



Sustainable Agri-food Development Division
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13 October 2026

Dear Stakeholder,

DRAFT HEMP (THIRD COUNTRY IMPORTS) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2026

I am writing to provide you with an update following the recent engagement on the proposed changes to draft Hemp (Third Country Imports) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026. The draft regulations will amend the current domestic legislation, The Hemp (Third Country Import) Regulations 2002 on a Northern Ireland basis, primarily to raise the maximum acceptable tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content in hemp and hemp seeds imported from third countries from 0.2% to 0.3% amongst other technical amendments.

Background

Article 189 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 lays out the rules for checks of imports of hemp and hemp seeds to ensure that they offer certain guarantees regarding their tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content.

Prior to January 2023, imports of hemp, including acceptable levels of THC content, into the European Union were set by [Regulation \(EU\) No 1307/2013](#), establishing rules for direct payments to farmers under support schemes within the framework of the common agricultural policy. With regards to hemp, Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 lays out that true hemp/hemp seeds must not have a THC content greater than 0.2%. Article 189 of 1308/2013 refers to 1307/2013 to set the maximum acceptable THC level that may be imported into the Union.

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Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 was repealed and replaced by [Regulation \(EU\) No 2021/2115](#), which took effect from 01 January 2023. These new regulations raised the THC level of eligibility for direct payments from 0.2% to 0.3%. In December 2023, the European Commission [issued a notice](#) clarifying that it followed that the implementation of Regulation 2021/2115 meant that the maximum allowed THC levels for imports of raw true hemp and seeds of varieties of hemp for sowing also increased from 0.2% to 0.3% from 1 January 2023.

Equality, Rural Needs and Regulatory Impact

The draft Regulations have been considered for their impact on equality and human rights, and have been screened out of the need for a full Equality Impact Assessment on the basis that they do not have any equality or human rights implications. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment has been carried out which has concluded that there is no differential impact upon citizens in rural areas. In addition, a Regulatory Impact Assessment has been considered and screened out. Stakeholders were invited to comment or provide evidence in relation to these conclusions, with no responses received.

Consultation Outcome

The consultation closed on 01 September 2026. The Department received no responses to the stakeholder letter. As no issues have been raised with regards the new draft amendment regulations through the consultation, the Department will begin the process of laying the legislation. **The drafted Regulations are included at Annex A**

Accessibility

Copies of these documents can be made available, on request, in alternative formats e.g. in large print, Braille disc, audio cassette and other languages. Please contact us at marketing.standards@daera-ni.gov.uk, or 028 9037 8575, to arrange such copies. For those with hearing difficulties, please leave a message on the Department's text phone (18001 028 9037 8575).

Responding to the Department

This letter, and associated documents, are available on the Department's website at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations

Yours sincerely,



Samantha Swann
Agri-food policy
Sustainable Agri-food Development Division

Attachments:

Annex A – The Hemp (Third Country Imports) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

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