



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

APHA Briefing Note 26/26

Export Certification of Products of Animal Origin to Japan

Date issued: 1 September 2026

Purpose

1. To remind Official Veterinarians (OVs) of their responsibilities when certifying Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for meat and meat products intended for export to Japan, and to reinforce the importance of ensuring all certification requirements are met in full prior to certification.

Background

2. APHA and DEFRA have been made aware of several certification-related incidents affecting exports of products of animal origin (POAO) to Japan. In the most recent case, a consignment of pork products was certified for export to Japan despite originating from an establishment that was not approved and listed by Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) for export to the Japanese market. Furthermore, APHA's review of the case concluded that the EHC had been certified incorrectly. There was a separate poultry meat certification issue in 2025 relating to notifiable disease clearance, which resulted in the temporary suspension of UK poultry meat imports to Japan.
3. Japanese authorities have raised serious concerns regarding the recurrence of certification errors. The authorities have questioned the robustness of the UK's export certification system, and have requested information on the measures being taken by the UK to prevent similar incidents occurring in future. Japan's MAFF has indicated clearly that repeated certification failures may affect confidence in the UK's export health processes which could impact future trade. Japan was the UK's seventh largest export market for pork and pork products by value in 2025, with exports totalling approximately £5.5 million. Any restriction or loss of access to this market as

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.

a result of further non-compliance would therefore have significant consequences for the British pork sector and other POAO exports.

Action

4. OV's are reminded that exports to Japan may only take place from establishments that have been specifically authorised by, and notified to, the Japanese authorities/MAFF. This requirement applies not only to slaughterhouses, but also to cutting plants, processing establishments and cold stores in the production, storage and handling of the consignment/product.
5. Prior to certification, OV's must ensure that all establishments declared on the EHC are approved and listed by Japan where required by the certificate and associated Notes for Guidance (NfGs). OV's should not rely solely upon commercial documentation and should undertake all necessary checks to satisfy themselves that the certification can be signed and progressed.
6. OV's are also reminded that establishment details must be recorded accurately on the EHC and that particular care and attention should be taken where establishments have recently changed ownership, name or operational status. Exports must not be certified unless the establishments concerned have received the appropriate Japanese approval and appear on the relevant list of designated facilities.
7. Failure to comply with importing country requirements and certification procedures may result in formal non-compliance action. OV's must ensure they are able to support every certified statement with appropriate evidence and must not certify consignments where any eligibility approval requirements remain unresolved. Certification errors will have consequences beyond the loss, rejection or destruction of the individual consignment and may undermine confidence in the UK's export certification system.

Further Information

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