



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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25 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

## Response to stakeholder engagement on the pre-notification exemption proposal for certain low risk goods

Thank you for submitting views on the above stakeholder engagement. This letter is to notify you of the outcome.

### Background

On 29 August 2023, the UK Government published the final Border [Target Operating Model](#) (BTOM) that introduces a new approach to phytosanitary (SPS) controls applying to imports of plants and plants products at the border. Defra and the Scottish and Welsh Governments will implement the new SPS regime in accordance with the timetable detailed in the TOM, with the first stage, coming into force by 31 January 2024.

### Proposal

To not require pre-notification for low-risk fruit and vegetables from the EU, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Low-risk fruit and vegetables from the EU are all those not listed in either the high or medium risk categories (see [here](#)) and includes all EU fruit and vegetables with parts of stems or part of plants attached such as tomatoes on the vine, sweet corn in husk.

### Summary of responses

One response was received from a private individual that emphasised that this measure would significantly ease pressures on consumers' food supplies, in terms of both higher cost and restricted availability.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

They added, however, that EU exporters will benefit from the easier access to customers than their GB counterparts to EU customers and requested that Defra work with other Government Departments to obtain the equivalent treatment from the EU. They also requested that Defra kept in mind how the SPS regime impacts GB gardeners and the horticultural industry that supply them, preserving the benefits gained from the international movement of plants whilst still controlling any risks from their movement.

Response:

*Since 1 January 2021, GB has operated its own sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) regime, which is focused on addressing the risks it faces. This regime includes risk-based import checks of plants, plant products and other objects to avoid the introduction of harmful plant pests and diseases. These risk-based checks are in line with WTO/SPS principles and consistent with our obligations under the EU Withdrawal Act.*

*To support businesses in adopting the new EU-GB requirements, the UK Government took the decision to introduce new measures in phases for the import of EU plants and plant material. This has allowed us to protect GB biosecurity whilst maintaining the efficient trade in goods such as plants and plant products.*

*The scope of the BTOM is beyond the EU. It creates a new global regime, aimed at making the border easier to use and, where possible, reducing processes and administrative burdens on businesses. The BTOM will deliver a suite of new digital improvements and digital systems to improve efficiencies across border processes, and data will be used to inform the risk profile of commodities being moved across the border.*

**Next steps**

The response received was supportive of the proposed amendments to exempt low-risk fruit and vegetables, from the EU, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, from the pre-notification requirement. Defra and the Scottish and Welsh Governments intend to implement this proposal from 17 November 2023.

I would like to thank those responding for taking the time to submit views on the stakeholder engagement. Your comments have been very valuable in working to develop a policy position.

If you have any views about how this review was handled, or its outcome, please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

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