

Chapter 8

Country of Origin Labelling

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1. Purpose

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1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 Purpose

Under retained EU law, full traceability of pre-packed fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goat and poultry entering and moving within the domestic and Third Countries markets is a legal requirement. These controls have been drafted in order to comply with the particulars surrounding ‘country of rearing’ and ‘country of slaughter’. Pre-packed fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goat and poultry for supply to the consumer or mass caterer require origin information to be printed on the product labels in order for them to meet legal requirements as set down in:

- Commission Implementing [Regulation \(EU\) No 1337/2013](#) for which the enforcement provisions are given in [The Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#) (SSI 2016 No. 84)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011](#) (known and referred to by the acronym FIC – Food Information for Consumers), for which the enforcement provisions are given in [The Food Information \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014](#) (SSI 2014 No. 312)

Reference: See guidance on labelling requirements at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-safety-standards/labelling> for additional information.

Reference: See Food Standards Training Manual at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/food-standards-training-manual-january-2017> for additional information.

The aforementioned domestic and EU regulations do not affect the identification of cattle and labelling of beef and veal, which are regulated by Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1825/2000. The Beef and Veal Labelling (Scotland) Regulations 2010 (SSI 2010 No. 402) provide the means for enforcement of the Beef Labelling Scheme in Scotland. These Regulations are

enforced by the Scottish Ministers in slaughterhouses, cutting plants or wholesalers, and by Local Authorities in all other premises.

As Food Standards Scotland is not the Competent Authority, this Chapter does not intend to provide any guidance on the labelling of beef and beef products.

Further information on the Beef Labelling Scheme can be found at the following link:

[Beef labelling: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot/Beef_labelling_guidance)

1.2 Glossary of Terms

For ease of reference, the following paragraphs contain the main definitions of terms used within the chapter. The remaining definitions can be found in:

- Article 2 of the FIC Regulation
- Article 3 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013
- Regulation 2 of SSI 2016 No. 84

Group of animals

The size of the group of animals is defined by Article 4 of Regulation 1337/2013 as:

- the number of carcasses cut together which constitutes one batch for the cutting plant in the case of cutting carcasses
- the number of carcasses from which the meat has been cut or minced together and constitutes one batch; this may be from already deboned meat

“Batch” is defined in Article 2(b) as “meat, falling within the Combined Nomenclature codes listed in Annex XI to Regulation 1169/2011, obtained from a single species, with or without bone, whether or not cut or minced, that has been cut, minced or packed under practically identical conditions”.

The size of a batch cannot exceed the production of one day.

- The establishments in which meat is cut or minced shall ensure that all carcasses in a batch correspond to the animals to which identical labelling indications apply; except where Article 7 of Regulation 1337/2013 is applied.

Reared in

An indication of the country in which the rearing took place is referred to as ‘reared in’. There are different rearing criteria for each species, as established by Article 5 Paragraph 1 (a) of Regulation 1337/2013.

Slaughtered in

The country in which the animal was slaughtered is indicated as ‘slaughtered in’.

Origin

'Reared in' and 'slaughtered in' may be replaced by the single term 'origin' if the meat has been obtained from animals born, reared and slaughtered (wholly produced), in one single country.

Exceptions

Where several pieces of meat, of the same or of different species, corresponding to different labelling indications in respect of 'reared in' and/ or 'slaughtered in' are presented in the same pack to the consumer or mass caterer, the label shall indicate this, as established by Article 5 Paragraph 3 of Regulation 1337/2013.

Batch code

A batch code which identifies the meat supplied to the consumer or mass caterer must be given on the label. This code may be referenced with other information to enable food businesses to demonstrate the accuracy of the information on the label.

A definition of batch code is provided in Regulation 2(1) of the domestic Regulations SSI 2016 No 84 as: "Any existing mark on a label or packaging, such as a date mark or lot number, which a food business operator can demonstrate, when cross referenced with other information, allows them to identify the origins of the meat". A food business should be able to demonstrate that the batch code chosen is one that is valid for determining the accuracy of the mandatory origin claims.

Place of provenance

A place of provenance, as defined by Regulation 1169/2011 Article 2 Paragraph 2 (g), is any place where a food is indicated to come from and that is not the 'country of origin' as determined in accordance with [section 17\(2\) to \(4\) of the Taxation \(Cross-border Trade\) Act 2018](#), as read with the Customs (Origin of Chargeable Goods) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 (for example Tayside, Tuscany).

Pre-packed food

Pre-packed food, as defined by Regulation 1169/2011 Article 2 Paragraph 2 (e), means any single item for presentation to the final consumer and to mass caterers, consisting of a food and the packaging into which it was placed before being offered for sale. This applies whether such packaging encloses the food completely or only partially, but in any event in such a way that the contents cannot be altered without opening or changing the packaging.

