



Animal &  
Plant Health  
Agency

## APHA Briefing Note 12/26

# Publication of updated guidance on the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme

Date issued: 13 April 2026

### Purpose

To inform Official Veterinarians (OVs) and Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) about the publication of the updated Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) guidance.

### Background

The GEFS facilitates exports from approved food business operators with defined supply chains, by using 30-day Support Attestations (SAs) to help in the certification process. Responding to feedback and questions from industry and OVs since the updated guidance was published last year, Defra has now published an updated version of the scheme's guidance that adds some clarifications and changes. Some of these changes may impact how OVs and FCCOs sign SAs and EHCs.

### Information

1. APHA has published a [new, updated version of the GEFS guidance](#). This replaces the previous version of this guidance published in May 2025.
2. The eligibility requirements for using the GEFS remain unchanged, as do the requirements to use a SA and a Batch Declaration for each and every consignment moved to the exporting premises.
3. The updated guidance comes into effect from today.
4. The updated SAs may be used immediately and **must** be used from 13 July 2026.
5. Existing members of the GEFS have also been contacted and made aware of the updated guidance and SAs.

APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

## Key changes

6. We have revised the requirements for using the GEFS, moving from the need for a “stable” supply chain to a “defined” supply chain, to facilitate the addition of new suppliers into a GEFS SA.
7. This means the GEFS may be used where manufacturers source their POAO or ABP ingredients from a known and documented supply chain, verifiable by the OV or FCCO conducting the compliance visit.
8. To do this, the manufacturer must have in place and use a thorough and robust onboarding process for all suppliers and supply relevant evidence to the OV or FCCO. This replaces the requirement to provide evidence documenting a stable supply chain for the preceding six months. More information can be found in paragraphs 57-62 and 71-75 in the updated guidance.
9. The SA for OVs covering POAO goods (SA1) has been expanded to cover all commodities eligible to be exported using the GEFS, as well as attestations omitted on the previous version.
10. We have also made a number of small revisions to all template SAs to clarify what information should be provided in Part 1.B.

## Action

- All OVs and FCCOs issuing SAs or certifying goods under GEFS must adhere to the updated guidance from today and must use updated SAs from 13 July 2026. However, the updated SA may be used sooner where the GEFS member wishes to make use of the new additions.
  - [Support Attestation for OVs, covering POAO goods \(SA1\)](#)
  - [Support Attestation for OVs, covering ABP goods \(SA2\)](#)
  - [Support Attestation for FCCOs, covering specific POAO goods \(SA3\)](#)

## Further Information

For further questions or clarification, exporters, suppliers and certifying officers should contact the GEFS team at APHA at [gefsteam@apha.gov.uk](mailto:gefsteam@apha.gov.uk)

APHA’s Centre for International Trade – Carlisle, email: [exports@apha.gov.uk](mailto:exports@apha.gov.uk) Telephone: 03000 300 201

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