

Advice Sheet 43: Dealing with Samples of Foreign Origin

There are many pests and diseases that can seriously damage crops and plants in the UK. To protect plant health, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) sets policy and enforces controls and restrictions on the import, movement and keeping of certain plants, plant pests and other materials such as soil.

What constitutes a sample of foreign origin?

To import, move and keep samples of soil and plant material for chemical and physical analysis that have originated from places other than the UK and the EEC a licence is required from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

NRM Laboratories hold licences for both of its sites, and are able to transfer samples between the sites. There are specific conditions under which the material must be imported, moved and stored, which are detailed below.

There are different rules you must follow to bring material in from the EU and from non-EU countries.

NRM is licensed to handle the following samples from all countries:

- Soil with associated plant material including *Gramineae*
- Unplanted plant material

Authorisations for prohibited soil and other organic material

You must have an authorisation to import, move or keep soil from all third countries, except Switzerland. You do not need an authorisation or a letter of authority to import soil from the EU or Switzerland. This also applies to any organic material capable of sustaining plant life and containing solid organic matter. For example, humus, peat moss and bark.

You must have an authorisation for an artificial growing medium containing organic matter.

You do not need an authorisation for:

- marine sediments
- pure and unused peat
- pure and unused fibre of *Cocos nucifera*
- pure sand, clay, talc, rocks, volcanic pumice and chalk
- water that isn't contaminated by soil or organic matter.

Letter of Authority

Our licence will have a Letter of Authority (LoA) which will need to be attached to any packages containing samples of foreign origin.

If you are sending material to us which is of foreign origin, you will need to request a copy of our LoA and follow the guidance below.

Follow these steps to import prohibited material into England and Wales from non-EU countries under a licence:

1. Request a copy of your letter of authority.
2. Fill in the form as follows:
 - Box 1: Enter your address
 - Box 9: Enter “packaged as per licence, storage at ambient”
 - Box 12: Mark yes and enter the reference number as Client Code and date (as ddmmyy)
e.g. X870-100221.
 - If you do not have a Client Code assigned to you, or you do not know your Client Code, please use R600 plus the date as the reference number e.g. R600-100221.
 - Box 13: Mark as “Analytical testing”
 - Box 14: If you can obtain endorsement by your NPPO, do so. If not, this should be acceptable.
3. Attach the letter to the outside of the package and include a copy inside each package.

Packaging and transport

If you're importing material in luggage, you must present it at the red customs channel, along with the appropriate letter of authority, when you arrive in England or Wales.

You must make sure any prohibited material you're moving under a licence is stored in 3 layers of packaging.

At least 1 of the layers must be escape and shatter-proof.

You must make sure you have licensed material transported to NRM Laboratories directly from the place of landing or the licensed establishment in England and Wales.

Licensed material must only be opened, handled and kept in the approved quarantine containment facility listed on NRM's licence.

Moving samples between licenced sites

If samples are to be moved between licenced sites (e.g. one laboratory to another where each has its own PHL) then a PHI10 must have been requested by the sender and issued by APHA prior to the samples being sent. NRM Compliance can provide advice if required.

Prohibited plants

There are certain types of plant material that are prohibited. The following are species NOT ALLOWED to be imported under the terms of NRM's Plant Health Licence:

FORBIDDEN Scientific Name	Common Description	Location	Notes
Solanum	Potato, tomato, nightshade, horse nettles	Outside Europe	Especially tuber-forming species
Citrus	Citrus fruits: oranges (tangerine, satsuma, clementine, mandarin, citron), lemons, grapefruit, pomelo, lime	Outside Europe	
Coniferae	Conifers: cedars, Douglas Fir, cypresses, firs, junipers, kauri, larch, pines, hemlocks, redwoods, spruces, yews	Outside Europe	
Fortunella	Kumquats	Outside Europe	
Poncirus	Trifoliate orange, hardy orange	Outside Europe	
Phoenix	Date palms	Outside Europe	
Vitis	Grape vines	Outside Europe	
Castanea	Chestnut	Outside Europe	Non-dormant
Quercus	Oak	Outside Europe	Non-dormant
Populus	Poplar, aspen, cottonwood	From the USA	

If you require any further information, please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/moving-prohibited-plants-plant-pests-pathogens-and-soil#bringing-material-in-from-other-countries>