



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 13/26

Revised Returned EU Consignments Process

Date issued: 14 April 2026

Purpose

To inform OV's of changes to the process for returning consignments rejected at EU Border Control Posts (BCPs).

Background

On 31 March this [Trader Notice](#) was issued to outline the change of process to traders.

The current process for returning consignments rejected at EU BCPs requires exporters to notify APHA of their intention to return goods. APHA commission risk assessments from Food Standards Agency (FSA), Food Standards Scotland (FSS) or APHA (depending on the origin and commodity) before issuing an authorisation for the goods to return to their point of origin not through a BCP. Once back at the establishment of origin, the goods must be inspected by the relevant competent authority – for example FSA or the local authority – before they can be put on the domestic market or be re-exported. This service is only available to exporters during working hours from Monday to Friday.

From 20 April 2026 goods rejected at an EU BCP will follow the same process as those rejected in non-EU countries. They must be pre-notified and enter GB via a BCP. Prior to departing the EU BCP, the consignment must be pre-notified on the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS), ensuring that the 're-entry' box is selected. The evidence of pre-notification must be provided to the EU BCP for authorisation to release the consignment. IPAFFS is available 24/7 and GB BCP opening hours can be found [here](#). The IPAFFS notification must be completed by the operator responsible for the consignment in GB, not an agent in the EU.

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.

The current EU returns route will remain open to exporters if that remains their preference, however, this service will now operate to a 5 working day timeframe from pre-notification to risk assessment and clearance.

Returned consignments from the island of Ireland are exempt from the new process due to the lack of available BCP for these goods to return to. The current process will remain in place, and the existing working timeframe will be maintained for these returned consignments.

Further communications will be issued closer to the changeover. A second Trader Notice will be issued on 20 April to reiterate the original points and provide some further clarifications. An updated Importer Information Note will be published on GOV.UK on 20 April.

Further Information

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Imports and EU Trade Team