

businesscompanion

trading standards law explained

Labelling of meat: country of origin

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Key legislation

Although the United Kingdom has left the European Union (EU), certain pieces of legislation (formally known as 'retained EU law') will still apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation; this means that you will still see references to EU regulations in our guidance.

This guidance is for England and Wales

The Country of Origin of Certain Meats (England) Regulations 2015 and the Country of Origin of Certain Meats (Wales) Regulations 2015 cover labelling meat from swine, sheep, goats and poultry with their countries of rearing and slaughter. See '[Labelling of beef](#)' for information about meat from cows.

Certain prescribed information is compulsory for fresh, chilled and frozen pork, lamb, mutton, goat meat and poultry meat at all stages in the supply chain, from slaughter to final retail or catering. Other information may be applied to these products as long as it is not misleading.

This information must be provided on the label with the packaging. The requirement only applies to prepacked meat intended for supply to the final consumer or to mass caterers.

A robust traceability system must be in place for all stages in the supply chain.

The Regulations do not apply to meat-containing products (see '[Composition of products containing meat](#)' for details of what constitutes a 'product containing meat').

Compulsory information

Fresh, chilled and frozen pig, sheep, goat and poultry meat

Information that must be provided on all fresh, chilled and frozen pork, lamb, mutton, goat meat and poultry meat supplied to mass caterers or the final consumer:

- 'Reared in: [name of Member State or non-EU country; where an animal has been reared in more than one country, the table below explains what should appear on the labelling]'
- 'Slaughtered in: [name of Member State or non-EU country]'
- a reference number or batch code identifying the specific animal or group of animals from which the meat was derived

'Member State' means Member State of the EU; bear in mind that the UK is no longer a Member State and you must not refer to it as such.

Table showing how to identify the country of rearing on the labelling

Swine	Sheep and goats	Poultry
Slaughtered at over six months: the country where the last rearing period of at least four months took place	Slaughtered at over six months: the country where the last rearing period of at least six months took place	Slaughtered at over one month: the country where the last rearing period of at least one month took place
Slaughtered at under six months with live weight of at least 80 kg: the country where the animal was reared since it weighed 30 kg	Slaughtered at under six months: the country where the whole rearing period took place	Slaughtered at under one month: the country where the whole rearing period after the animal was placed for fattening took place
Slaughtered at under six months with live weight of below 80 kg: the country where the whole rearing period took place	N/A	N/A

Where the rearing period referred to in the table above is not attained in any of the Member States or non-EU countries where the animal was reared (for example, when slaughtered at over six months but did not spend the last four months being raised in a single country), the indication referred to in the first bullet point above should be replaced by 'Reared in: several Member States of the EU'; or, where the meat or the animals have been imported into the EU, by 'Reared in: several non-EU countries' or 'Reared in: several EU and non-EU countries'. However, where the food business operator has evidence to prove that the rearing period was spent in specific Member States and/or non-EU countries, these countries may be stated in the form of a list.

Where it can be proved that animals were born, raised and slaughtered in the same Member State or non-EU country, then the first and second compulsory requirements in the bulleted list above can be replaced by 'Origin: [name of Member State]' or 'Origin: [name of non-EU country]'.

Where compulsory information is not available for meat imported from a non-EU country, the labelling must show at least the words 'Reared in: non-EU' and 'Slaughtered in [name of non-EU country]'.

Prepacked cut meat with different origins

Where several pieces of meat, of the same or of different species, that would require different origin declarations are supplied to a mass caterer or the final consumer in the same pack, the origin information should be provided in the form of a list for each species. The batch code is also required.

Minced meat and trimmings

'Trimmings' are defined as small pieces of meat produced exclusively during trimming operations, when boning carcases or cutting up meat.

Minced meat and trimmings are permitted to be labelled in one of the ways below if more specific information as to their origin is not available:

- 'Origin: EU', if the minced meat or trimmings derive exclusively from animals born, reared and slaughtered in different Member States
- 'Reared and slaughtered in: EU', if the minced meat or trimmings derive exclusively from animals reared and slaughtered in different Member States
- 'Reared and slaughtered in: non-EU', if the minced meat or trimmings derive exclusively from meat imported into the EU
- 'Reared in: non-EU' and 'Slaughtered in: EU', if the minced meat or trimmings derive exclusively from animals imported into the EU for slaughter and slaughtered in one or more different Member States
- 'Reared and slaughtered in: EU and non-EU', if the minced meat or trimmings are derived from animals reared and slaughtered in one or more different Member States and from meat imported into the EU; or from animals imported into the EU and slaughtered in one or more different Member States

'Member State' means Member State of the EU; bear in mind that the UK is no longer a Member State and you must not refer to it as such.

Protected food names

Products with 'protected designation of origin' or 'protected geographical indication' must show all compulsory information listed at the start of this guide. More information on [protected food and drink names](#) is available on the GOV.UK website.

Traceability

Food business operators at each stage of production and distribution of the meat, including packaging and labelling it for the final consumer, are required to have an identification and registration system in place.

In particular, a record needs to be kept of the arrival and departure from the food business establishment of animals, carcases or cuts (as appropriate) to ensure a correlation between such arrivals and departures.

The purpose is to ensure that the information provided to the mass caterer or final consumer corresponds to that relating to the batch where the meat came from.

Additional voluntary information

Supplementary information concerning the provenance of the meat is permitted, but must comply with Chapter V of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 *on the provision of food information to consumers* in that it should not mislead the consumer, or be ambiguous or confusing for the consumer, and (where appropriate) it should be based on relevant scientific data.

The Pork Provenance [code of practice](#), concerning the provision of information about the conditions under which pigs have been reared, is an example of where such additional information may be provided.

Trading Standards

For more information on the work of Trading Standards services - and the possible consequences of not abiding by the law - please see '[Trading Standards: powers, enforcement and penalties](#)'.

In this update

No major changes.

Last reviewed / updated: February 2023

Key legislation

[Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers](#)

[Regulation \(EU\) No 1337/2013 laying down rules for the application of Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011 as regards the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance for fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry](#)

[Food Information Regulations 2014](#)

[Food Information \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

[Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(England\) Regulations 2015](#)

[Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Wales\) Regulations 2015](#)

Please note

This information is intended for guidance; only the courts can give an authoritative interpretation of the law.

The guide's 'Key legislation' links often only shows the original version of the legislation, although some amending legislation is linked to separately where it is directly related to the content of a guide. Information on changes to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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