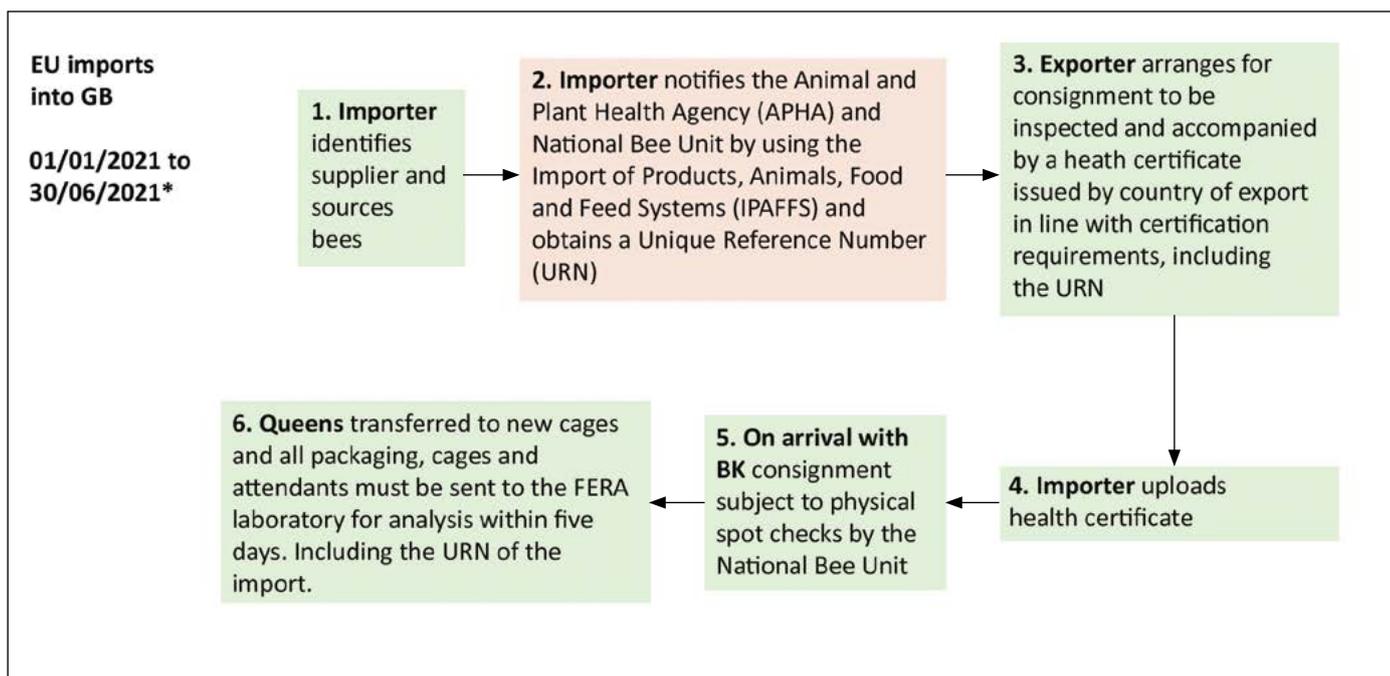


# Honey Bee Imports into Great Britain

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Flow chart summarising the process for importing queens from 1 January 2021

From 1 January 2021, the way you import bees from the European Union (EU) has changed. You must now follow new rules. This article is intended to provide short, informal, non-statutory guidance that aims to clarify the requirements that apply to imports of bees.

**Non EU member states:** Imports must enter via a Border Control Post (BCP) (no change in rules)

#### EU member states:

- Until 30 June 2021: imports will be checked at destination
- After 30 June 2021: imports must enter via a BCP.\*

Currently the only BCPs through which bees can enter are at Heathrow Airport and Manchester Airport.

More detailed information is available as follows:

- **General information**  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-animals-animal-products-and-high-risk-food-and-feed-not-of-animal-origin-from-1-january-2021](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-animals-animal-products-and-high-risk-food-and-feed-not-of-animal-origin-from-1-january-2021)
- **Border operating model**  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-operating-model](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-operating-model)
- **Guidance notes for importers**  
[www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47)

If you are importing or exporting from Northern Ireland then the Northern Ireland Protocol should be consulted at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/moving-goods-into-out-of-or-through-northern-ireland-from-1-january-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/moving-goods-into-out-of-or-through-northern-ireland-from-1-january-2021)

#### Procedure for EU imports into GB until 30 June 2021\*

##### What can I import?

Queen bees with up to 20 attendants.

