



THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE LABELLING OF PORK AND PORK PRODUCTS

The Code of Practice is in the process of being revised to reflect the EU law on country of origin labelling for fresh and frozen pork that is in force from 1 April 2015.

More information is available [here](#)

A PIG
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THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE LABELLING OF PORK AND PORK PRODUCTS

Produced by BPEX

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CONTENTS

Foreword	2
Introduction	3
Scope	3
Country of Origin	3
Pig Production Terms	4
Breed Names	5
How to Sign Up to the Code	6
Useful Contacts	6
About the Task Force	7

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FOREWORD

The Pig Meat Supply Chain Task Force launched the voluntary Code of Practice for the labelling of pork and pork products. The Code of Practice was drawn up to provide the pig meat supply chain with a set of guidelines to help them produce clear, consistent and unambiguous labelling on all pork and pork products. It calls for the country of origin of the pork used in pork products to be clearly displayed.

Organisations that sign up to the Code of Practice are able to provide consumers with clarity and even greater confidence in the pork products they purchase. The Code of Practice is consistent with the policy of the Food Standards Agency which wants labelling to be clear, consistent and transparent. The Code of Practice applies to the whole of the pig meat supply chain.

For more information about the Task Force turn to page 7.



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INTRODUCTION

British consumers consider a range of factors when buying pork and pork products. [Research](#) shows that while price and freshness are primary concerns when deciding what to buy, consumers want clear and unambiguous labelling so that they have the ability to make an informed choice. Of particular interest is country of origin, pig production terms – such as free range – and the use of breed names.

This Code of Practice sets down the minimum standards which supporting businesses will use when labelling pork and pork products. It is largely based on advice on best practice from the Food Standards Agency¹ and LACORS.

The Code sets out a number of principles that supporting businesses will use in their labelling. It then lists examples of the terminology that could be used. Companies may use similar terms with the same meaning in the design of their labels and literature.

SCOPE

The Code of Practice applies initially to fresh and frozen, pork, bacon, gammon, ham, sausages and pork pies. Once established it is planned to extend coverage of the Code to other processed products where pork is an important constituent.

This Code of Practice applies to retail labels used on pre-packed or loose pork and pork products. It also applies to the use of the terms in foodservice.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Background

Under EU law specific food groups are required to be labelled with information on country of origin. These include beef, veal, fish, shellfish, most fresh fruit and vegetables and poultry meat imported from outside the EU. Other food groups including pork and pork products are covered by The Food Labelling Regulations 1996.

There is a general principle in the regulations that the place of origin or provenance of the food should be labelled if failure to do so might mislead a purchaser.

However there are areas where there is a lack of clarity or the regulations do not match consumers' expectations. For example the legislation allows imported pork processed in this country to be labelled as Produced in the UK (as this was the place of last substantial change).

This Code of Practice addresses these ambiguities and provides clarity for consumers in the labelling of pork and pork products.

1. Retail Labelling – Code of Practice

1.1 The country of origin of pork and the pork used in processed products will be clearly displayed on the front of the packet. If this is not practical due to label size or extended origin descriptions the country of origin will be clearly displayed on the side or back of the packet. For products not sold pre-packed a country of origin statement will be displayed in close proximity to the product concerned.

1.2 Single country of origin declarations mean that the pig used to produce the pork or pork product was born, reared and slaughtered in that country.

Example

"Origin country x"
"Country y bacon"

1.3 Where a country of origin is stated and the pig is born, reared or slaughtered in more than one country then additional information will be provided on the pack. This will be either a) a statement of each of the countries involved; or b) the country where the pigs were born or reared (farmed) will be stated.

Example

"Country x pork from pigs born in country y and reared / farmed in country z"
"Country x pork from pigs reared in country y"
"Bacon from country x from pigs reared in country y"
"Country x pork from pigs born in country y"

1.4 The terms "Produced in the UK" and "Packed in the UK" can be ambiguous about origin if not qualified and so will not be used in isolation. The country or countries of origin will be clearly stated.