1.3 Retained European Regulations

1.3.1 Regulation (EC) No 178/2002

Article 18 requires that Food Business Operators (FBOs) must have systems and procedures in place to ensure that the traceability of food and food-producing animals can be established at all stages of production, processing and distribution. The FBO must be able to:

- identify any person from whom they have been supplied with a food producing animal.
- identify the other businesses to which their products have been supplied.
- make this information available to the competent authorities on demand.

1.3.2 Regulation (EC) No 853/2004

Article 1 point 6 (c) states that the Regulation shall apply without prejudice to requirements concerning the identification of animals and the traceability of products of animal origin.

1.3.3 Regulation (EU) 2017/625

During the exercise of official controls, the OV is to verify compliance with the FBO's duty pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 to ensure that animals accepted for slaughter for human consumption are properly identified.

Reference: Regulation (EU) 2017/625 Article 18 (1).

1.3.4 Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011

Article 26(2)(b) sets out the obligation to indicate the country of origin or place of provenance on the label of meat falling within the Combined Nomenclature codes listed in Annex XI to that Regulation i.e. fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goats and poultry.

Article 26(3) sets out the obligation to indicate the country of origin or the place of provenance of the primary ingredient of a food, if it is different from the country of origin or place of provenance of the food itself. Rules for the application of this Article are set out in the [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/775](#).

1.3.5 Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013

Article 1 lays down rules on the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance on the label of fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, meat of sheep or goats, and meat of poultry, which fall within the respective Combined Nomenclature codes listed in Annex XI of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011.

Article 3 requires full traceability of any of the above entering the food chain, including:

- the FBO must have an identification and registration system
- the system must be robust and be able to show a link between the meat and the animal or group of animals from which it has been sourced – this is the responsibility of the Slaughterhouse FBOs
- transmission of the information with the meat to subsequent processors, distributors, mass caterers and consumers
- creating batch coding and full traceability of such codes
- recording arrival and departure of animal, carcase or cuts and ensuring correlations between arrivals and departures

Article 4 sets out the definition for a [group of animals](#).

Article 5 defines the criteria to follow to show the country in which rearing took place indicated as 'reared in' and slaughter took place indicated as 'slaughtered in' (see [section 2](#)).

Article 6 defines the derogation for meat from other countries (see [section 5.3](#)).

Article 7 states the derogations for minced meat and trimmings, detailing how 'reared in' and 'slaughtered in' should be applied (see [section 5.4](#)).

Article 8 refers to the additional voluntary information that the FBO may add on the label.

1.4 Domestic Regulations

[The Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#) apply to pre-packed fresh, chilled and frozen meat of swine, sheep, goat and poultry for supply to the consumer or mass caterer.

The FBO must be able to:

- identify any person from whom they have been supplied with a food-producing animal.
- identify the other businesses to which their products have been supplied.
- make this information available to the competent authorities on demand.

[Regulation 5](#) states that the FBO must keep a record of information under the traceability system required by Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 1337/2013 and retain it for a period of 12 months from the end of the calendar year to which the record relates (e.g. record from April 2022 must be retained until 31/12/2023). See [Section 3.2.1](#) for details.

[Regulation 8](#) defines the transitional provision applicable to the domestic market due to the UK withdrawal from the EU (see [section 5.5](#)).

[The Food and Drink \(Miscellaneous Amendments Relating to Food and Wine Composition, Information and Labelling\) Regulations 2021, Regulation 7](#) which amended the Retained Regulation (EU) 1337/2013 due to UK withdrawal from the EU.

2. Criteria for Country of Origin

The criteria to determine the place of rearing for swine, sheep, goats and poultry are showed in the following table:

| Species | Age at the time of Slaughter | Live weight | Place of Rearing |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Swine | older than 6 months | n/a | Country in which the last rearing period of at least 4 months took place |
| | younger than 6 months | at least 80 kilograms | Country in which the rearing period after the animal had reached 30 kg took place |
| | | less than 80 kilograms | Country in which the whole rearing period took place |
| Sheep and goats | older than 6 months | n/a | Country in which the last rearing period of at least 6 months took place |
| | younger than 6 months | n/a | Country in which the whole rearing period took place |
| Poultry | older than 1 month | n/a | Country in which the last period of at least one month took place |
| | younger than 1 month | n/a | Country in which the entire rearing period after the animal was placed for fattening took place |

As defined by Article 2 Paragraph 2 (c) of Regulation (EU) 1337/2013, 'country', in relation to the United Kingdom (UK), means the UK as a whole and does not mean England, Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales individually.

In summary:

1) for **ALL SPECIES** (pigs, sheep/goats, poultry):

The indication 'Origin UK' can be used only if the animal/s was/were born, reared and slaughtered in UK.

