

Government to boost support for Northern Ireland agri-food traders

Traders moving agri-food from Great Britain to Northern Ireland will benefit from increased Government support until the end of 2023, Defra has announced today (Monday 12 July 2021).

The Movement Assistance Scheme helps traders by covering certain certification costs incurred when moving agri-food products.

Since it was launched in December 2020, the scheme has helped more than 140 businesses, with the cost of more than 11,400 certificates and 1,300 inspection hours covered. The announcement of further support today demonstrates the efforts the Government has made to operationalise the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Alongside the extension to the end of December 2023, the scheme will also be expanded to cover costs related to:

- scrapies testing for sheep exports
- sample testing and certification required for individual seed lots
- the Plant Health Exports Audited Trader Scheme (PHEATS) (from 1 August)
- exporters in Great Britain who move organics solely to Northern Ireland, and Northern Irish importers who face new costs to receive these goods from Great Britain (from 1 August)

Farming, Fisheries and Food Minister Victoria Prentis said

The Movement Assistance Scheme provides essential support to agri-food traders moving goods under the Protocol.

Extending and expanding the scheme means that we can offer further help to businesses affected by new rules, and it demonstrates the efforts the Government has made to operationalise the Protocol.

Despite this extra support, we know that the Protocol is causing disruption for many businesses. That is why we are working with the EU to try and resolve the issues. If solutions cannot be found, we will consider all options available to us. We will present our approach to Parliament before the summer recess.

Since 1 January 2021, there have been new requirements for inspection and certification when moving agri-food and similar goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland.

Authorised traders, such as supermarkets and their trusted suppliers, currently benefit from a grace period from certification requirements for products of animal origin, composite products, food and feed of non-animal origin and plants and plant products as well as organic products.

The Government has proposed a trusted trader scheme to the EU so that traders could benefit from streamlined certification requirements, without any compromise to existing high biosecurity standards on the island of Ireland.

Background

[Guidance on the scheme and moving agri-food goods to and from Northern Ireland](#) is available on gov.uk.

If you would like further information on moving agri-food goods from GB to NI, please contact the Movement Assistance Scheme (MAS) helpline on 0330 0416 580. MAS can help you by offering support and advice, and information around GB to NI processes and policy. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays).

Last week, Lord Frost announced that the Government is considering its next steps and will set out its approach on the Protocol to Parliament before summer recess. More information available here: [Government to set out way forward on the Northern Ireland Protocol to Parliament](#).