INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE IN HATCHING EGGS

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE OF THE OFFICIAL VETERINARIAN (OV) AND EXPORTER

1. KEY DOCUMENTS

The following key documents must be read and understood prior to completing and signing the Intra-trade Animal Health Certificate (ITAHC) for hatching eggs:

- Poultry-Hatching Eggs -NFG - this document
- Poultry- Hatching Eggs -CKL - checklist procedures

2. NOTIFIABLE DISEASE CLEARANCE:

Official Veterinarians may certify membership of the Poultry Health Scheme and the following paragraphs of the Checklists on behalf of the Department provided written authority to do so has been obtained from the local Animal Health Divisional Office on form TRACES NDC: CKL Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 (a) or (b), 18.

The TRACES NDC must bear the same certificate reference number as the ITAHC (or Checklist) to which it relates.

3. SCOPE:

The ITAHC 90/539 IV 1 may be used for the export of poultry hatching eggs to another Member State of the European Union, or to Switzerland. Exports of live poultry and hatching eggs to countries within the European Union are harmonised under Council Directive 90/539/EEC (as amended). Under separate EU legislation poultry movements between Switzerland and the EU Member States are treated in the same way as EU internal movements.

Poultry is defined in the Directive as “fowl, turkeys, guinea fowl, ducks, geese, quail, pigeons, pheasants, partridges and ratites, reared or kept in captivity for breeding, the production of meat or eggs for consumption, or for re-stocking supplies of game”.

Some sections in the ITAHC require the OV to certify compliance with Articles in EU legislation rather than itemising each condition separately. The checklists are provided in order to explain each of those conditions, and if the answer to each question in the checklists is ‘Yes’, the consignment will comply with the relevant Articles of the EU legislation.

4. CHECKLIST:

(a) Separate consignments

A separate ITAHC export health certificate and a separate checklist must be completed for each separate consignment. A ‘consignment’ is defined as a group of eggs of the same health status, from the same premises, travelling together in one container or vehicle to the same consignee at the same place of destination.
(b) **Support documents**

If the flock of origin is covered by a different veterinarian from the OV who completes the ITAHC (for example if the eggs are gathered for export from an egg store at some distance from the flock of origin), a separate checklist must be completed by the veterinarian at the flock of origin. The flock veterinarian must be an MRCVS or FRCVS, but it is not essential for him/her to be an Official Veterinarian on the poultry export panel 1. k. The checklist must be signed by the flock veterinarian as a support document and forwarded by fax or post to the OV at the final point of departure, who may complete the ITAHC on the basis of the checklist support statements.

(c) **Approved establishment: question 1**

Flocks and hatcheries must be approved under Directive 90/539/EEC in order to export to other member States of the EU. In Great Britain approval is implemented by membership of the Poultry Health Scheme (PHS). The DVM will confirm that the flock of origin is currently a member of the PHS on the TRACES NDC form.

(d) **Notifiable diseases: questions 2 and 3**

Note that question 2 refers to restrictions that may have been applied specifically to the premises of origin themselves, whereas question 3 refers to restrictions on the area in which the premises are located.

The TRACES NDC will authorise the certification of either question 3 (a) or 3 (b), but not both. For further details see the advise on completion of the ITAHC in paragraph 5 (b) of these notes.

(e) **6-week Approval limit: question 4**

Note that a flock must have been a member of the PHS for at least 6 weeks before it may export to another member State of the EU.

(f) **Approved vaccines: question 5**

Any vaccine used in the flock of origin must have a marketing authorisation issued by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) of DEFRA. The use of vaccines imported under a VMD issued Special Import Certificate (SIC) or, of autogenous vaccines manufactured and used with the approval of the VMD, can be considered to have the equivalent of a marketing authorisation in the UK.

(g) **Inspection of Flock of Origin: question 6**

Where, for management reasons, a flock of origin has been culled or disposed of after the eggs were collected but before they were consigned for export question 6 may be ticked ‘yes’ if the certifying Official Veterinarian has either:

- undertaken a health inspection of the said flock within 72 hours prior to disposal and found no clinical signs or suspicion of contagious poultry diseases;
- or
- received a written support certificate from the veterinarian responsible for the health of the flock of origin stating that a health inspection of the said flock was carried out within 72 hours prior to the disposal and no clinical signs or suspicion of contagious poultry diseases was found at the inspection;
- or
received a written support certificate from the Company veterinarian responsible for the health of the flock of origin stating that the flock was disposed of in accordance with normal management practice and no clinical signs or suspicions of contagious poultry diseases were evident in the flock at the time of disposal.

If option 6 (b) is chosen then the Official Veterinarian must, at some time during the 72 hours prior to the despatch of the consignment:

i. examine the records (see below) of the health status of the flock

and

ii. evaluate the current health status of the flock as assessed by up-to-date information supplied by the person in charge of the flock.