##### What can't I import?

Packages, nuclei, full colonies.

##### Who must I notify?

All imports must be notified via the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) with a minimum of one day's notice. Guidance can be accessed at: [www.gov.uk/guidance/import-of-products-animals-food-and-feed-system](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/import-of-products-animals-food-and-feed-system).

IPAFFS will generate a Unique Reference Number (URN) and this is key for your imports.

The IPAFFS website uses the Government Gateway logon system. The logon details are the same as those you would use to access your tax details, for example. If you do not have an account or have forgotten your details, instructions are provided on the logon page.

Once logged in, click 'Create new notification' and follow the journey through the website.

You will require the following details:

- country of origin
- commodity code: 01064100 for bees
- quantity – ie, the number of queens
- expected date of entry
- reason for movement: select 'other' if nothing else applies
- accompanying documents: a health certificate which you will need to add after you have received it from the exporter. The certificate must include the URN which is provided by the IPAFFS system
- addresses of the:
  - place of origin (the exporter)
  - importer
  - destination, if different from the importer.
- transport details, including any countries travelled through and port of entry.

You can amend the entry in the IPAFFS notification system as many times as you wish until the date of entry for your import. Each time an amendment is made, the version number at the end of the notification 'V-' is updated.

Once submitted, you will receive a URN in the format: IMP.GB.2021.----- V-. Send this URN (not including the V\*) to the exporter to appear on the certificate provided by the exporting country. The exporter then sends you the certificate which you need to add to the accompanying document section in the IPAFFS system mentioned above.

If you are importing on more than one occasion, there is a facility to 'copy as new' information you have already entered, meaning only certain fields need to be entered for future notifications.

The original health certificate must accompany the consignment of queens and needs to be issued – no more than 24 hours prior to despatch – by the relevant authority in the country of origin. It is valid for ten days from the date of issue.

### My queens have arrived – what now?

As in previous years, the National Bee Unit (NBU) will continue to complete at destination risk-based import checks. If your import is selected, your local inspector will be in touch, so please do not complete the actions below until the queens have been inspected.

Once checked, or if you have not heard from the NBU:

- transfer the queens to new cages before they are introduced to any local colonies
- send the original cages with attendant worker bees and other material that accompanied the queen bees from their country of origin to RM 02G06, Fera Science Ltd, York Biotech Campus, Sand Hutton, York YO41 1LZ within five days of receipt. Please include your name, address, contact number and URN with the parcel.

When sending bees and other material for examination, please use a cardboard container, so that bees travel and arrive in good condition. Tin boxes, polythene bags or other airtight containers cause the sample to sweat and lead to rapid decomposition of the bees, making an examination difficult.

These controls are aimed at reducing the risk of the introduction and spread of notifiable pests and diseases.

### What is changing after 1 July 2021?\*

In addition to the process described above, the queens will have to arrive through a Border Control Post (BCP). The BCP will make documentary and ID checks to ensure the certificate matches the import.

Currently the only BCPs accepting invertebrates are Heathrow Airport and Manchester Airport.

Physical checks will still be carried out, on a risk basis, by the NBU at place of destination. All attendants and cages, etc, will still need to be sent for examination as previously described, regardless of any other checks made.

### What happens if my documentation/certificate is missing or incorrect?

If any import is found to be non-compliant, it will either be returned to country of origin or destroyed. This also applies if an import fails to enter through a BCP from 1 July.\*

### Latest Information

For the latest information and any updates, please view the imports and exports page on BeeBase at:  
[www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=47)

### Addendum (\*)

Since preparing this article, there have been changes to the rules regarding the requirement for queen bee imports to enter via BCPs from 1 July 2021. This has now been delayed until March 2022 and, therefore, queen imports may continue to travel direct to destination for the time being.

We would, however, remind bee farmers and bee suppliers that these imports may still be subject to checks by inspectors at first destination, in the usual way.

Additionally, being now Third Country imports, cages, attendant workers and packaging *must* be sent to Fera Science for diagnostic testing. This is the responsibility of the importer named on the health certificate. □

## Don't put your bees at risk Register on BeeBase



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