Example

"Produced in the UK using pork from country x"
"Made in the UK using country x and country y pork"
"Packed in the UK using pork from country x"

1.5 Pork products such as sausages, ham and pork pies can sometimes be made with pork from a number of different countries. In such cases the countries of origin will be stated or the EU will be the declared origin

Example

"made with pork from country x and country y"
"made with imported pork"
"made with pork sourced from the EU"
"made with pork from a number of EU countries"
"made with pork from country x, country y or country z"



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INITIATIVE**

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN cont...

- 1.6 Statements of origin containing a list of possible countries that includes the UK such as "Produced using pork from country a, b, c or UK" has the potential to mislead consumers that the product could be entirely or predominantly of UK origin. Therefore this will not be used.
- 1.7 Where national terms and symbols (such as flags or logos containing flags) such as Great British Classics are used as part of the description of processed pork products then this means that the ingredients that characterise the product (such as bacon or the pork in pork pies) and all of the main production/manufacturing processes associated with the product originated within that place or country.

Geographical Origin

- 1.8 Product specific terms or recipes that state a geographical origin within the UK will be made from UK pork. Otherwise they will be accompanied by an origin declaration in the same field of vision on the label.

Example

"Wiltshire Cure bacon"
"Wiltshire Cure bacon... from country x"
"Melton Mowbray Pork Pie.... using country x pork"
"Cumberland sausage... made from country x and country y pork"
"Lincolnshire sausages... from EU pork"

- 1.9 The use of breed descriptions that state a geographical origin within the UK will be from UK pork. Otherwise they will be accompanied by an origin declaration in the same field of vision on the label.

Example

"Hampshire cross breed pork"
"Hampshire cross breed country x pork"
"Country y Berkshire pork"

- 1.10 The use of trade names (for example Rural Valley) and/or imagery (for example English village scenes) used on packaging that could imply a UK country of origin will be UK origin. Otherwise they will be accompanied by an origin declaration in the same field of vision on the label.

Example

"Rural Valley pork"
"Rural Valley pork... from country x"
"Rural Valley... Country x bacon"

2. Foodservice – Code of Practice

- 2.1 The country of origin of pork and the pork used in processed products will be available to customers either on menu, on accompanying literature, on a company website or directly from the company on request. Pork products such as sausages, ham and pork pies can

sometimes be made with pork from more than one country. In such cases the countries of origin will be available or the EU will be the declared origin.

- 2.2 The use of terminology and descriptions relating to origin on foodservice menus will be clear and unambiguous.
- 2.3 The use of the term "local" or "locally sourced" pork and pork products will be clearly defined and available to customers either on menu, on accompanying literature, on a company website or directly from the company on request.
- 2.4 Product specific terms or recipe names that state a UK geographical origin will be made from UK pork. Otherwise they will be accompanied by an origin statement on the menu or on accompanying literature.

Example

"Wiltshire Cure bacon"
"Wiltshire Cure gammon from country x"
"Melton Mowbray Pork Pie using country x pork"
"Cumberland sausage made with country x and country y pork"
"Lincolnshire sausages made with EU pork"

- 2.5 The use of breed descriptions that state a UK geographical origin will be UK origin pork. Otherwise they will be accompanied by an origin statement on the menu or on accompanying literature.

Example

"Gloucestershire Old Spot gammon"
"Hampshire cross bred pork from country x"

3. PIG PRODUCTION TERMS

Background

A number of terms relating to [pig production methods](#) are currently in use on retail packs and menus featuring pork and pork products. These include free range, outdoor bred and outdoor reared. There are accepted industry norms relating to these terms but there are not agreed, auditable definitions as there are, for example in the poultry sector. The Code of Practice therefore includes such definitions so that consumers can be fully informed when buying these products.

