	492	2.7
Exports							
Plants and planting material	48	50	34	25	22	-26	-54.1
Food and crops	2,487	4,095	3,426	1,960	3,134	647	26.0
Forestry	761	684	484	873	1,074	313	41.2
Total	3,296	4,828	3,944	2,858	4,231	935	28.4
All trade							
Plants and planting material	406	411	344	380	510	105	25.8
Food and crops	15,564	16,824	17,400	15,126	16,498	934	6.0
Forestry	5,281	5,353	5,126	5,994	5,669	388	7.3
Total	21,251	22,587	22,869	21,501	22,677	1,426	6.7

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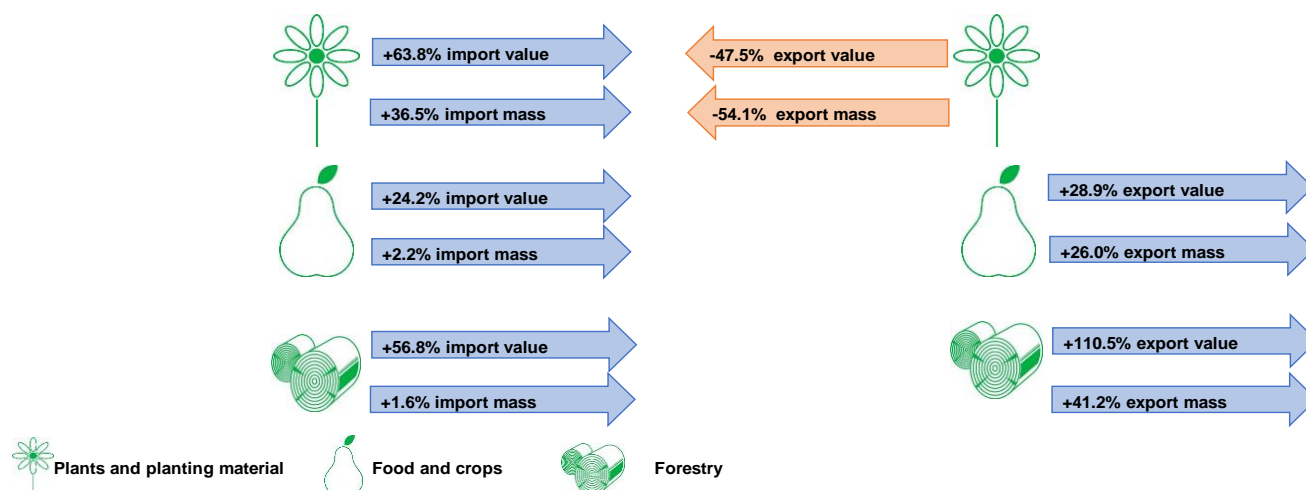
Table 2 shows the total net mass of trade in plants and plant commodities, by sector, between 2018 and 2022.

- The total net mass of imports only increased slightly (2.7%) between 2018 and 2022 however the net mass of imports of plants and planting material, the smallest sector, increased by 36.5%.
- As with the value of trade in plants and plant products (table 1), only exports of plants and planting material experienced a decrease in net mass over the time period (-54.1%). The net mass of plant and planting material exports in 2022 was less than half the net mass exported in 2018.
- With the exception of plants and planting material, increases in export net mass were proportionally higher than for imports however export net mass as a whole only accounted for 18.7% of total net mass.

Figure 1: Changes in trade of plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022

Change in imports of plants and plant products, 2018-2022

Change in exports of plants and plant products, 2018-2022



Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 3: Value of UK and EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, £ million

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(b)(r)	2022(b)(p)		
EU Imports							
Plants and planting material	811	819	849	884	1,334	523	64.5
Food and crops	4,670	4,796	5,107	4,453	5,655	985	21.1
Forestry	1,628	1,551	1,546	2,579	2,763	1,136	69.8
Total	7,108	7,166	7,503	7,916	9,752	2,644	37.2
EU Exports							
Plants and planting material	96	89	77	54	46	-50	-52.3
Food and crops	888	1,097	994	666	1,131	243	27.3
Forestry	147	145	140	311	344	196	133.3
Total	1,132	1,331	1,212	1,030	1,521	389	34.3
All EU trade							
Plants and planting material	907	908	926	937	1,380	473	52.1
Food and crops	5,558	5,893	6,101	5,119	6,786	1,228	22.1
Forestry	1,775	1,697	1,687	2,890	3,107	1,332	75.0
Total	8,240	8,497	8,714	8,946	11,273	3,033	36.8

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(2) more information on sectors can be found in the glossary at the end of this document.

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Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 3 shows the value of commodities that are imported into the UK from the EU and commodities that are exported from the UK to the EU, by sector.

- The total value of trade in plants and plant commodities between the UK and the EU stood at £11,273m in 2022 of which 86.5% was imports.

- The value of imports showed a year-on-year increase over the time period whilst the value of exports was more variable. Imports as a proportion of all trade reached their highest level of the time period in 2021 (88.5%).
- In 2021 and 2022, food and crops accounted for a lower proportion of the value of imports from the EU than in other years of the time period (56.3% - 58.0% compared to 65.7% - 68.1%).

Table 4: Net mass of UK and EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, '000 tonnes

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(b)(r)	2022(b)(p)		
EU Imports							
Plants and planting material	293	308	266	287	418	126	42.9
Food and crops	6,376	5,609	6,472	5,888	6,334	-42	-0.7
Forestry	3,988	4,138	4,060	4,415	4,246	258	6.5
Total	10,657	10,055	10,798	10,590	10,998	341	3.2
EU Exports							
Plants and planting material	41	42	30	21	20	-21	-52.2
Food and crops	2,164	3,437	2,584	1,631	2,777	613	28.3
Forestry	678	594	436	808	1,017	339	50.0
Total	2,883	4,073	3,050	2,460	3,813	931	32.3
All EU trade							
Plants and planting material	334	350	296	308	438	104	31.3
Food and crops	8,540	9,046	9,056	7,519	9,111	571	6.7
Forestry	4,666	4,732	4,496	5,224	5,263	597	12.8
Total	13,540	14,128	13,848	13,050	14,812	1,272	9.4

(1) data are calendar year

(2) more information on sectors can be found in the glossary at the end of this document.

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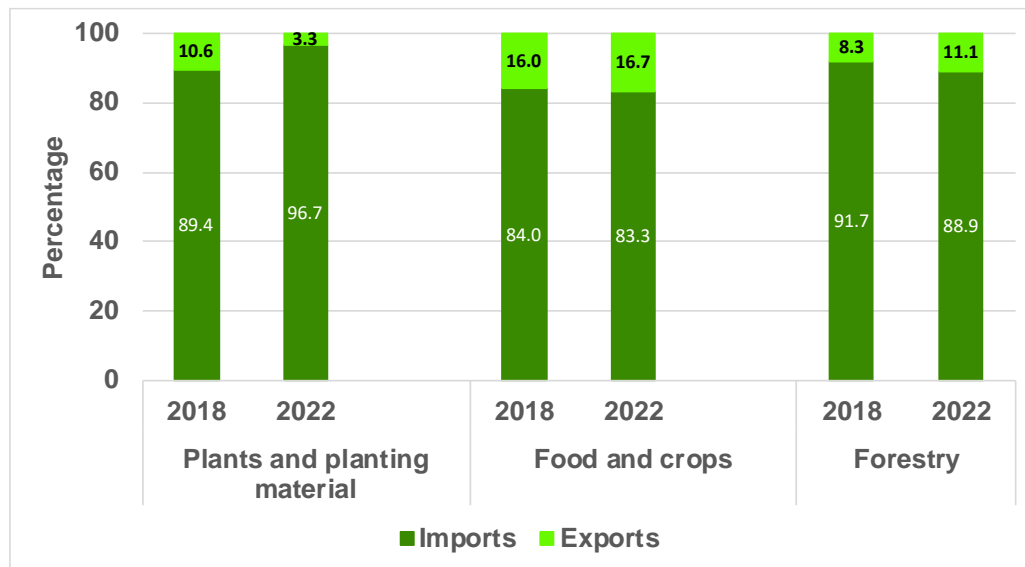
Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 4 shows the net mass of commodities that are imported into the UK from the EU and commodities that are exported from the UK to the EU, by sector.

