

Measures against the introduction of epitrix on potatoes imported from Spain

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

RPC rating: validated

Description of proposal

The UK has recently discovered nine cases of epitrix (potato flea beetle) in potato imports from Spain. The EU is currently reviewing measures to tackle this issue; however, the Department is proposing to undertake domestic action while the EU's review occurs.

The Department proposes to require all potatoes imported from non-demarcated areas of mainland Spain to be washed before being allowed into the UK. This proposal will last for two years, until the EU review is expected to be complete.

Impacts of proposal

The Department states that the UK currently imports approximately 55,000 tonnes of potatoes from Spain at a value of £5.5 million. This is approximately 1% of UK potato imports. It is unable to estimate what percentage of these imports are unwashed.

The Department states that there are a large number of suppliers of similarly priced potatoes from other EU and non-EU countries. It therefore expects that either Spanish businesses exporting potatoes to the UK will wash their potatoes and bear much of the associated costs to remain competitive; or UK businesses currently importing affected potatoes will switch to importing unwashed potatoes from other countries. Therefore, the Department does not expect any material decrease in potato imports or increase in potato prices as a result of the proposal.

The Department has not monetised any familiarisation costs that the proposal may impose on business. However, these are expected to be very small, as the Department is working with trade bodies to raise awareness of the change.

The Department states that the proposal may reduce the prevalence of epitrix in the UK. If this occurs, it would reduce the loss of potato yields from epitrix, boosting the revenues of affected businesses. These benefits have not been monetised.

The RPC is able to validate the estimated annual net cost to business.

Quality of submission

The Department has not monetised the costs or benefits of the proposal. The IA would benefit from including more quantitative detail in these areas. However, given the scale of the proposal, the RPC acknowledges that it could be disproportionate to monetise the impacts fully.

The proposal does not include a SaMBA. This is not required for regulatory proposals less than £1 million.

Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
Equivalent annual net cost to business (EANCB)	£0 (not quantified)
Business net present value	£0

RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
EANCB – RPC validated ¹	£0.0 million
Small and micro business assessment	Not required (fast track low-cost regulation)



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman

¹ For reporting purposes, the RPC validates EANCB figures to the nearest £100,000.