2) for **PIGS**:

The indication 'Reared in UK' can be used only if:

- the animal is slaughtered at >6 months of age and spent at least the last 4 months in UK;
- the animal entered the UK at <30 kg liveweight and it was slaughtered at least with a 80 kg liveweight;
- the animal is slaughtered at <80 kg overweight and spent the whole rearing period in UK.

3) for **SHEEP and GOATS**:

The indication 'Reared in UK' can be used only if:

- the animal has spent at least the last 6 months of the rearing period in UK;
- the animal is slaughtered at <6 months of age and spent the whole rearing period in UK.

4) for **POULTRY**:

The indication 'Reared in UK' can be used only if:

- the animal has spent at least the last month of the rearing period in UK;
- the animal is slaughtered <1 month of age and spent the whole rearing period in UK.

When rearing criteria in one single country are not met, exemptions exist: see [Section 5.1](#) for details.

3. Traceability

[3.1 Introduction](#)

[3.2 Identification and Registration](#)

[3.3 Batch Codes](#)

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Definition and scope

Traceability, as defined by Article 3, Paragraph 15 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002, means ‘the ability to trace and follow a food, feed, food-producing animal or substance intended to be, or expected to be incorporated into a food or feed, through all stages of production, processing and distribution’.

3.1.2 Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 Recital 28

Experience has shown that the functioning of the internal market in food or feed can be jeopardised where it is impossible to trace food and feed. It is therefore necessary to establish a comprehensive system of traceability within food and feed businesses so that targeted and accurate withdrawals can be undertaken, or information given to consumers or control officials, thereby avoiding the potential for unnecessary wider disruption in the event of food safety problems.

3.2 Identification and Registration

3.2.1 System

A system must be in place to record a link between the meat and the animal or group of animals from which it has been obtained. It must have the ability to transmit the information as appropriate with the meat to the operators at the subsequent stages of production and distribution. The system must record, in particular, the arrival at and departure from the establishment of animals, carcasses or cuts, as appropriate, and ensure a correlation between arrivals and departures. Records of the above must be retained and available for 12 months from the end of the calendar year to which each record relates.

3.2.2 Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013

Article 3: FBOs must have an identification and registration system in place which must be applied to ensure, at slaughter stage, a link between the meat and the animals or group of animals from which it has been obtained. This is the slaughterhouses' responsibility.

3.2.3 Regulation (EC) No 178/2002

Article 18 (1): FBOs must have systems and procedures in place to ensure that the traceability of food and food-producing animals can be established at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

3.3 Batch Codes

Correlation between the final batch of meat and the constituent batch or batches of raw material must be coded in such a way as to provide full traceability.

4. Labelling

[4.1 Carcase and Cuts Labelling Procedures](#)

[4.2 Boxed Product Labelling Procedures](#)

[4.3 Bulk Packaging Labelling Procedures](#)

[4.4 Packed ready for Sale Labelling Procedures](#)

4.1 Carcase and Cuts Labelling Procedures

4.1.1 Swine, sheep and goats

Labels must be tamper-proof, tear-resistant and firmly attached to each quarter of carcase or cut. The labels must have printed on them in an indelible form the following:

- the approval number of the abattoir
- the identification or slaughter number of the animal
- the date of slaughter

Reference: Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 Article 8 Paragraph 8 – FBOs must ensure that other FBOs that purchase their goods are provided with sufficient information to enable them, where appropriate, to meet their obligations in providing a durability label.

- the weight of the carcase
- where applicable, that the classification has been carried out by using automated grading techniques.

4.2 Boxed Product Labelling Procedures

4.2.1 Swine, sheep, goats and poultry

The labels must be firmly attached and have printed on them in an indelible form the following:

- name of food
- best before or use by date
- name & address of responsible person or business

- batch number
- any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use
- country of rearing
- country of slaughter
- net weight

4.2.2 Tamperproof

An ID mark label must be firmly attached in such a way to seal the box lid to base to prevent access and tampering of product.

4.3 Bulk Packaging Labelling Procedures

4.3.1 Swine, sheep, goats and poultry

The product should be palletised and cling wrapped to completely seal in all products. It is recommended that the pallet should have labels attached to all four sides. The labels must be clearly and firmly attached and have printed on them in an indelible form the following:

- best before or use by date
- name & address of responsible person or business
- name of the food
- any special storage conditions and / or conditions of use

The remaining mandatory information may be provided in commercial documents either accompanying the goods or supplied prior to delivery.

Reference: Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, Article 8, Paragraph 7

4.4 Packed Ready for Sale Labelling Procedures

4.4.1 Label

Labels must contain all product information as laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011, as well as all specific requirements in Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013. When routinely checking packaging, ensure that both 'reared in' and 'slaughtered in' are clearly displayed.

4.4.2 Health mark

Oval health mark and identification mark must be applied to all fresh meat produce in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 Annex II Section I B points 5 – 8 and Section I C points 9, 13 and 14.