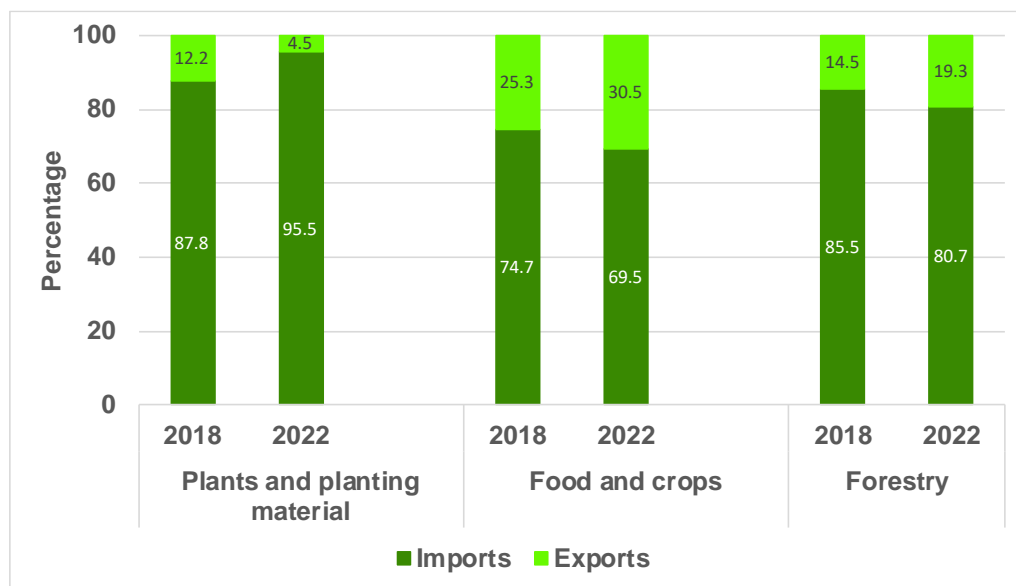
- Overall, the net mass of trade in plants and plant commodities between the UK and the EU was 14,812 thousand tonnes in 2022.
- At the sector level, the net mass of exports of plants and planting material broadly followed the pattern seen for value. The export net mass of forestry commodities increased but by a much smaller proportion than the value (50.0% compared to 133.3% as shown in table 3).
- The net mass of food and crops accounted for 61.5% of total net mass in 2022 compared to 63.1% in 2018.

Chart 1a and 1b: Distribution of UK and EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022

1a. Value



1b. Net mass



Data are calendar year.

2022 figures are provisional.

2022 represents a break in the time series due to changes in the recording of imports.

Source: [Overseas Trade Data, HMRC](#)

- Imports accounted for between 83.3% and 96.7% of trade value and between 74.7% and 95.5% of the net mass of UK-EU trade in each sector during the period 2018 to 2022.
- The proportion of EU trade value that was imports was highest for the sector plants and planting material, increasing from 89.4% in 2018 to 96.7% in 2022. The corresponding import net mass for this sector also increased, from 87.8% in 2018 to 95.5% in 2022.
- The proportion of EU trade value that was imports was lowest for the food and crops sector at 83.3% in 2022 compared to 84.0% in 2018. The proportion of net mass that was imports for this sector decreased from 74.7% in 2018 to 69.5% in 2022.

Table 5: Value of UK and non-EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, £ million

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(r)	2022(p)		
Non-EU Imports							
Plants and planting material	193	186	163	281	309	117	60.7
Food and crops	5,072	5,191	5,465	5,741	6,445	1,373	27.1
Forestry	442	435	399	573	481	39	8.8
Total	5,706	5,812	6,027	6,594	7,235	1,529	26.8
Non-EU Exports							
Plants and planting material	27	30	19	18	18	-8	-30.3
Food and crops	176	246	277	203	241	65	37.1
Forestry	39	44	35	38	48	9	24.3
Total	241	320	331	259	308	67	27.6
All non-EU trade							
Plants and planting material	219	216	182	299	328	109	49.7
Food and crops	5,248	5,437	5,743	5,944	6,686	1,438	27.4
Forestry	481	479	434	610	529	48	10.1
Total	5,948	6,132	6,358	6,853	7,543	1,595	26.8

(1) Data are calendar year

(2) more information on sectors can be found in the glossary at the end of this document.

(r) indicates revised data

(p) indicates provisional data

Numbers may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 5 shows the value of commodities that are imported into the UK from countries outside of the EU and commodities that are exported from the UK to these non-EU countries, by sector.

- The total value of non-EU trade increased by 26.8% between 2018 and 2022 with import value increasing by the same amount and export value increasing by 27.6%. Proportionally, the largest increase in total value was in the smallest sector of plants and planting material (49.7%).
- Between 2018 and 2022 the value of non-EU imports of plants and planting material increased by 60.7% whilst the export value decreased by 30.3%. Exports of plants and planting material was the only trade flow to see a decrease in value over the time period. The largest increases in the value of imports in this sector were seen in 2021 and 2022.
- The value of non-EU imports of food and crops increased year-on-year over the time period and accounted for 89.1% of all non-EU import value in 2022.

Table 6: Net mass of UK and non-EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018 to 2022, '000 tonnes

Sector ²	Year ¹					Value change 2018 to 2022	Percentage change 2018 to 2022
	2018	2019	2020	2021(r)	2022(p)		
Non-EU Imports							
Plants and planting material	65	53	44	69	70	5	7.5
Food and crops	6,700	7,120	7,501	7,278	7,030	330	4.9
Forestry	532	531	582	706	348	-184	-34.6
Total	7,298	7,703	8,128	8,053	7,448	150	2.1
Non-EU Exports							
Plants and planting material	7	8	3	3	2	-5	-65.5
Food and crops	323	658	842	329	357	34	10.6
Forestry	83	89	49	65	57	-25	-30.6
Total	413	755	894	397	417	4	1.0
All non-EU trade							
Plants and planting material	72	61	47	72	72	0	0.4
Food and crops	7,024	7,778	8,343	7,607	7,387	364	5.2
Forestry	615	620	631	771	406	-209	-34.0
Total	7,711	8,459	9,021	8,450	7,866	155	2.0

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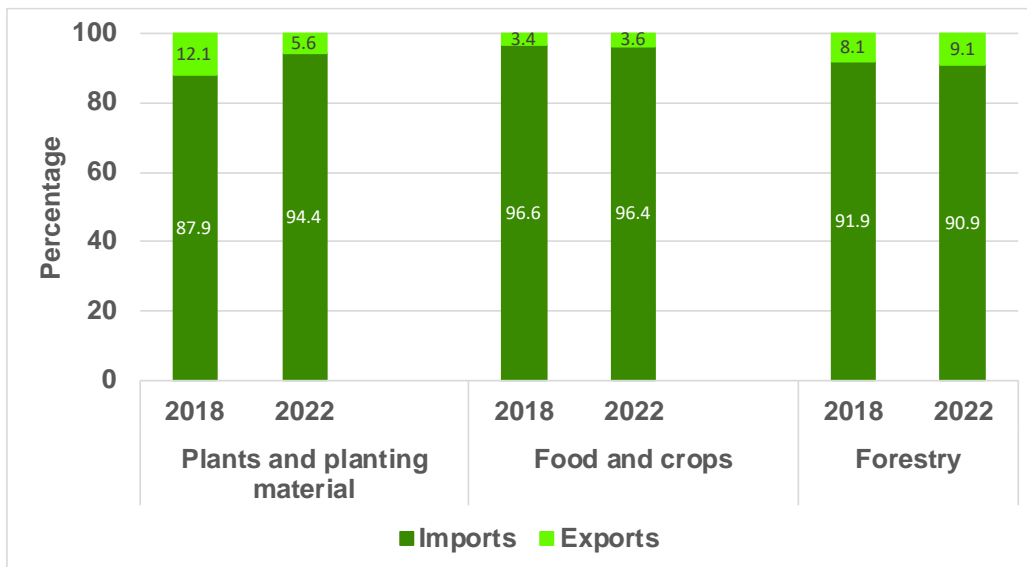
Source: Overseas Trade Data, HMRC

Table 6 shows the net mass of commodities that are imported into the UK from countries outside of the EU and commodities that are exported from the UK to these non-EU countries, by sector.

