
EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Order, made under the Diseases of Animals Act 1950, as amended by the Diseases of Animals Act 1975, replaces previous orders regulating the importation into Great Britain of all ruminating animals and swine. It prohibits the landing of such animals except under a licence granted by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in relation to England and Wales, and by the Secretary of State in relation to Scotland. A licence may be general or specific, and may contain conditions designed to prevent animal diseases from being introduced into or spread within Great Britain, and to protect imported animals from unnecessary suffering. A licence is also required for animals on board a vessel which enters a harbour in Great Britain even if the animals are not to be landed.

After landing, imported animals must be moved to an approved reception centre for resting, or to approved quarantine premises for detention for the period specified in the relevant import licence, before they are permitted to proceed to their final destination in Great Britain. Whether or not imported animals are required by the import licence to be detained at approved quarantine premises will depend on the disease risk involved in importing the animals to which the licence relates.

Detailed requirements are laid down regarding the action to be taken in case of injury, death or disease among animals being carried to Great Britain, and with regard to their unloading on arrival. Veterinary inspectors (of the Ministry) may regulate unloading, and inspectors (of the Ministry or of a local authority) are empowered to require the cleansing and disinfection of any vessels, aircraft, vehicles or containers which have brought animals to Great Britain, or which have come to Great Britain contaminated with animal matter.

Reception centres and quarantine premises must be approved by licence of the Minister or the Secretary of State, and such licences may be conditional. Additionally, approved premises are subject to control by veterinary inspectors.

Where disease is found among imported animals, veterinary inspectors may require them to be slaughtered, re-exported or detained subject to such conditions as they may prescribe, and similar powers are given to inspectors in relation to animals in respect of which there has been a breach of the order or of a licence. In both cases, the Minister and the Secretary of State have power to slaughter without payment of compensation. Where disease is found among animals at approved premises, veterinary inspectors may impose conditions with regard to the premises and their use.

Wide default powers are provided, enabling local authorities and persons acting on behalf of the appropriate Minister to ensure that the requirements of the order, and of licences issued, notices served and directions given under it, are properly carried out. Local authorities and Ministers are empowered to recover reasonable expenses thus incurred.

The Order provides the option of prosecution on indictment, in accordance with section 3 of the Diseases of Animals Act 1975, in relation to certain offences involving intent to evade its provisions. Local authorities are made responsible for enforcing the order.

Schedule 1 amends certain orders relating to animal health so as to bring them into line with the new order. Schedule 2 lists further orders which will now only apply to imported animals after they are eligible under the order to be moved out of approved premises. Schedule 3 deals with revocations.