BREXIT FACTSHEET: AGRI-FOOD

Irish Food Sector - Brexit ready?

The Agri-Food business is a fundamental core of the Irish economy. In recent years, this industry has earned a reputation for the production of high quality, sustainable and safe food products. These unique characteristics have helped build a vibrant export market worth circa €12.1 billion euro (Bord Bia 2019) with nearly 37% of these exports going to the UK. Up to now, this trade has been facilitated though the EU Single Market that has eliminated the imposition of tariffs and frontier controls.

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, we have to prepare for this transition. Brexit will have an impact not only on the goods exported from Ireland but also imported goods that come into Ireland from the UK. It is important that steps are taken by Irish business to mitigate these impacts.

What are the implications for the Irish food industry?

Supply chain and logistical impacts could take place particularly regarding the use of the UK as a land-bridge to continental Europe and the import of raw materials sourced from, or through, the UK. Solutions to these risks such as transit around the UK could incur an additional 36-48 hours which is not suitable for perishable foods or Irish importers of raw materials from the UK facing import tariffs and potential border control testing and compliance obligations.

What are the implications for Product and Food Safety Certification?

EU regulations and directives cover almost all aspects of the food supply chain including transportation, processing, retail, food service, health and safety, communication and information to consumers (e.g. labelling).

Product implications

Companies importing products from the UK may find that there is a divergence in the requirements outlined under current EU regulations and revised UK legislative requirements e.g. chilled food temperature requirements between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Packaging and Raw material implications

Food contact materials (FCMs) are widely used in everyday life in the form of food packaging, kitchen utensils, tableware, etc. EU Regulations on food contact materials specifically the *Food Contact Materials Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004* establishes a general safety requirement applicable to all possible food contact materials. There is also detailed harmonisation at EU level for the following materials plastics, ceramics, regenerated cellulose film and active and intelligent materials. Post-Brexit, it is unclear whether organisations importing packaging from the UK will need to demonstrate compliance with EU requirements. This may lead to a risk of product being held at the point of entry to the EU until compliance is confirmed.

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What are the implications for Irish importers who import from the UK?

When the UK is designated a "third country", importers of UK products may be required to fulfil the legal role of "authorised representatives." This role was not required while the UK was an EU Member State. The duties of an "authorised representative" are set out in a number of harmonised regulations and directives. Food labelling requirements could also be affected.

Management System Certification

Certification to any of the International Standards Organisations Management Systems Standards such as ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System will continue to be internationally recognised

Looking for further information?

Contact the NSAI Brexit Unit at **BrexitUnit@NSAI.ie** for any queries on standards and certifications, and your business post-Brexit.

The EU Commission has produced a suite of official guidance notices on Brexit Preparedness for a wide range of sectors. Further information on Brexit and what it will mean to your business can also be found on the websites below.

Websites	
NSAI	https://www.nsai.ie/about/news/is-your-business-ready-for-brexit/
Bord Bia	https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/brexit/
Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation	https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/EU-Internal-Market/Brexit/
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	https://www.dfa.ie/brexit/
Enterprise Ireland	https://www.prepareforbrexit.com/
InterTradeIreland	https://intertradeireland.com/brexit/
Food Safety Authority of Ireland	https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/brexit.html
Food Drink Ireland IBEC	http://www.fooddrinkireland.ie/Sectors/FDI/FDI.nsf/vPages/Home?OpenDocument
EU Commission information on Brexit	https://ec.europa.eu/info/brexit_en
EU Commission Brexit Preparedness	https://ec.europa.eu/info/brexit/brexit-preparedness/preparedness-notices_en
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/brexit/

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