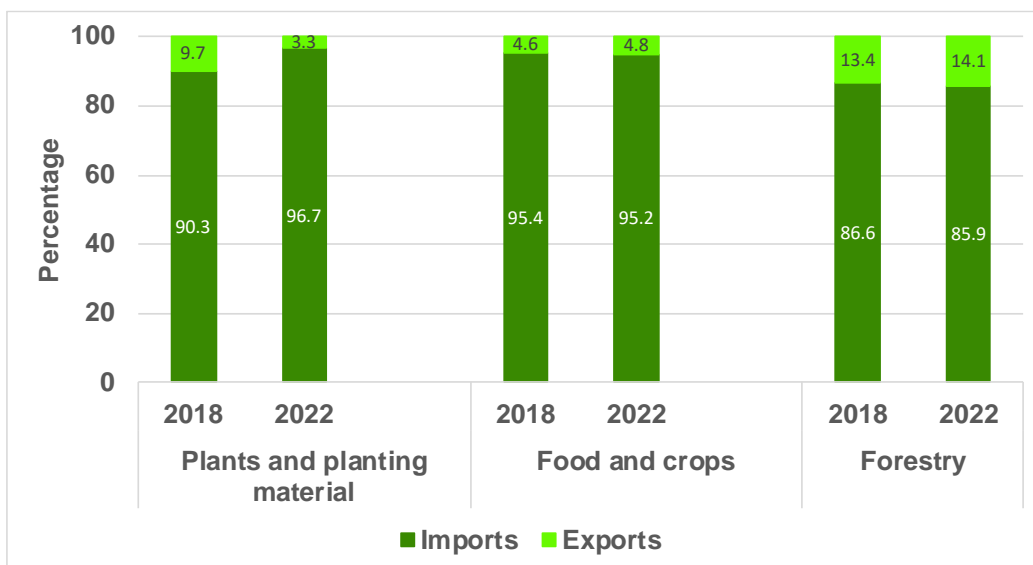
- Overall, the net mass of the non-EU trade in plants and plant commodities was fairly stable across the period 2018 to 2022 however there was variability at the sector and trade flow level.
- The net mass of non-EU exports of plants and planting material experienced the largest percentage change with a decrease of 65.5% over the time period. For the last three years the export net mass in this sector has remained at very low levels.
- The net mass of both non-EU imports and exports of forestry commodities experienced decreases of 34.6% and 30.6% respectively between 2018 and 2022. The fall in overall net mass for this sector after 4 years of consecutive increases saw 2022 trade at the lowest level of the time period.

Chart 2a and 2b: Distribution of UK and non-EU trade in plants and plant commodities, 2018-2022

2a. Value



2b. Net mass



Data are calendar year.

2022 figures are provisional.

Source: [Overseas Trade Data, HMRC](#)

- Imports accounted for the majority of trade between the UK and countries outside of the EU in terms of both value and net mass.
- Imports accounted for between 87.9% and 96.6% of all non-EU trade value in each sector in 2018. In 2022 imports as a proportion of the trade value in a sector had increased for plants and planting material (6.5 percentage points) but decreased slightly for forestry (-1.0 percentage points) and remained stable for food and crops (-0.3 percentage points).
- For net mass the proportion of non-EU trade that was imports increased by 6.4 percentage points between 2018 and 2022 for plants and planting material however forestry and food and crops remained fairly stable (-0.7% and -0.2% respectively).

Figure 2: Changes in trade of plants and plant commodities between 2018 and 2022, by broad region of trade



Source: *Overseas Trade Data, HMRC*

Controlled Commodities

The Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate (PHSI) implements and enforces plant health policy in England and in Wales (on behalf of the Welsh Government). The Forestry Commission (FC) implements and enforces plant health policy in England and Scotland, and in Wales via Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

PHSI and FC carry out inspections of controlled plant materials, including plants for planting. The controls of such materials differ according to the species - and what quarantine organisms they may carry – but may include phytosanitary certificates, plant passports and/or physical inspection. More detailed information covering the activities of the inspection services is available in the Multi Annual National Control Plan reports⁷.

Under EU legislation plants, fruit, vegetables, and plant material from outside the EU fall into 3 categories: ‘unrestricted’, ‘controlled’, and ‘prohibited’ material. Plant passports facilitate the movement of controlled commodities within the EU area whilst inspections of relevant businesses are carried out ‘in field’, generally between 2 and 4 times per year. Commodities imported from outside of the EU area need to be declared on entry to the EU and can then move freely across the EU area. In December 2019 the EU introduced new legislation pertaining to plants and plant products. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 and its Annexes replaced the Annexes of Directive 2000/29/EC⁸. Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/2072 covers more plants and plant commodities than the previous legislation.

Now that the UK has left the EU new legislation is in place⁹ and, following the end of the transition period (31 December 2020), there are new processes for importing plants and plant products, including wood and wood products, from the EU. These are detailed in the [Guidance on importing and exporting plants and plant products from 1 January 2021](#).

⁷ [Food Standards Agency - Multi-Annual National Control Plan](#)

⁸ [New Plant Health rules](#)

⁹ [The Plant Health \(Phytosanitary Conditions\) \(Amendment\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#)

Under the new UK legislation plants, fruit, vegetables, cut flowers, soil and other regulated objects (for example, machinery) fall into 5 categories of phytosanitary control:

1. 'Prohibited' - Can only bring into Great Britain if a scientific research license or derogation is obtained.
2. 'Prohibited (pending risk assessment)' – material you can only bring into Great Britain if risk assessed by Defra. (Exclusions apply).
3. 'Regulated and notifiable' – material you can only bring into Great Britain if accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate and advanced notification of landing.
4. 'Regulated' – material you can only bring into Great Britain if accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. After applicants complete a customs entry, a small number of these consignments may need advanced notification on CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight).
5. 'Unregulated' – material you can bring into Great Britain without a phytosanitary certificate or advanced notification.

A small number of commodities have been deregulated and no longer require a phytosanitary certificate¹⁰.

Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) has adopted a phased approach to plant health controls for plants and plant products imported from the European Union (EU). This phased approach started in January 2021 and is proposed to be completed in 2024¹¹.

Since 1 January 2021, high-priority plants and plant products have required pre-notification and a phytosanitary certificate (PC) when being imported from the EU, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland. These include all plants for planting, ware potatoes, some seed for sowing and other plant or forest reproductive material, some wood and wood products and used agricultural or forestry machinery.

Since 1 January 2022, notification of import has been required for some other regulated and notifiable plants and plant products imported from the EU (except the Republic of Ireland) including growing medium attached to plants, root and tubercle vegetables, some leafy vegetables, some fresh produce (fruit and vegetables), some seeds (in addition to those on the high-priority list) and some cut flowers.

The analysis below focuses on consignments of commodities classed as controlled and arriving at points of entry in Great Britain (England and Wales for PHSI, England, Wales, and Scotland for FC). These consignments are subject to inspection activities ranging from document checks to physical inspections. The level of checks required for different types of commodities varies but the highest risk commodities are subject to full checks (100%). In addition, emergency measures¹² can be introduced which may restrict trade due to changes in import requirements.