In the case where records or other information gives rise to the suspicion of disease in the flock(s), then the Official Veterinarian must carry out both a clinical health examination of the flock(s) and send samples to a DEFRA approved laboratory in order to rule out the possibility of contagious poultry disease.

(h) **Marking of hatching eggs: question 7**

All hatching eggs must be marked prior to placing into an incubator in one of the following two ways:

i. Method 1 requires the eggs to be marked at the producer establishment, the mark being the producer establishment's registration number. The number must be printed in an indelible black ink and the characters must be at least 2mm high and 1mm wide.

ii. Method 2 requires the eggs to be marked before they are placed in an incubator. The mark must be clearly visible and printed in indelible black ink having an area of at least 10mm$^2$. Marking may be done either at the producer establishment or at the hatchery. Neither the shape of this mark or its maximum size is specified in the UK.

Note that the marking requirement applies only to eggs of the species chicken, turkey, ducks, geese and guinea fowl.

(j) **Disinfection of eggs: question 8**

Eggs may be disinfected with any product designed for that purpose provided that it is used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

(k) **Disinfection of vehicles: question 15**

Disinfectants are approved by Defra under the Diseases of Animals (Approved Disinfectants) Order 1978 (as amended). The list contains over 200 brands of disinfectant approved for use with poultry on the basis of their efficacy against Newcastle disease and avian influenza viruses. Defra approved disinfectants carry a statement on the container, and other references to their approval may be found in their data sheets or label instructions.
(l) **Newcastle disease vaccination: question 16**
The additional vaccination information is required only for those countries which do not permit Newcastle disease vaccination, and whose status has been accepted by the EU Commission. At present those countries are Finland, Sweden and Switzerland. If the consignment is not destined for one of those countries, the question may be deleted.

(m) **Avian Influenza outbreaks: questions 17 and 18**
The DVM will provide confirmation on form TRACES-NDC that no restrictions currently apply at the premises of origin because of confirmed cases in either wild birds or domestic poultry.

5. **COMPLETION OF ITAHC**

(a) **Part 1, box I.31 - identification of the animals**
The following details should be given as a minimum:
- Poultry species;
- Category (ie: pure line/grandparents/parents/laying pullets/fattening/others);
- Identification codes on the containers

The Official Veterinarian must be satisfied that the consignment meets the identification description throughout Part I of the ITAHC certificate. The OV (NOT someone in the employ of the exporter, transporter or agent) is responsible for verifying the identification marks or other appropriate details recorded in the certificate.

Part II. 1. **Animal Health Attestation**

(b) **Part II, section II, 1. (a) – Articles in the Directive**
The content of Articles 6,7,15 are covered by the Checklist. Article 6 covers approval details of the premises of origin, Article 7 covers health details of the flock of origin, and Article 15 covers transport procedures.

Section II. 1. (a) (one option only) may be certified if all the answers to Checklist questions 1 to 15 are ‘Yes’ (including either question 3 (a) or 3 (b) on the checklist.) Note that the OV MUST delete one of the 2 options in section II. 1. (a).

The first option may be retained, and the second one deleted, if the answer to checklist question 3 (a) is ‘Yes’.

The second option must be retained, and the first one deleted, if the answer to checklist question 3 (b) is ‘Yes’. This option will apply in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza in poultry in GB, if certain conditions are met which will allow the export of poultry from within restricted zones under a special licence. The EU legislation under which such exports may be permitted is EU Decision 2006/415/EC, which is referred to in section II.3.2 of the ITAHC. If the DVM has provided a TRACES NDC authorising the certification of either question 3(a) or 3 (b), the consignment will comply with the animal health conditions in Commission Decision 2006/415/EC.
(c) Part II, section II, 1. (b) – Articles in the Directive
The content of Article 12 (1)(a) is covered by Checklist question 16. The Article covers special requirements relating to Newcastle disease vaccination which apply only to exports to Finland, Sweden and Switzerland. The section may be certified if the consignment is destined for one of those countries, and the answer to checklist question 16 is ‘Yes’. Otherwise the OV should delete it.

(d) Part II, section II, 1. (c) - Articles 13 and 14 of the Directive
These Articles refer to additional guarantees in respect of Salmonella. Such guarantees at present exist only for exports of day old or adult birds to Finland and Sweden. As the statement is not applicable, the blanks should be left empty and the section may be ignored.

(e) Part II, section II. 1. (d) - Newcastle disease vaccination
Note that this is not covered by the CKL. The OV must certify this section on the basis of his/her knowledge of the flock and any necessary support statements. Newcastle disease vaccination is not compulsory, but where a vaccine is used, the date of vaccination, type and strain must be entered in this section of the ITAHC. This is to provide epidemiological information in the event of an outbreak of disease. The indented lines that do not apply must be deleted.

