

UK-EU Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement Equine Sector response to Call for Information

Respond to [Defra online via the dedicated webpage](#)

Deadline 23 April 2026

A Call for Information has been launched by Defra to assist with a new Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement which it's anticipated will make it easier, cheaper and more predictable to move goods to the EU and around the UK. Submitting a response will provide Defra and Cabinet Office with specific details of your issues and your requirements that need to be addressed. It will help BEF and British Horse Council represent your needs when talking to officials and ministers and give us the best chance of a positive outcome from the 2027 proposed changes to movements to and from the EU.

We expect that the proposed changes will reduce the need to border checks and documentary controls on equines and germinal products being moved in and out of GB, easing the burden of legitimate movements. In order for this to happen we will need to "Dynamically Align" with the EU, meaning that we will have to adopt some of their regulations.

The response may take you up to two hours to complete, but the benefits may help undo the damage caused to our world by Brexit

Before starting the online response, **collect key business, operational, and financial information**. Having this ready will make the process quicker and ensure responses are as accurate as they can be and this information sheet is intended to save you time and to help you prepare to sit down and complete the online form.

It applies to:

- Competition riders/yards/owners/coaches
- Studs and breeders, semen importers/exporters
- Transport agents, competition and event organisers.

Be aware that the questions aren't written with equestrian movements in mind so it may not be immediately obvious what's required. Please also look at the accompanying suggested response sheet which provides recommendations for responses you might use on a question-by-question basis

1. Business / organisation profile

You will be asked for name and contact details, organisation name and the nature of your business, business size, location, number of employees, annual turnover (in £ - actual or estimated).

2. Areas of operation (markets and geography)

Prepare details on where you **operate, trade, or travel**

Where you **move horses or germinal products to** - Great Britain, Northern Ireland, European Union (including Republic of Ireland), rest of the world

Where you **source from** - horses, semen/embryos, services (e.g. transport, training, veterinary)

Approximate **proportion of revenue or costs** linked to each region (if known).

3. Equine activities and services

Be ready to describe:

A. Horse movements

- Number of cross-border movements per year for competition, sales, training or breeding
- Typical routes (e.g. UK ↔ France, UK ↔ Ireland)
- Types of horses moved (competition, breeding, youngstock, leisure).

B. Competition participation

- Number of international competitions attended/organised annually
- Countries regularly travelled to/where competitors originate
- Frequency of travel per horse and typical duration of trips.

C. Breeding and germinal products (if applicable)

- Volume of semen imports/exports or embryos or ova movements
- Key markets (EU countries, etc.)
- Seasonal patterns (e.g. breeding season peaks).

D. Transport and logistics

- Whether you transport horses yourself or use third-party transporters.
- Number of journeys per year, use of staging posts or border control posts, any reliance on specialist equine logistics providers.

4. Current operational requirements

Think about what you currently need for cross-border activity:

Export Health Certificates (EHCs), veterinary inspections and approvals, border checks and clearance processes – access to IPAFFS and other Gov systems, identification and traceability requirements, transport compliance requirements.

It is helpful to note and important to emphasise time taken per movement and administrative steps involved AND recurring issues or delays.

5. Costs and financial information

Prepare figures (ranges are fine) on:

A. Current costs

Certification costs (e.g. EHCs, vet fees), transport costs (including impact of delays and waiting times), staff/admin time and IT costs, compliance-related costs.



B. Potential future costs

IT or system upgrades, changes to processes or record-keeping, training for staff/riders/or anyone, contract changes.

C. Potential benefits / savings

Reduced paperwork and lower certification costs, faster border crossings and fewer physical inspections, increased ability to compete or trade in the EU and vice versa – better for business, mention details of the benefits of proposed reduction in bureaucracy, potential removal of BCPs, benefits of checks at destination etc.

6. Staffing and workforce

You may need the number of employees or staff involved in horse care, transport/logistics, admin and compliance, freelancers (e.g. grooms, riders) and/or seasonal staff.

7. Readiness and planning

Be prepared to outline whether you have started preparing for SPS changes, what actions (if any) you have already taken, estimated time needed to adapt (e.g. months/years).

8. Key challenges and risks

Think in advance about barriers to moving horses or germinal products that you can specifically talk about risks to competition schedules, horse welfare during transport and breeding timelines and administrative or regulatory burdens.

9. Support needs

Identify what would help you prepare for the changes, such as guidance on new rules and which rules are within the scope of the changes, simplified certification processes, training or webinars, direct support (e.g. helplines, veterinary guidance). **Our key ask here is for a specialist stakeholder advisory group through the British Horse Council.**

10. Before starting the survey gather **real examples** (e.g. a recent EU trip or semen shipment) and use best estimates if exact data isn't available.

Good luck – and thank you! Your response will really help the BEF and British Horse Council represent your specific requirements at upcoming officials and ministerial meetings. If you are able, please share a copy of what you have submitted with BEF using the email below which will be treated in the strictest confidence.

If you have a specific question that is not covered by the above and would like to talk through your options, please email jan.rogers@bef.co.uk.

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