Controlled commodities are a subset of the trade analysis shown above (which also includes unrestricted commodities); however, data are not comparable to that provided by HMRC due to differences in measurement units, geographies, and purpose. More information can be found in the accompanying quality and methodology report.

¹⁰ [Unregulated plants and plant products, Defra](#)

¹¹ [Imports from the EU, Defra](#)

¹² [EU emergency control measures by species](#)

Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate

The Plant Health and Seed Inspectorate (PHSI) is part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and implements and enforces plant health policy in England, and in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. PHSI carry out inspections of plants, seeds, bulbs, cut flowers, planting materials, fruits, vegetables and some used agricultural machinery.

It is important to note that changes in the number of consignments may be influenced by changes in trade patterns as well as by legislative changes. Factors which can contribute to changes in trade patterns include climate events, changes in market demand, social unrest or change, pest outbreaks etc. Controls may be applied to any number of countries where there is a pest risk but additionally countries may apply self-prohibition if they are aware of a pest issue in their country. Where self-prohibition is applied there are no formal reporting routes and often information cannot be confirmed.

Some key bans thought to have affected imports to the UK were:

- Ghana: Capsicum L., Lagenaria Ser., Luffa Mill., Momordica L. and Solanum L., other than *S. lycopersicum* L. were banned from 13/10/2017 until 31/12/2017.
- Trade in fresh curry leaves was stopped from 26/04/2014 due to countries outside of the EU being unable to meet EU requirements. Israel now fulfils the necessary requirements.

New controls being introduced may also impact trade patterns. For example:

- Decision 2014/78 required all imports of Capsicum to become regulated as from 1 Oct 2014. The decision also included the application of controls on some other commodities.
- EU Directive 2017/1279 required tomatoes originating from all third countries (outside the EU but including Canary Islands, Ceuta, Melilla and the French Overseas Departments) and pomegranates originating from countries of the African continent, Cape Verde, Saint Helena, Madagascar, La Reunion, Mauritius and Israel to be imported with a phytosanitary certificate.
- Decision 2019/523 added controls on fruits of Kiwi, Papaya, Strawberry, Avocado, Rubus, Grapes and used agricultural machinery.
- Decision 2019/1598 added controls on maize.
- Commission Implementing Regulation 2019/2072 implemented on 14 December 2019 as part of Smarter Rules for Safer Food package which increased the scope of regulated material to include all living plant material other than Fruits of *Ananas comosus*, *Cocos nucifera*, *Durio zibethinus*, *Musa* and *Phoenix dactylifera*.
- Following the departure from the EU, the Plant Health (Phytosanitary Conditions) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 implemented on 1 January 2021 amended 2019/2072 increasing the range of exempt material to include fruits of *Actinidia*, *Fortunella*, *Poncirus*, *Diospyros*, *Gossypium*, *Mangifera*, *Passiflora*, *Psidium* and fruit and leaves of *Citrus* and *Leaves of Murraya*.
- There has been self-imposed bans from Thailand, Bangladesh and Vietnam. These can be very limited (for example to one exporter) or more general.

Table 7: Number of controlled consignments, by commodity type, England and Wales, 2018 to 2022

Year ¹	Commodity type ²			Total
	Plants and planting material	Fruit and vegetables	Other commodities	
2018	27,948	78,758	2,474	109,180
2019	25,777	83,785	3,078	112,640
2020(b)	22,043	120,937	3,131	146,111
2021(b)	124,946	117,960	3,496	246,402
2022(b)	191,483	281,632	6,198	479,313
Value change 2018-2022	163,535	202,874	3,724	370,133
Percentage change 2018-2022	585.1	257.6	150.5	339.0

1. Data are calendar year.

2. See glossary for information on commodity types.

b. 2020 - EU plant health regulation and official controls regulation were implemented in the EU and the UK on 14th December 2019.

b. 2021 - Following the UK's exit from the EU, GB specific legislation has been introduced and there has been a phasing in of plant health controls. From January 2021 all regulated and notifiable high priority plants and plant products imported from the EU have been subject to plant health controls. Additionally, some commodities have been deregulated.

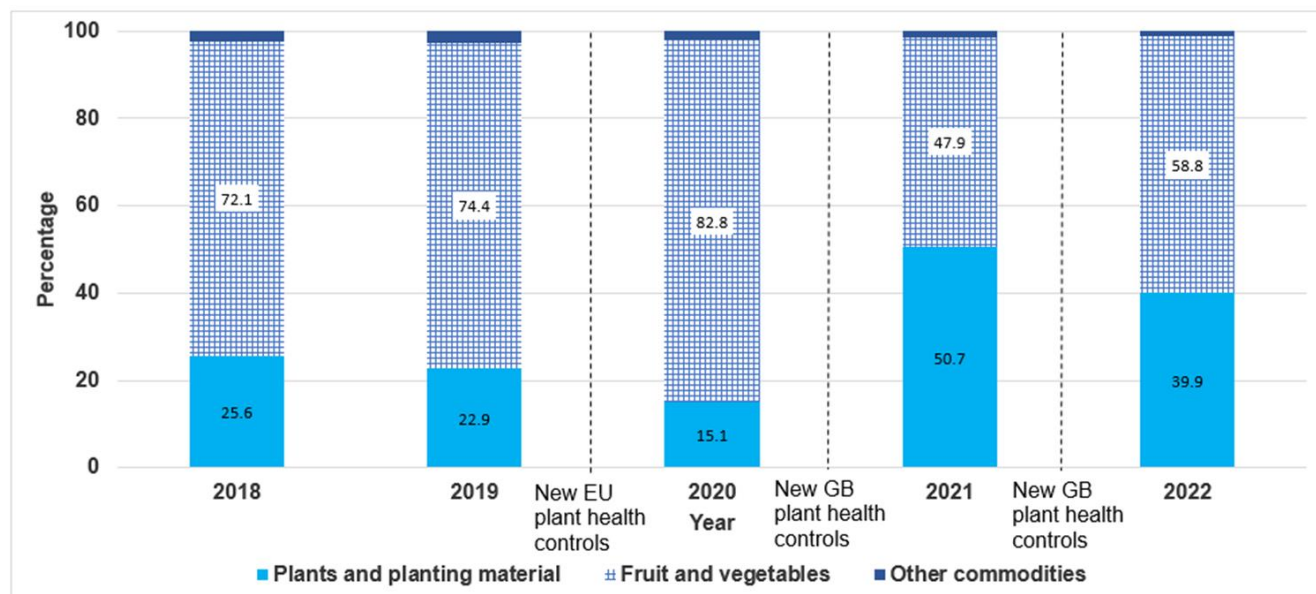
b. 2022 From January 2022 notification of import has been required for some other regulated and notifiable plants and plant products imported from the EU. More information is provided in the Controlled Commodities section above.

Source: Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate

Table 7 shows the number of controlled consignments notified to PHSI, by commodity type.

- The majority of the increase in notified consignments has followed key legislative changes; in 2020 following the implementation of new EU plant health regulations and in 2021 and 2022 following the end of the transition period of the UK exiting the EU and the phasing in of plant health controls.
- Since 1 January 2021 high priority plants and plant products imported from the EU have had to be notified to the PHSI. The impact of this can be seen in the increase of controlled consignments in the plants and planting material category where notifications were over 5 times higher in 2021 than in 2020 (124,946 compared to 22,043) and further increased in 2022 (191,483).
- Following the introduction of the requirement to notify some additional plants and plant products increases were seen in notifications of fruit and vegetables (281,632 in 2022 compared to 117,960 in 2021) and other commodities (6,198 in 2022 compared to 3,496 in 2021).

Chart 3: Controlled consignments by commodity type, England and Wales, 2018 to 2022



Data are calendar year.