Free Range

- 3.1 These pigs are born outside, in fields where they remain outside until they are sent for processing. They are provided with food, water and shelter and are free to roam within defined boundaries. Very generous space allowances are defined with minimum requirements dependent on soil conditions and rotation practices.



THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE LABELLING OF PORK AND PORK PRODUCTS

A PIG
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INITIATIVE

PIG PRODUCTION TERMS cont...

Breeding sows are kept outside, in fields for their productive life. They are provided with food, water and shelter with generous minimum space allowances.

Outdoor Bred

- 3.2 These pigs are born outside, in fields where they are kept until weaning. Breeding sows are kept outside in fields for their productive lives. Where soil types and climate are a constraint, producers can apply for a derogation to keep gestating sows in barns, in groups on deep straw bedding for a maximum of seven weeks at the start of each production cycle. The pigs are provided with food, water and shelter with generous minimum space allowances. Pork and pork products labelled as Outdoor Bred will also contain a statement about how the pigs are subsequently farmed. Where possible this will be in the same field of vision on the label as Outdoor Bred. Retailers and foodservice businesses are encouraged to make further information available about the method of finishing to consumers through literature or websites.

Example

"Outdoor Bred.....and housed in straw barns"

Outdoor Reared

- 3.3 These pigs are born outside in fields, where they are reared for approximately half their life (defined as at least 30kg). Breeding sows are kept outside in fields for their productive lives. They are provided with food, water and shelter and generous minimum space allowances. Pork and pork products labelled as Outdoor Reared will also contain a statement about the way the pigs are subsequently farmed. Where possible this will be in the same field of vision on the label as Outdoor Reared. Retailers and foodservice businesses are encouraged to make further information available about the method of finishing to consumers through literature or websites.

Example

"Outdoor Rearedand housed in straw barns"

- 3.4 The term **Outdoor** used on its own will mean that the pork and pork products come from Outdoor Reared pigs that are kept outside, in fields until they are sent for processing. Minimum space allowances are generous although these are lower than for Free Range pigs.
- 3.5 In all cases it is allowed to house pigs for a very limited period of time in case of veterinary treatment, emergency and when directed or advised to do so by the relevant authorities (for example during an exotic disease outbreak).

- 3.6 Label imagery that features outdoor pig farming scenes will only be used on Free Range, Outdoor Bred, Outdoor Reared or Outdoor products.

- 3.7 For a full and detailed description of the requirements of the Code of Practice please see Production System Definitions Minimum Requirements.

4. BREED NAMES

- 4.1 Where a specific breed name is used without qualification (for example Hampshire pork) this comes from pigs resulting from the mating of a pedigree boar and sow of the same named breed.
- 4.2 Where pork and pork products come from the mating of animals of different breeds (i.e. a pedigree Berkshire boar with a commercial hybrid sow) reference to the parentage will be provided on the label. The following types of statements (using bacon as an example) could be used:
- A. Berkshire Cross Breed Bacon**
 - B. Cross Breed Berkshire Bacon**
 - C. Produced from Pigs Sired by Pedigree Berkshire Boars
 - D. Produced from Pigs Bred from Pedigree Berkshire Sires
 - E. Produced from Pigs Bred from Pedigree Berkshire Boars
- 4.3 While all these descriptions can be used Statements A and B are considered to be the true names of the food for these products. Statements C, D and E are likely to be statements accompanying and expanding upon the true name.
- 4.4 The type font and size used on packaging will not give an undue prominence to the breed over the actual cross breed status of the meat.
- 4.5 Any reference to a specific breed should refer to an animal registered by an officially recognised registration authority licensed within the EU, for example the British Pig Association (www.britishpigs.org.uk).
- 4.6 If the produce is not from two pedigree registered animals of the same breed, any photographs or illustrations shown on labels, point of sale materials, advertisements or supporting literature should be clearly linked with the true name statement (i.e. captioned with the words in paragraph 4.2 [A or B] above). Such captions should be sufficiently prominent and clear to avoid the consumer being misled (i.e. in the same weight and size of font as any other reference to the breed on the packaging).
- 4.7 Any trade mark applied to the products should not be capable of being confused with the actual breed/cross breed of the product.



