

Proposed changes to the health and identification marks

27 July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to ask for your views on an issue that will directly affect your business following the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU).

As you will be aware, the detail of the UK's future relationship with the EU remains subject to negotiation. However, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is consulting stakeholders on a number of detailed issues where it is clear that, whatever the outcome of those negotiations, a change to business practices will be necessary. This letter concerns changes to health and identification marks on certain food products.

Health and identification marks are the oval stamps that must be applied to food products of animal origin to confirm they have been inspected and are fit for human consumption. When the UK leaves the EU, the letters 'EU' or 'EC' within the current marks will no longer be permitted. This change will impact on all approved establishments.

Update to the health mark

To provide for this change, the FSA proposes to amend the current health and identification mark by removing the 'EU' or 'EC' pre- fix.

The dimensions and form of the current health and identification marks will remain the same, including the "UK" abbreviation representing England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It will continue to be a single mark incorporating the establishment approval number, which will also remain unchanged. Please see the pictures attached.

This update will ensure that UK products continue to display an appropriate label that clearly shows the product has been subject to the strict health and welfare checks that will continue after the UK leaves the EU.

- **Please tell us of any views or concerns with this change to the health and identification mark?**

Using older packaging

We also need to explore how long we would continue to accept for domestic use only, and not for export, packaging bearing the old identification mark once we have left the EU. This would be an interim measure to enable industry to use stocks of old packaging.

- **Do you have any information that will help us decide how long we should continue to accept for domestic use packaging bearing the old identification mark?**
- **If you store pre-printed labels or packaging bearing the identification mark, we would be interested to know how long it would take you to use your existing stock.**

Wider impact

Our aim is to keep the change to the health and identification mark as simple and least burdensome as possible. We want to minimise the impact on industry and ensure continued recognition of the UK brand by consumers in the UK, EU and countries that we export to outside the EU.

- **Are there any other impacts we should be made aware of as a result of changing the health and identification mark?**
- **It is important that the FSA fully assesses the impact of this change so please tell us of any views or evidence to assist our assessment.**
- **In particular, the FSA would welcome any information you can provide on the costs associated with**
 - **printing identification marks for EU export**
 - **printing identification marks for the domestic market**
 - **(re)designing those labels**

Next steps

If you have any views on the issues detailed in this letter please reply to us at csulondontransactions@food.gov.uk by Friday 27 August 2018.

The views that you provide on this issue will be fed into the wider formal consultation on how the FSA plans to bring existing EU food and feed hygiene regulations into UK legislation. This will be launched shortly.

The implementation date for our proposal has not yet been decided and is subject to withdrawal negotiations. The FSA is planning for a range of exit scenarios and the earliest date that the changes proposed to the UK health and identification mark would be from 29th March 2019. I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that the FSA and DAERA are taking steps to ensure that operational staff in establishments that we are responsible for are equipped with appropriate health marks from this date.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rod Ainsworth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rod Ainsworth
Director of Regulatory and Legal Strategy
Food Standards Agency

Current Health and Identification Mark

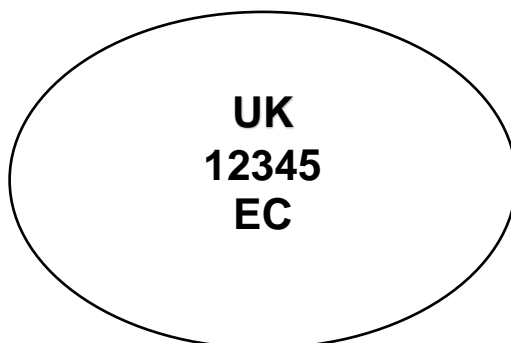


Proposed UK Health and Identification Mark



AND/OR

Current



Proposed