See glossary for information on commodity types.

Source: Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate

- Between 2018 and 2020, plants and planting material accounted for between 15.1% and 25.6% of all notified commodities. This increased to 50.7% in 2021 following the introduction of GB regulations and the phasing in of controls which meant plants and planting material imported from the EU needed to be notified.
- In 2022 plants and planting material accounted for 39.9% of all notified consignments. This decrease from 50.7% in 2021 reflected the expansion of the requirement to notify imports from the EU to include some plant products from 1 January 2022.

Table 8: Number of controlled consignments, by region of origin, England and Wales, 2018 to 2022

Year ¹	Region ²						Total
	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe ³	Oceania	Other ⁴	
2018	59,315	22,980	23,520	1,076	2,289	-	109,180
2019	60,099	26,241	22,990	1,279	2,031	-	112,640
2020(b)	77,825	32,592	32,581	1,186	1,927	-	146,111
2021(b)	88,423	29,453	36,910	90,133	1,473	10	246,402
2022(b)	90,184	31,495	29,101	327,433	1,098	2	479,313
Value change 2018-2022	30,869	8,515	5,581	326,357	-1,191	z	370,133
Percentage change 2018-2022	52.0	37.1	23.7	30,330.6	-52.0	z	339.0

1. Data are calendar year.

2. Table uses [UNSD geographies](#).

3. Prior to 2021, Europe only included non-EU countries.

4. Includes records where the origin is unknown or the entry is ambiguous.

b. 2020 - EU plant health regulation and official controls regulation were implemented in the EU and the UK on 14th December 2019.

b. 2021 -Following the UK's exit from the EU, GB specific legislation has been introduced and there has been a phasing in of plant health controls. From January 2021 all regulated and notifiable high priority plants and plant products

imported from the EU have been subject to plant health controls. Additionally, some commodities have been deregulated.

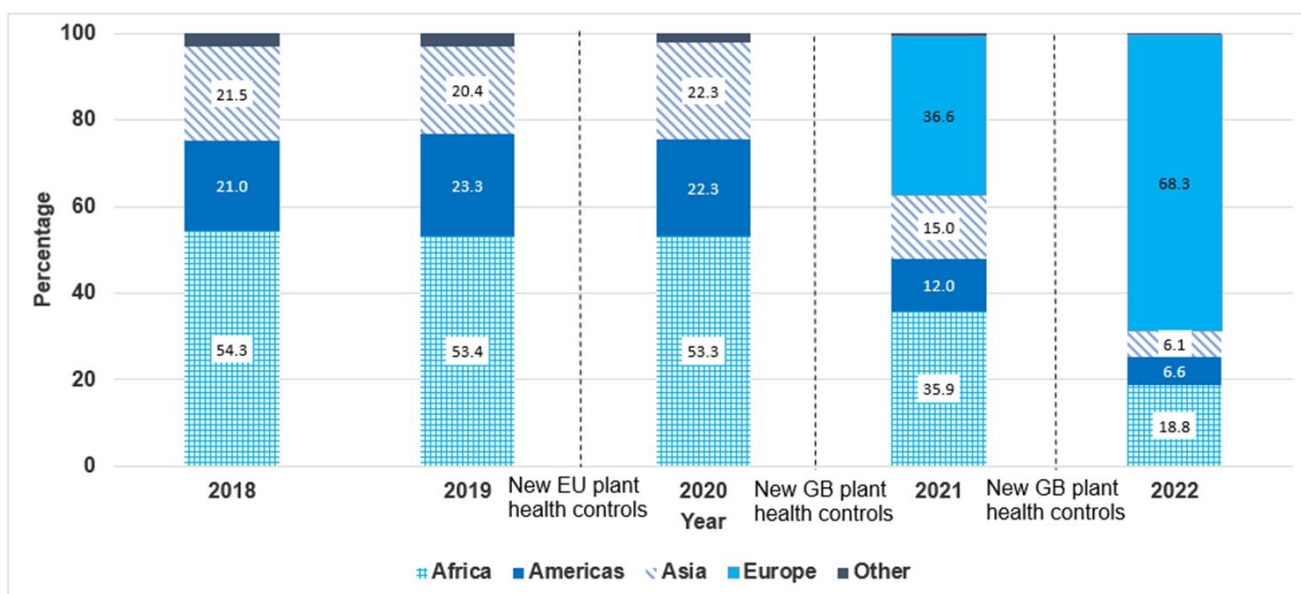
b. 2022 - From January 2022 notification of import has been required for some other regulated and notifiable plants and plant products imported from the EU. More information is provided in the Controlled Commodities section above.

Source: Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate.

Table 8 shows the number of controlled consignments notified to PHSI, by region of origin.

- The total number of notified controlled consignments stood at 479,313 in 2022 which reflected the increased requirement for imports from Europe to be notified. Controlled consignments from Europe increased to 90,133 in 2021 and 327,433 in 2022 compared to between 1,076 and 1,279 prior to 2021.
- Oceania was the only region to show a decrease in controlled consignments over the time period, from 2,289 consignments in 2018 to 1,098 consignments in 2022.
- Controlled consignments from Africa have shown a year-on-year increase, increasing by 52.0% since 2018.

Chart 4: Controlled consignments by region of origin, 2018 to 2022



Data are calendar year.

Chart uses [UNSD geographies](#).

Source: Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate.

- Notified consignments from Europe accounted for 68.3% of all consignments in 2022 whilst those from Africa accounted for 18.8%. Prior to 2021 consignments from non-EU European countries were captured in the 'other' category due to low numbers.
- Notified consignments from Europe have increased as GB plant health import regulations have been phased in. In 2022, these consignments accounted for over two thirds of all notifications of controlled imports of plants and plant products.

Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission (FC) are responsible for inspections of timber, including sawn timber, wood shavings, wood chips, sawdust, controlled firewood¹³ and prefabricated buildings made of

¹³ [Guidance on importing firewood](#)

wood being imported to England, Scotland and Wales. The Forestry Commission are also responsible for inspections of wood packaging¹⁴ however this trade is not covered by this release.

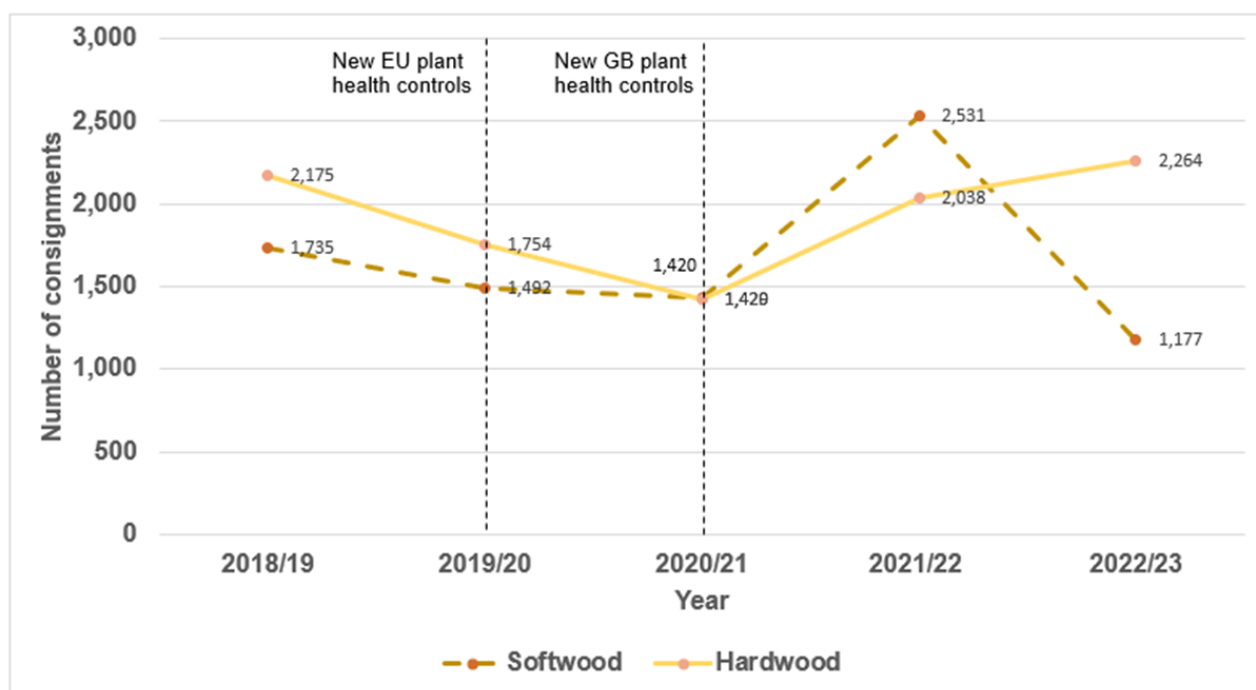
It is important to note that changes in the number of consignments may be influenced by changes in trade patterns as well as by legislative changes. Factors which can contribute to changes in trade patterns include climate events, changes in market demand, social unrest or change, pest outbreaks etc. Controls may be applied to any number of countries where there is a pest risk but additionally countries may apply self-prohibition if they are aware of a pest issue in their country.

