New Year Regulatory Overview: Requirements that apply from 2026

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Overview of EU rules that apply from 2026, and application dates

AGRINFO reports on EU rules that apply from 2026

Update

AGRINFO reports cover many European Union (EU) rules that will start to apply during 2026.

The purpose of this summary is to highlight these dates in order to avoid any disruption to trade. Areas affected include fisheries (CATCH certificate, tuna in brine); food safety (ban of some uses of antimicrobials, controls of listeria in ready-to-eat food, smoke flavourings, nickel levels); pesticide maximum residue levels (MRLs); marketing standards for honey, fruit juices, fruit jams, and preserved milk; food packaging; plant health-related import procedures; and rice tariff quotas.

Rules that will apply in 2026

Fisheries

- CATCH system: Regulation applies from 10 January 2026. The simplified catch certificate and the corresponding form for prior notification will apply from 10 January 2027 for non-EU fishing vessels. Until 10 January 2028, importers may use simplified catch certificates that have been validated before 10 January 2027.
- Revised rules for fisheries control and integration of digital catch certification: the digital information management system for catch certification (CATCH) is compulsory for EU operators and authorities for imports of fishery products from 10 January 2026. Catch certificates and related documents that have been validated, endorsed, or signed before that date may be used by importers until 10 January 2028.
- New template for fishery products transiting through countries other than Flag States: must be used from 10 January 2026.
- Amended hygiene rules for tuna frozen in brine: apply from 27 January 2026.
- Marine Stewardship Council's updated Fisheries Standard (v3.1): fisheries entering their first full assessment are required to adopt the updated requirements by 1 July 2026.

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- EU autonomous tariff quota for imported fisheries products: proposal expected to be adopted in 2026.
- EU Common Fisheries Policy external strategy – Review: proposal expected in the third quarter of 2026.
- Vision 2040 for fisheries and aquaculture: expected in 2026.

Food safety

- Use of quillaia extract in food supplements: new, stricter specifications apply from 9 May 2026.
- Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat food: extended food safety criterion applies from 1 July 2026.
- Maximum levels for nickel in certain foods: apply from 1 July 2026 for durum wheat, rice, husked rice, pseudo cereals, millet, and oats.
- Ban on the use of smoke flavouring primary products: applies from 1 July 2026, except for cheese and cheese products, meat, processed fish and fishery products, fish roe, and foods where smoke flavourings replace traditional smoking processes (in these cases the ban will apply from 1 July 2029).
- Rules on prohibited antimicrobials in imported animal products: apply from 3 September 2026.

Pesticide maximum residue levels

Reduction or amendment of MRLs for:

- chlorpropham: applies from 6 January 2026, impacting potatoes
- fuberidazole: applies from 6 January 2026
- methoxyfenozide: applies from 6 January 2026, impacting aubergines
- metolachlor: applies from 6 January 2026
- triflusulfuron: applies from 6 January 2026, impacting tree nuts, oilseeds, and oil fruits
- thiamethoxam: applies from 7 March 2026 on all products, with impacts on fruit, vegetables, cereals, teas and coffees, and animal products
- clothianidin: applies from 7 March 2026, with impacts on fruits, vegetables, cereals, teas and coffees, sugar, and animal products
- benthivalicarb: expected to be published soon and to apply from May 2026, MRLs likely to be reduced to the limit of determination (LOD) for all products, with impacts on grapes and tomatoes
- metribuzin: approval not renewed, MRLs likely to be reduced to the LOD in 2026, with potential impacts on cassava, land cresses, and olives for oil production.

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Marketing standards

- Revised marketing standards for honey, fruit juices, fruit jams, and preserved milk: applies from 14 June 2026.

Packaging

- Revoked authorisation of plastic food packaging materials containing salicylic acid and untreated wood flour or fibres: applies from 31 January 2026. These materials may still be used under specific conditions if an application has been approved by the European Food Safety Authority.
- Prohibition on use of bisphenol A (BPA) in packaging: applies from 20 July 2026, except for single-use food contact articles intended to preserve fruit and vegetables and fishery products, where it applies from January 2028.
- New EU packaging rules: strict restrictions will apply to PFAS (per- and polyfluorinated alkyl substances) in food contact packaging from 12 August 2026.
- Strengthened rules on the purity of plastic food contact materials: apply from 16 September 2026; materials placed on the EU market for the first time before that date can continue to be sold until stocks are exhausted.

Plant health

- Improvements to plant health-related import procedures: when exporting plants for planting to the EU, the requirement (previously only for some quarantine pests) to state the chosen pest management option in the phytosanitary certificate will be extended to include regulated non-quarantine pests; applies from 6 July 2026.

Trade

- Reference quantities for management of rice tariff quotas: apply from 23 November 2026.

Due diligence

- New rules to prohibit sales on the EU market of products made with forced labour: guidelines to support businesses' due diligence expected by 14 June 2026; new rules will apply from 14 December 2027.
- Review of EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR): application postponed to 30 December 2026.

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- Review of on-farm animal welfare rules, including for imports: a proposal for new rules is expected in 2026.

Timeline

This report lists EU rules that have already been adopted and will enter into application in 2026.

Recommended Actions

Operators and public authorities in non-EU countries should review the Regulations that will apply from 2026 in order to avoid any disruption to trade.

Background

Once a Regulation has been adopted or approved by relevant EU institutions, it must be published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* (Eur-Lex). Generally, it has legal effect ("enters into force") 20 days after publication.

A Regulation may apply from that date. However, if time is needed to adapt to new requirements, there may be a transitional period. This can range from a few months to several years, decided on a case-by-case basis. Stakeholders must take action to comply with the requirements as soon as possible, and may be controlled for compliance from the date the Regulation applies.

Sources

AGRINFO reports on EU rules that apply from 2026

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