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HOW TO SIGN UP TO THE CODE

Any organisation wishing to sign up to the Code of Practice for the labelling of pork and pork products should contact one of the following:

Mick Sloyan

T: 0247 647 8791

E: mick.sloyan@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Sonia Bryson

T: 0247 647 8790

E: sonia.bryson@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Jane Chapman

T: 07810 658 741

E: jane.chapman@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Simon Brookes

T: 07748 110 959

E: simon.brookes@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Tony Goodger

T: 07775 535 212

E: tony.goodger@bpex.ahdb.org.uk

Code of Practice declaration forms can also be downloaded from the website

www.porkprovenance.co.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS

British Meat Processors Association

12 Cock Lane

London

EC1A 9BU Tel: 020 7329 0776

www.bmpa.uk.com

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House

17 Smith Square

London

SW1P 3JR Tel: 020 7238 1000

www.defra.gov.uk

National Farmers Union

Agriculture House

Stoneleigh Park

Kenilworth

Warwickshire

CV8 2TZ Tel: 0247 658 8500

www.nfuonline.com

British Pig Association

Trumpington Mews

40b High Street

Trumpington

Cambridge

CB2 9LS Tel: 01223 845 100

www.britishpigs.org.uk

National Pig Association

Agriculture House

Stoneleigh Park

Kenilworth

Warwickshire

CV8 2TZ Tel: 0247 685 8782

www.npa-uk.org.uk

Food Standards Agency

Aviation House

125 Kingsway

London

Tel: 020 7276 8829

www.food.gov.uk



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ABOUT THE TASK FORCE

The Pig Task Force was brought together in 2009 by Defra and chaired by the Minister for Farming and the Environment. Its main aim was to help secure the long term future of the British pig meat industry.

The Task Force focused on helping the whole supply chain to thrive in a way that is sustainable in the long term. It comprised key representatives from all parts of the pig meat supply chain to increase collaboration in the pursuit of enhanced benefits to all.

The Task Force examined areas of concern including labelling, public sector procurement, pig health, welfare, environmental performance and better communications throughout the supply chain.

Specific projects undertaken by the Task Force included:

- Establishing a labelling Code of Practice with retailers and caterers
- Making significant progress on improving pig health and welfare
- Further increase in the level of public sector procurement of pork and bacon products that meet British welfare standards
- Improved processes that achieve affordable regulatory goals, especially with regard to the environment
- Enhanced levels of co-operation, integration and communication throughout supply chain

Under its Terms of Reference, the Task Force aimed to improve the resilience of the pig meat supply chain through increased collaboration and achieving best practice throughout the chain.

Task Force members included:

Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Minister of State, Defra
Stewart Houston, NPA
Mick Sloyan, BPEX
Richard Lister, JC Lister Farms Ltd
Susan Knox, Consumer in Europe Group
Barney Kay, NPA
Bernard Hoggarth, Cranswick Country Foods
John Hughes, Dalehead Foods
Bill Thurston, Vion Food International
Tricia Henton, Environment Agency
Simon Twigger, Sainsbury's
Stan Burns, Tesco
Nick Scrase, Asda
Andrew Thornber, Morrisons
Ian Platt, Baxter Storey
Simon Galkoff, Whitbread Plc
Jan Anderson, Regional Development Agency
Adrian Dowling, Bowes of Norfolk

Task Force Labelling Sub-Group:

Mick Sloyan, BPEX
Susan Knox, Consumer in Europe Group
Simon Galkoff, Whitbread Plc
Lucas Daglish, Whitbread Plc
Sian Philpott, Tesco
Sue Henderson, Sainsbury's
Chris Brown, Asda
Rob McFarlane, Prime Meats
Anil Kanani, Defra
Michael Wright, Food Standards Agency
Rob Smith, Vion Food Group