The war in Ukraine was having a major impact on bulk imports of sawn conifer timber from Russia. In the last few months of the 2021/22 financial year these imports were replaced by uncontrolled imports from the EU however in 2022/23 substitution for Russian sawn timber has been less of an issue.

An additional group of commodities are included in the data from 2021/22 onwards. These are wood shavings, wood chips, sawdust and ‘other’ (mainly oak barrel imports) and the measurement unit is kilograms rather than cubic metres. These data have not been included in the charts below but are included in the tables.

Chart 5a and 5b: Number of controlled consignments by timber type, 2018/19 to 2022/23

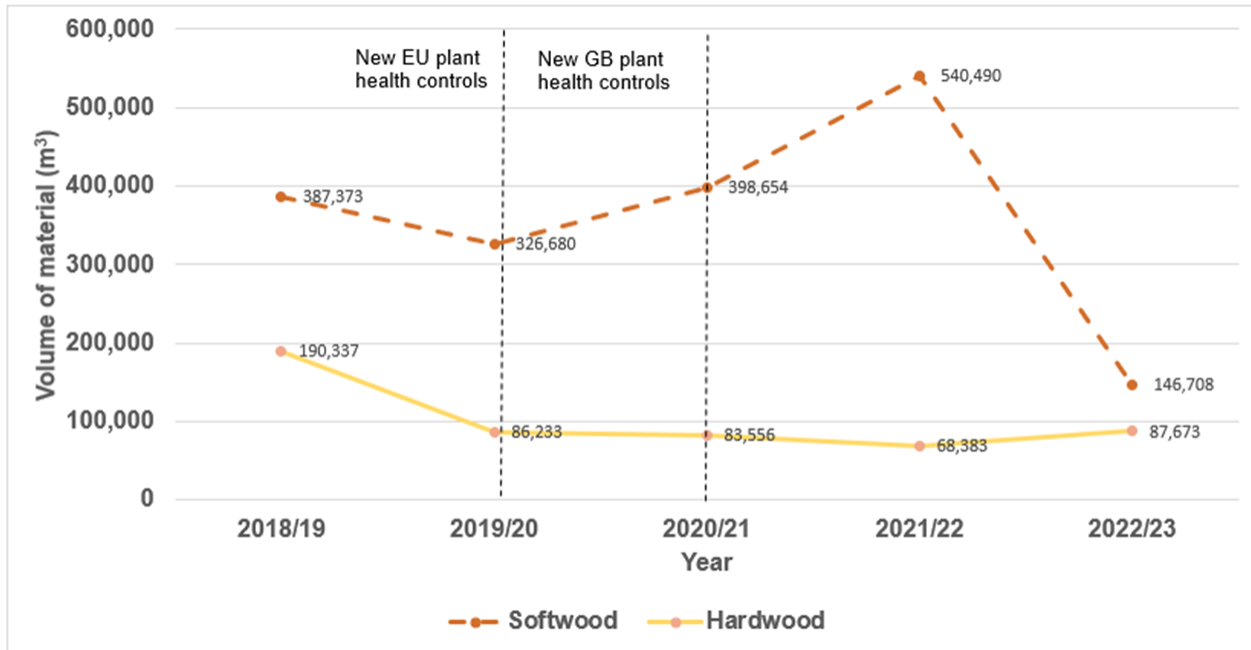
5a Number of consignments



Please note that chart 5b only contains volumes of commodities recorded in cubic metres. From 2021/22, import data also contained entries of new commodities which are recorded in kilograms. These new commodities' masses are included in the tables below but not in charts as only two data points are available.

¹⁴ [Guidance on importing or exporting wood packaging material](#)

5b. Volume of material



Data are financial year.
Source: Forestry Commission

- The number of controlled consignments of hardwood fluctuated over the time period but was at its highest level in 2022/23 when 2,264 consignments were notified. This continued an increase first seen in 2020/21 driven by the recovery of hardwood imports from outside the EU and the requirement for EU countries to notify consignments.
- The number of controlled consignments of softwood had also increased sharply following the introduction of the requirement to notify for EU countries however the number of controlled consignments notified in 2022/23 was at the lowest level of the time period (1,177). Like hardwood imports, the 2021/22 increase was driven by the new requirement for EU countries to notify imports of regulated commodities and by the recovery of softwood imports from some countries outside of the EU.
- The volume of material (m³) associated with softwood consignments decreased sharply between 2021/22 and 2022/23 and was considerably lower in 2022/2023 than in previous years, standing at 146,708m³ compared to 540,490m³ in 2021/22.

Table 9: Controlled consignments of softwood, by region of origin, 2018/19 to 2022/23¹

	Year ²					Value change 2018/19-2022/23	Percentage change 2018/19- 2022/23
	2018/19	2019/20(b)	2020/21(b)	2021/22	2022/23		
Number of consignments							
Africa	4	8	4	7	26	22	550.0
Asia	13	17	13	4	c	z	z
Oceania	49	63	27	27	35	-14	-28.6
Central and South America	41	41	28	39	44	3	7.3
North America	1,036	860	815	1,043	541	-495	-47.8
Europe ³	592	503	542	1,411	531	-61	-10.3
Total	1,735	1,492	1,429	2,531	1,177	-558	-32.2
Volume of notified product (m³)							
Africa	200	400	159	341	1,410	1,210	605.0
Asia	392	1,128	986	241	c	z	z
Oceania	2,629	2,997	1,266	1,156	1,697	-932	-35.5
Central and South America	4,162	3,472	2,634	3,216	3,900	-262	-6.3
North America	53,315	56,189	42,484	64,637	28,962	-24,353	-45.7
Europe ³	326,675	262,494	351,125	470,899	110,739	-215,936	-66.1
Total	387,373	326,680	398,654	540,490	146,708	-240,665	-62.1
Mass of notified product (kg)							
Africa	x	x	x	c	82,980	z	z
North America/Europe	x	x	x	1,622,732	5,748,830	z	z
Total	x	x	x	1,622,732	5,831,810	z	z

1. Table uses UNSD geographies.

2. Data are financial year.

3. Prior to 2021, Europe only included non-EU countries.

b. 2019/20 - EU plant health regulation and official controls regulation were implemented in the EU and the UK on 14th December 2019.

b. 2020/21 -Following the UKs exit from the EU, GB specific legislation has been introduced and there has been a phasing in of plant health controls. From January 2021 all regulated and notifiable high priority plants and plant products imported from the EU have been subject to plant health controls. Additionally, some commodities have been de-regulated.

x indicates data are not available.