Part II. 2. Public Health Attestation

(f) Note that this part is not covered by the CKL. The OV must certify it on the basis of his/her knowledge of the flock, an examination of relevant records and laboratory reports, and any necessary support statements.


The regulations currently apply ONLY to flocks of the chicken species (\textit{Gallus gallus}) From January 2007 onwards they apply to breeding flocks, and from February 2008 they will also apply to flocks laying table eggs. From January 2009 they will be extended to apply to flocks of broiler chickens, and in 2010 breeding turkeys.

If the species being exported is not chickens in the appropriate category, none of section II.2. applies and the OV should mark it as ‘Not Applicable’.

(g) Part II, section II. 2. (a) - Salmonella testing
The Regulation 2160/2003 is implemented in England by the Poultry Breeding Flocks and Hatcheries (England) Order 2007 (PBFHO) which has been revoked and replaced with the Control of Salmonella in Poultry Order 2007 (CSPO) and its equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. If the chicken flock is routinely tested according to the CSPO, the first sentence of this paragraph can be certified.

Concerning the results of testing, it should be described as positive ONLY if \textit{S.hadar}, \textit{S.virchow}, or \textit{S.infantis} are detected. If any other serotype is detected, or if none are detected, the result may be described as negative. The inapplicable line MUST be deleted.
(h) **Part II, section II. 2. (b)**
If the result in the section above is shown as positive, but this section is certified as negative, it is clear that the flock was only positive for either S.hadar, or S.virchow or S.infantis. The significance of this is that the export may be allowed to proceed, subject to the agreement of the receiving country, if the flock has been positive for one of those three, but not if it was positive for S.enteritidis or S.typhimurium. This is admittedly a tortuous way of expressing things. The Commission’s reason for designing the ITAHC in this way is in order to allow for the phasing in of future testing requirements, without having to make further changes in the certificate.

**Part II. 3 Additional Health Information**

(i) **Part II, section II. 3. 1 – Avian Influenza vaccination**
Under Council Directive 2005/94/EC, vaccination of poultry against avian influenza is not permitted within the EU, except in special circumstances in the face of an unusually high perceived risk of disease. In this case a special Decision will be issued specifying the conditions under which it is permitted. The OV must certify this section on the basis of his/her knowledge of the flock and any necessary support statements.

(j) **Part II, section II. 3. 2. – Commission Decision 2006/415/EC**
This Decision lays down conditions to be observed in the event of highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N1 being confirmed in domestic poultry within a member state. The OV may certify this section on the basis of the TRACES-NDC form, provided by the DVM, confirming that either question 3 (a) or question 3 (b) of the checklist may be certified (see question 17 of CKL, and also paragraph 5 (b) of these NFG).

(k) **Part II, section II. 3. 3. – Commission Decision 2006/563/EC**
This Decision lays down conditions to be observed in the event of highly pathogenic avian influenza subtype H5N1 being confirmed in wild birds within a member state. The OV may certify this section on the basis of the TRACES-NDC form, provided by the DVM, confirming that the premises of origin are not subject to any exporting restrictions imposed under the Decision (see question 18 of CKL).

(l) **Official Signature**
The Official Veterinarian must sign and stamp the ITAHC with the Official Veterinarian’s official stamp in ink of any colour other than black. The completed ITAHC parts 1 and II on a single sheet of paper will accompany the consignment to its final destination.

6. **FORM TRACES-CONF:**
**NOTIFICATION TO THE ISSUING AHDO OF COMPLETION AND SIGNATURE / AMENDMENT OF ITAHC**

In order to meet the requirement for notification of animal movements to other Member States, Official Veterinarians must notify the AHDO that an ITAHC has been completed and signed. To do this, the Official Veterinarian must complete and sign a copy of the confirmation document TRACES-CONF.

Poultry-Hatching Eggs-NFG (22/04/2009)
Completed copies of the following documents must be faxed to the exports section of the AHDO within one working day following signature of the ITAHC:

- form TRACES-CONF
- Part 1 of the ITAHC (indicating any amendments)
- completed Part 2 of the ITAHC

**Certified Copy of ITAHCs**

In cases where it is not possible to fax a copy of the original ITAHC following signature, Official Veterinarians must complete a copy of the ITAHC at the same time as the original. This copy must be clearly marked 'certified copy' and contain the identical details as the original. The certified copy should be signed and stamped and must clearly indicate that it is copy. It must be delivered to the AHDO without delay.

Any amendments to Part 1 of the ITAHC, e.g. changes in identification numbers of animals in the consignment, must be clearly indicated so that the necessary amendments can be made by the AHDO prior to sending the TRACES movement notification to the destination Member State.

These Notes For Guidance and the Checklist to which they refer are not part of the export health certificate and so should not be attached to it, nor accompany the consignment to the final destination. All completed Checklists should be retained by the certifying veterinarian for a period of 12 months.