5. Exceptions

[5.1 Rearing Criteria Not Met in One Single Country](#)

[5.2 Exceptions for Meat with different traceability information in the same pack](#)

[5.3 Derogation for Meat from other Countries](#)

[5.4 Derogations for Minced Meat and Trimmings](#)

[5.5 Transitional Provision: withdrawal from the EU](#)

5.1 Rearing Criteria Not Met in One Single Country

In the situation where the FBO can prove to the enforcing authority the names of the countries that the animal was reared in, then these can be specified; some examples:

- Reared in UK and Ireland
- Reared in UK and Denmark
- Reared in Thailand and Ireland and UK

Where the rearing period as explained is not attained in any of the countries where the animal was reared then the indication must be replaced by:

- Reared in several countries.

5.2 Exceptions for meat with different traceability information in the same pack

Where several pieces of meat, of the same or of different species, correspond to different labelling indications in respect of 'reared in' and or 'slaughtered in' and are presented in the same pack to the consumer or mass caterer, the label shall indicate:

- the list of countries in accordance with the requirements for each species and
- the batch code identifying the meat supplied to the consumer or mass caterer.

5.3 Derogation for Meat from other Countries

Where meat is imported for placing on the market in Great Britain from a non-UK source and where the information in regard to the place of rearing is unavailable the label shall contain the indication:

- 'Reared in non-UK' and
- 'Slaughtered in (name of the country where the animal was slaughtered)'.

For the purpose of this derogation, 'country' means any country, other than the United Kingdom, and includes:

- (a) the Bailiwick of Guernsey;
- (b) the Bailiwick of Jersey;
- (c) the Isle of Man.

5.4 Derogations for Minced Meat and Trimmings

The following indications may be applied:

- a) 'Reared and slaughtered in: non-UK' – where minced meat or trimmings are produced exclusively from meat imported into the United Kingdom
- b) 'Reared in: non-UK' and 'Slaughtered in: UK' – where minced meat or trimmings are produced exclusively from meat obtained from animals imported into the United Kingdom as animals for slaughter and slaughtered in the United Kingdom
- c) in a case where neither the indication in point (a) or (b) would be accurate, an indication of rearing and slaughtering as follows:
 - 'Reared in:' followed, as appropriate, by 'UK', 'non-UK' or 'UK and non-UK'; and
 - 'Slaughtered in:' followed, as appropriate, by 'UK', 'non-UK' or 'UK and non-UK'.

5.5 Transitional Provision: withdrawal from the EU

With The Food Information (Transitional Provisions) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2022 that came into force on 30th September 2022, the EU labelling terms will continue to be permitted on the GB market for an additional 15 months.

This means that, with regards to the minced meat labelling for goat, sheep, swine and poultry:

- the FBO can continue to refer to 'EU' and 'non-EU' when the label does not list each country of origin until 31st December 2023.
- from 1st January 2024, the FBO must use 'UK' and 'non-UK' when the label does not list each country of origin.

6. Enforcement

[6.1 Introduction](#)

[6.2 The Country of Origin of Certain Meats \(Scotland\) Regulations 2016](#)

[6.3 The Food \(Scotland\) Act 2015 \(Compliance Notices\) Regulations 2023](#)

6.1 Introduction

Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible to address minor non-compliances through informal advice and education. However, if informal measures are not appropriate to the labelling contravention or issue, the matter should be elevated to formal action by a report to the Procurator Fiscal.

Authorised Officers shall follow the hierarchy of enforcement approach as described in Chapter 7 Section 4 of the SMOC and contact the Area Veterinary Advisor, if technical support is needed.

6.2 The Country of Origin of Certain Meats (Scotland) Regulations 2016

[Regulation 4](#) states that these Regulations are enforced by:

- FSS in slaughterhouses and cutting plants.
- Local Authorities in retail establishments (other than wholesalers which are also cutting plants).

[Regulation 6](#) states that a person who contravenes or fails to comply with the provisions of Articles 3 to 6 and 8 of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1337/2013 and with the provisions of [Regulation 5](#) commits an offence.

6.3 The Food (Scotland) Act 2015 (Compliance Notices) Regulations 2023

On 30 June 2023, the Food (Scotland) Act 2015 (Compliance Notices) Regulations 2023 came into force.

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These regulations introduce a new formal notice that allows AOs to take a more proportionate and graduated approach to enforcing food standards. This type of notice may be served to any food business that manufactures or retails any food products that have breached food information or composition standards legislation. These include an offence under Regulation 6(1) and (2) of the Country of Origin of Certain Meats (Scotland) Regulations 2016.

The aim of the compliance notice is to give AOs the power to instruct food businesses to rectify any food standards non-compliances within a defined timescale, no shorter than the minimum specified period of 14 days.