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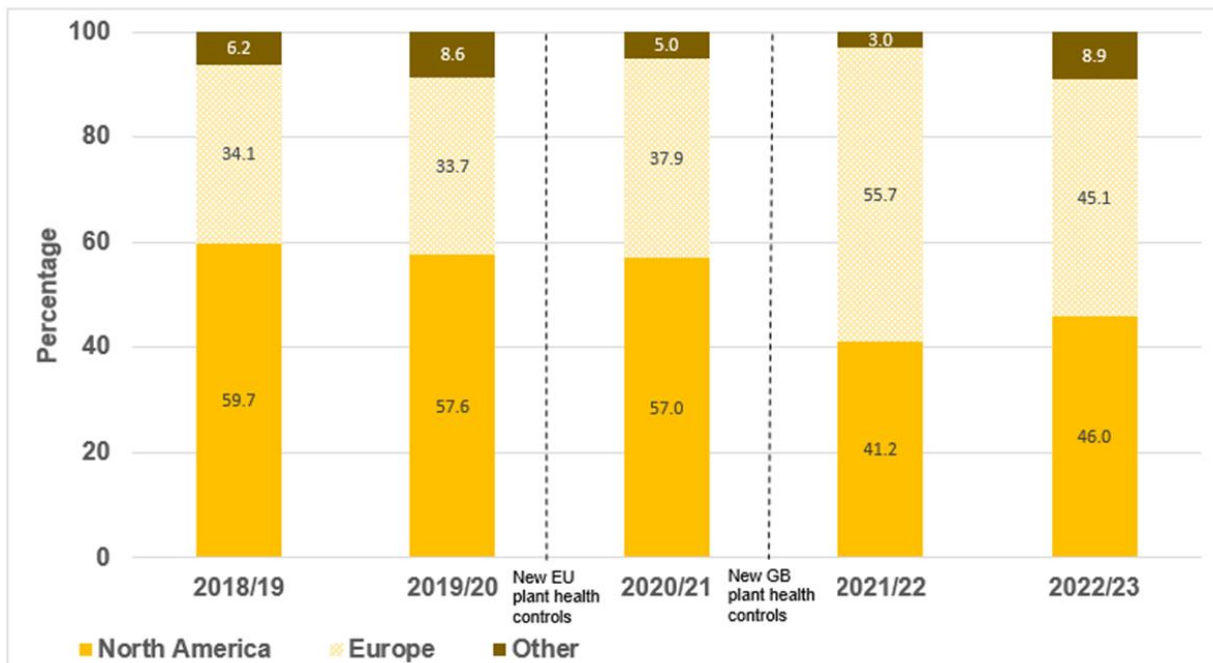
Source: Forestry Commission

Table 9 shows the number of controlled consignments of softwood and the associated volume of material notified to FC, by region of origin.

- The number of controlled consignments of softwood decreased by 32.2% between 2018/19 and 2022/23. For consignments imported from Europe and North America there was a sharp fall in imported consignments between 2021/22, the highest levels of the period, and 2022/23. For North America this decrease resulted in the lowest number of softwood consignments across the time period whilst for Europe numbers fell back to pre-2021/22 levels despite the introduction, in 2021, of the requirement to notify these consignments.
- The volume of material notified in cubic metres also decreased for imports from Europe and North America however the volume of material imported in kilograms increased suggesting there were more imports of products such as wood chips, sawdust and bark than seen in 2021/22 and fewer imports of products such as sawn timber, roundwood and firewood.
- There number of controlled softwood consignments imported from Africa increased to 26 from 4 in 2018/19 and the corresponding volume of material also increased, from 200m³ to 1,410m³. Additionally, 82,980kg of softwood material was imported from Africa.

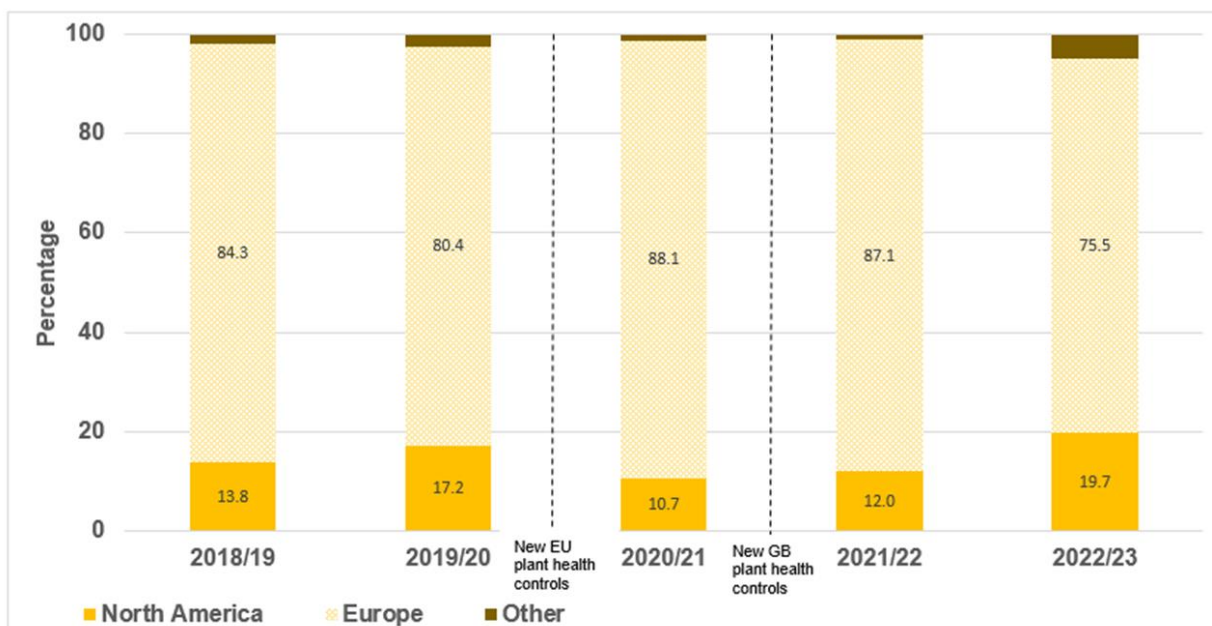
Chart 6a and 6b: Softwood consignments and volume, by region of origin, 2018/19 to 2022/23

6a. Softwood consignments



Please note that chart 6b only contains volumes of commodities recorded in cubic metres. From 2021/22 import data also contained entries of new commodities which are recorded in kilograms. These new commodities' masses are included in the tables below but not in charts as only two data points are available.

6b. Softwood volume



Data are financial year.

Chart uses UNSD geographies.

Prior to 2021, Europe only included non-EU countries.

Source: Forestry Commission

- Prior to 2021/22 over half of all softwood consignments arrived from North America (57.0% to 59.7%) however since 2021/22 the proportion of softwood consignments arriving from

Europe has increased, following the introduction of the requirement to notify imports from the EU, and stood at 45.1% in 2022/23 compared to 46.0% for North America.

- In 2022/23 Europe and North America were each responsible for 45-46% of all notified softwood consignments however the largest share of softwood material consistently arrived from Europe. In 2022/23 the volume of material from Europe decreased to 75.4% of softwood volume compared to 87.1% in 2021/22.
- The proportion of softwood material imported from North America and other countries outside Europe increased by 6 and 3 percentage points respectively over the time period.

