businesscompanion
trading standards law explained

Feed hygiene for farmers and growers

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In this guide, the words 'must' or 'must not' are used where there is a legal requirement to do (or not do) something. The word 'should' is used where there is established legal guidance or best practice that is likely to help you avoid breaking the law.

Although the United Kingdom left the European Union (EU) in 2021, certain pieces of legislation (known as 'assimilated law') continue to apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation, revoked or permitted to expire. This means that our guidance still contains references to legislation that originated from the EU.

This guidance is for England

Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 *laying down requirements for feed hygiene* is aimed at ensuring that controls throughout the feed chain are strengthened. In particular, it contains:

- Controls and provisions in relation to feed businesses' operational standards
- Provisions to help ensure that feed is produced, transported and stored in hygienic conditions, and records are kept allowing full traceability of feed

The Regulation requires feed businesses to be approved by or registered with their local authority.

Who is covered?

With few exceptions, the legislation applies to all feed businesses, which are defined in assimilated Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 *laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety* as "any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any operation of production, manufacture, processing, storage, transport or distribution of feed including any producer producing, processing or storing feed for feeding to animals on his own holding".

Examples of feed businesses include:

- Feed manufacturers
- Feed importers
- Sellers of feed
- Feed transporters
- Storers of feed
- Food companies selling co-products or surplus food for use in feed
- Pet food manufacturers
- Livestock farms, fish farms or arable farms growing and using or selling crops for feed use

Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 requires feed businesses to be approved or registered with their local authority, as appropriate, and they must not operate without such registration / approval. See the GOV.UK website for how to apply for approval or registration, and see below for exemptions.

Exemptions

There are some farm-related activities that fall outside the scope of the legislation:

- Private domestic production of feed for food-producing animals kept for private domestic consumption and for animals not kept for food production
- Feeding of food-producing animals kept for private domestic consumption
- Feeding of animals not kept for food production
- Direct supply of small quantities of primary production of feed* at local level by a producer to local farms for use on those farms
- Direct supply, by the producer, of small quantities of primary production of feed* to local retail establishments directly supplying the final consumer
- Pet food retail

[*A working definition of the term 'small quantities of primary production of feed' is less than 20 tonnes per annum.]

Conditions

The legislation contains various conditions that feed businesses have to comply with, as appropriate. The annexes to assimilated Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 (please see the link in 'Key legislation' below) set out various standards that feed businesses must comply with, as appropriate:

- Annex I. This covers provisions applicable to businesses involved in primary production of feed*. It includes general hygiene and record-keeping requirements
- Annex II. This applies to businesses operating other than at the level of primary production - for example, mixing feeds on-farm with additives, using premixtures or manufacturing a compound feed to place on the market. It contains standards in relation to facilities and equipment, personnel,

quality control, storage and transport, and record-keeping
- Annex III. This covers the requirements on feeding food-producing animals that livestock farmers have to comply with

[*'Primary production of feed' is defined in assimilated Regulation (EC) 183/2005 as "the production of agricultural products, including in particular growing, harvesting, milking, rearing of animals (prior to their slaughter) or fishing resulting exclusively in products which do not undergo any other operation following their harvest, collection or capture, apart from simple physical treatment".]

Hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP)

The legislation requires feed businesses that fall within the scope of Annex II to put in place and operate procedures based on the principles of HACCP. HACCP is a system of safety management based on the prevention of feed and food safety problems. It provides a documented, structured approach to ensuring food safety and places a requirement on businesses to identify, manage and control hazards inherent in the handling and production process.

Feed businesses that are only involved in primary production or the feeding of livestock will not be required to apply HACCP (excluding those that buy in and use feed additives or premixtures).

Definitions of feed additives and premixtures

'Feed additives', as defined in assimilated Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 *on additives for use in animal nutrition*, "means substances, microorganisms or preparations, other than feed material and premixtures, which are intentionally added to feed or water in order to perform, in particular, one or more" of the functions listed below.

"The feed additive shall:
(a) favourably affect the characteristics of feed,
(b) favourably affect the characteristics of animal products,
(c) favourably affect the colour of ornamental fish and birds,
(d) satisfy the nutritional needs of animals,
(e) favourably affect the environmental consequences of animal production,
(f) favourably affect animal production, performance or welfare, particularly by affecting the gastro-intestinal flora or digestibility of feedingstuffs, or
(g) have a coccidiostatic or histomonostatic effect."

Only approved additives may be used in animal feed. Some additives have a limited level of permitted use and are only available for certain species of animals.

For a list of approved additives, please refer to the register of regulated food and feed products for Great Britain on the Food Standards Agency (FSA) website.

More information on additives can be found on the GOV.UK website.

'Premixtures' means mixtures of approved feed additives or mixtures of one or more approved feed additives with feed materials or water used as carriers; premixtures are not intended for direct feeding to animals.

Further requirements

More information on record keeping and HACCP requirements is available on the GOV.UK website.

Please note that this guidance does not cover arrangements for the approval of premises, manufacturing, selling or using coccidiostats, histomonostats and growth promoters or the incorporation, distribution and use of veterinary medicines in premixtures and feeding stuffs, all of which are covered by separate legislation enforced by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD).

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: June 2026

Key legislation

- Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 *laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety*
- Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 1831/2003 *on additives for use in animal nutrition*
- Assimilated Regulation (EC) No 183/2005 *laying down requirements for feed hygiene*
- Animal Feed (Hygiene, Sampling etc and Enforcement) (England) 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 go to the legislation.gov.uk website. The site usually updates the legislation to include any amendments made to it. However, this is not always the case. Information on all changes made to legislation can be found by following the above links and clicking on the 'More Resources' tab.

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