



## **Port Health Service**

# **Sampling Policy**

**2025/26**

Approved June 2025

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. It is the policy of River Tees Port Health Authority (RTPHA) to carry out sampling of food, feed, water and relevant products to protect public and animal health and to ensure fair trade.
- 1.2. All sampling activities will be carried out in accordance with legal requirements, current guidance and the Authority's standard operating procedures. Officers carrying out the sampling will be authorised in accordance with Quality Management System Procedure QSP/EHC/06 and in line with the delegated powers in the Constitution of RTPHA.
- 1.3. RTPHA will ensure that proper officers are appointed to carry out the examination and analysis of food, feed, water and relevant products.
- 1.4. This policy is supported by the Authority's Service Plan which is produced annually in accordance with the Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food and Feed Law Enforcement.

## **2. Sampling of food, feed and relevant products**

- 2.1. All checks are carried out in accordance with assimilated Regulation (EU) 2019/2130 establishing detailed rules on the operations to be carried out during and after documentary checks, identity checks and physical checks on animals and goods subject to official controls at border control posts.
- 2.2. The Official Inspector must verify that the goods are fit to be used for the intended purpose and that their properties have not changed during transport. This can be done by;
  - a) sensory examination of the smell, colour, consistency or taste of the goods; or
  - b) simple physical or chemical tests by cutting, defrosting or cooking the goods; or
  - c) laboratory tests.
- 2.3. Laboratory tests are undertaken where it is not possible to verify the goods are fit for the intended purpose at the BCP.
- 2.4. Philis will randomly select physical checks, however deviations from this may occur as they are determined by:
  - a) Requirements of legislation and associated guidance;
  - b) New legislation;
  - c) Trends identified from previous sampling activities;
  - d) Intelligence and risk – the type of product, country of origin, history of compliance of the importer etc.
  - e) FSA alerts;
  - f) Food Standard Agency priorities; and
  - g) Participation in Local, Regional or National Surveys co-ordinated by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Association of Port Health Authorities or other agencies.

2.5. A sampling plan will be implemented based on the following;

- a. National Monitoring Plan – the national plan is provided by the Food Standards Agency.
- b. Risk based BCP monitoring plan – this is based on local intelligence and National Monitoring priorities.
- c. Under suspicion
  - 1. Intensified Official Controls – for repeated infringements or serious health risk. Where triggered, the first 10 consignments are detained and checked. This will be evident by a banner on IPAFFS.
- d. Safeguard measures.
- e. Required by Legislation.

### **3. Water Sampling**

3.1. RTPHA will take samples of drinking water at the request of shipping agents and the port operator. Samples may also be taken for monitoring purposes. Sampling points will include on-board ship supplies and from designated drinking water supply points located within the port. Although the port is served by a mains water supply, they must have provisions in place to prevent backflow to the system when filling ships.

### **4. Analysis and Examination**

- 4.1. Samples of imported products not of animal origin under official controls, will be formal samples. Samples for analysis will be submitted to the Public/Agricultural Analyst appointed by the Authority and samples for examination will be submitted to the Food Examiner of the UKHSA Laboratory.
- 4.2. Water samples will be informal samples and submitted to the UKHSA Laboratory for examination.
- 4.3. RTPHA will have regard for the opinions of the Food Examiner and Public/Agricultural Analyst for the interpretation of results including all relevant guidance.

### **5. Resources**

- 5.1. All fees charged in relation to food not of animal origin, feed and food contact material sampling is recovered in full from the importer. Samples of Products of Animal Origin are not recoverable, however these are factored in when setting the fees and charges for ID and Physical checks.
- 5.2. All ships water samples are recovered in full from the fees charged to the requester. Where a resample is carried out due to an unsatisfactory sample, we will not charge for any resamples.
- 5.3. All jetty water sampling is carried out using our water analysis allocation by Health Security Agency.

## **6. Review**

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and when there are significant changes to legislation, guidance or activities at the port.