Table 10: Controlled consignments of hardwood, by region of origin, England, Scotland and Wales, 2018/19 to 2022/23¹

	Year ²					Value change 2018/19-2022/23	Percentage change 2018/19- 2022/23
	2018/19	2019/20(b)	2020/21(b)	2021/22	2022/23		
Number of consignments							
North America	2,164	1,734	1,411	1,822	1,461	-703	-32.5
Europe/Asia	11	20	9	216	803	792	7,200.0
Total	2,175	1,754	1,420	2,038	2,264	89	4.1
Volume of notified product (m³)							
North America	189,544	84,980	83,113	58,670	50,520	-139,024	-73.3
Europe/Asia	793	1,253	443	9,713	37,153	36,360	4,585.1
Total	190,337	86,233	83,556	68,383	87,673	-102,664	-53.9
Mass of notified product (kg)							
North America	x	x	x	30,973	41,584	z	z
Europe	x	x	x	0	15,206	z	z
Total	x	x	x	30,973	56,790	z	z

1. Table uses [UNSD geographies](#).

2. Data are financial year.

3. Prior to 2021, Europe only included non-EU countries.

b. 2019/20 - EU plant health regulation and official controls regulation were implemented in the EU and the UK on 14th December 2019.

b. 2020/21 -Following the UKs exit from the EU, GB specific legislation has been introduced and there has been a phasing in of plant health controls. From January 2021 all regulated and notifiable high priority plants and plant products imported from the EU have been subject to plant health controls. Additionally, some commodities have been de-regulated.

x indicates data are not available.

z indicates data are not applicable.

Source: Forestry Commission

Table 10 shows the number of controlled consignments of hardwood and the volume of material, notified to FC, by region of origin.

- The total number of hardwood consignments increased slightly from 2,175 to 2,264 (4.1%) between 2018/19 and 2022/23 however the volume of controlled hardwood decreased from 190,337m³ to 87,673m³ (-53.9%).
- The number of consignments imported from Europe increased sharply in the two most recent years following the requirement for EU countries to notify imports from 2021/22. In general, European consignments are smaller than consignments arriving from outside the EU.
- The volume of hardwood material imported from North America has shown a year-on-year decrease over the time period. The volume of material decreased by 73.3% between 2018/19 and 2022/23, from 189,544m³ to 50,520m³.

- There was an increase in the mass of material imported in kilograms, this material includes wood shavings, wood chips, sawdust, bark and other wood products rather than sawn timber, roundwood and firewood and was imported from North America. and Europe.

Table 11: Controlled consignments of oak and ash timber, England, Scotland and Wales, 2018/19 to 2022/23

	Year ¹					Value change 2018/19-2022/23	Percentage change 2018/19- 2022/23
	2018/19	2019/20(b)	2020/21(b)	2021/22	2022/23		
Number of consignments							
Ash	335	240	131	302	736	401	119.7
Oak	1,562	1,227	1,003	1,246	963	-599	-38.3
Total	1,897	1,467	1,134	1,548	1,699	-198	-10.4
Volume of notified product (m³)							
Ash	11,531	22,128	4,589	12,405	34,921	23,390	202.8
Oak	140,852	38,330	68,310	38,087	31,543	-109,309	-77.6
Total	152,383	60,458	72,899	50,492	66,464	-85,919	-56.4
Mass of notified product (kg)							
Ash	x	x	x	0	0	z	z
Oak	x	x	x	5,663	c	z	z
Total	x	x	x	5,663	c	z	z

1. Data are financial year.

b. 2019/20 - EU plant health regulation and official controls regulation were implemented in the EU and the UK on 14th December 2019.

b. 2020/21 -Following the UKs exit from the EU, GB specific legislation has been introduced and there has been a phasing in of plant health controls. From January 2021 all regulated and notifiable high priority plants and plant products imported from the EU have been subject to plant health controls. Additionally, some commodities have been de-regulated.

x indicates data are not available.

z indicates data are not applicable.

c indicates data are confidential and have been suppressed.

Source: Forestry Commission

Ash from all third countries became controlled 2021, prior to this, ash originating in Canada, China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Europe and the USA was controlled. Oak originating in Canada, China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Russia, Taiwan, Turkey, Taiwan, USA and Vietnam is controlled.

- Oak and Ash accounted for 75.0% of all controlled hardwood consignments in 2022/23, a decrease from 87.2% in 2018/19. These two species accounted for 75.8% of the volume of controlled hardwood in 2022/23, a decrease from 80.1% in 2018/19.
- Both the number of oak consignments and the associated volume decreased over the time period with 599 fewer consignments and 109,309m³ less material in 2022/23 compared to 2018/19. In contrast the number of consignments and the volume of ash increased (120 consignments and 203m³).
- Oak accounted for 56.6% of controlled consignments of ash and oak, and 47.5% of the volume of material in 2022/23, a decrease of 25.7 percentage points in consignments and 45.0 percentage points for volume since 2018/19.

Glossary¹⁵

Commodity: A type of plant, plant product, or other article being moved for trade or other purpose [FAO, 1990; revised ICPM, 2001]

Consignment: A quantity of plants, plant products or other articles being moved from one country to another and covered, when required, by a single phytosanitary certificate (a consignment may be composed of one or more commodities or lots) [FAO, 1990; revised ICPM, 2001]. For PHSI data a consignment is a commodity type declared on a phytosanitary certificate. Some phytosanitary certificates will cover more than one commodity type and so the number of consignments declared will be more than the number of phytosanitary certificates.

Controlled plant products: plants and plant commodities which are required to undergo checks for pest and disease on crossing a customs border. For countries within the European Union (EU) this means upon entry to the EU, and this applied to GB trade until the UK exited the EU on 31 December 2020.

Country of origin: Country where the plants were grown [FAO, 1990; revised CEPM, 1996; CEPM, 1999]

Customs declaration: an official document that lists and gives details of goods that are being imported or exported. In legal terms, a customs declaration is the act whereby a person indicates the wish to place goods under a given customs procedure. This legal procedure is described in the Union Customs Code (UCC) (Articles 5 (12) and 158 to 187)¹⁶.

Exports (HMRC trade data): the country of destination as declared at the time of export. However, where goods can be traded while in transit (e.g., grain and crude oil), this may not necessarily be the final destination of the goods.

Food and crops: commodities traded for the primary purpose of human consumption.

Forestry: timber and wood commodities but not live trees.

Fruit: the sweet and fleshy product of a tree or other plant that contains seed and can be eaten as food.

Hardwood: timber from broadleaved trees.

Imports (HMRC trade data): The country from which the goods were originally dispatched to the UK without any commercial transaction in any intermediate country (either with or without breaking bulk in the course of transport). This is not necessarily the country of origin, manufacture or the last country from which the goods were shipped to the UK.

Inspection: Official visual examination of plants, plant products or other regulated articles to determine if pests are present or to determine compliance with phytosanitary regulations [FAO, 1990; revised FAO, 1995; formerly “inspect”].

¹⁵ Some definitions are taken from [ISPM 5 Glossary of phytosanitary terms](#)

¹⁶ [Union Customs Code](#)

Non-EU European countries: Countries outside of the European Union but geographically part of Europe¹⁷.

'Other' commodities: plants and parts of plants (including seeds and fruits) used primarily in perfumery or pharmacy or for insecticidal, fungicidal or similar purposes.

Phytosanitary certificate: An official paper document or its official electronic equivalent, consistent with the model certificates of the IPPC, attesting that a consignment meets phytosanitary import requirements [FAO, 1990; revised CPM, 2012]

Plants and plant commodities: goods including plants, trees, bulbs, seeds, fruit, vegetables and timber. Commodities are included if they are (1) raw plant products or (2) simply processed, i.e., processed in a manner that would not, in theory, remove the pest and disease risk.

Plants and planting material: live or dormant plants, seeds, bulbs or tubers of plants and trees and cut flowers.

Simple processing: Simple processing can include peeling, grinding, chopping and debarking but excludes cooking, fermenting and preservation in liquid. For further information please see International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures; ISPM No. 32; Categorisation of commodities according to their pest risk (2009)¹⁸.

Softwood: timber from coniferous trees.

Vegetable: A plant or part of a plant used as food, such as a cabbage, potato, turnip, or bean.

¹⁷ [List of non-EU countries](#)

¹⁸ [International standards for phytosanitary measures. ISPM No. 32](#)