vinetur

Britain Sets Five-Year Plan for Food and Border Checks

Defra outlines risk-based inspections and enforcement from 2026 through 2030 across imports, domestic products and compliance controls

Tuesday, May 19, 2026



Britain’s food and border regulators have set out a new five-year control plan that will guide inspections and enforcement from 2026 through 2030, covering imported and domestic products and giving officials a framework for checking compliance with safety, health and welfare rules.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published the Multi-Annual National Control Plan for Great Britain on Monday, laying out how official controls will be carried out across animal products, non-animal products, import checks and domestic oversight. The plan is meant to support risk-based inspections and to make sure controls are applied in proportion to the level of risk involved.

The document is a statutory requirement under Regulation (EU) 2017/625, which remains part of British law after Brexit. It brings together the work of several agencies, including the Food Standards Agency, Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency, along with local authorities, port health authorities and border inspection posts.

The plan matters for the wine sector because it sits within the wider system of official controls that also covers regulated food and drink products, labeling compliance, import procedures and geographic indication protections. For producers, importers and distributors, that means the rules governing verification, documentation and enforcement will continue to be shaped by a coordinated national framework rather than by a single agency acting alone.

Defra said the system depends on cooperation across government departments and delivery partners in order to protect human, animal and plant health. The plan also notes that implementation is partly devolved, with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland working within the broader structure while adapting enforcement to regional needs.

Among the areas covered are competence checks for staff carrying out controls, including training, audits and assessments. The plan also sets out the role of laboratories in testing products, confirming compliance and supporting disease monitoring. Officials say those functions are central to identifying risks early and responding when standards are not met.

For businesses in wine and spirits, the practical effect is likely to be felt in inspections, certification checks and border procedures tied to product movement into Great Britain. The plan also links official controls to broader food safety enforcement, animal health surveillance and plant health monitoring, all of which can affect supply chains that rely on imported ingredients, packaging or finished goods.

The publication comes as regulators continue to emphasize targeted enforcement rather than blanket checks. Under the plan, authorities are expected to focus resources where risks are highest, while maintaining coordination between national bodies and local enforcement teams. That approach is intended to keep controls consistent while limiting unnecessary burdens on compliant businesses.

Defra said planning and reporting will remain central to the system over the next five years so that controls can be adjusted as risks change.