

You are here > Home > News and updates > Illegally imported food from China seized

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Illegally imported food from China seized

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Hundreds of boxes of food from China that were being illegally imported to the UK have been seized by UK Border Agency officers.

The find was made last Wednesday (20 January) as officials carried out checks on cargo that had arrived into Teesport, Middlesbrough, from Ningbo, China.

Searches of a container on the vessel, MSC Camille, revealed almost 200 boxes of products of animal origin that had not been declared and were set to be smuggled into the country. The food, including fin-flavour noodles, granulated chicken, milk tea and sweets, was all bound for a warehouse in Gateshead. It was hidden among legitimate cargo, which included cooking wine and plastic cups and will now be destroyed.

Amanda Wren, senior UK Border Agency officer at the port, said:

'Preventing the illegal importation of products of animal origin is a key priority for the UK Border Agency, and this seizure reflects the controls we have in place.'

'We carry out tough checks to protect our borders against the importation of illegal cargos such as this.'

'Illegally imported foodstuffs carry a public health risk, and also increase the risk of major disease outbreaks, such as Foot and Mouth.'

'We will continue to work with our partners to reduce the amount of products of animal origin that are smuggled across our borders.'

We are working together with Defra and the Food Standards Agency in an effort to reduce the smuggling of products of animal origin. As well as freight cargo, tight controls also apply to passenger and postal importations.

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