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Venezuela

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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Report Highlights: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in Caracas for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required By Government (Matrix) :

- Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin, Registration through the Ministry of Health
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Permits issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands through its Agricultural Health Service
- Import Licenses issued by the Ministry of Food

Please see attachment -Appendix II- for the list of products by HS Code that require the different certificates.

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

According to the Venezuelan harmonized tariff schedule, imports of food and agricultural products are subject to a list of requirements given by its “tariff regime” (Spanish: regimen legal). The requirements include sanitary import permits or certificates, import licenses, and product registration.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) is responsible, through its different Ministries, for issuing import permits, import licenses, and product registration. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAT) issues import permits; the Ministry of Food (MINAL) issues import licenses and the Ministry of Health (MH) grants food registration for all domestic and imported processed food products. Foods not registered in the country of origin cannot be registered in Venezuela.

The BRV requires a “sanitary certificate” from the country of origin. Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are approved by authorities on a case-by-case basis.

1. Animal Products and Unprocessed Plant Products

Through the Agricultural Health Service (Spanish: Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral, or INSAI), MAT is responsible for quality control and inspection of everything related to the manufacture, processing, importation, exportation, storage, distribution, and marketing of food, biological products, medications and animal feed, as well as for the laboratories that control the quality of these products. INSAI is equivalent to APHIS in the United States.

Sanitary import permits

INSAI is in charge of issuing phytosanitary or sanitary import permits for imported products and sub products of plant or animal origin, and animals and plant breeding material. The following guidelines are provided by INSAI:

- Prior to importing animal products and/or unprocessed plant products, importers should request

- and obtain a sanitary health (SPS) import permit from INSAI.
- Required SPS statements (treatment and other conditions) for each type of product are decided by INSAI on a case-by-case basis.
- Required SPS statements are written on the import permit issued by INSAI.
- The “remarks” section of the export certificate on FSIS or APHIS letterhead certificate should include the required SPS statements, and should be written both in English and Spanish.
- An APHIS veterinarian or equivalent FSIS official must sign the export certificate.
- No product should be loaded in a vessel before the import permit is received and the sanitary statements required are written on the USDA export certificate.
- INSAI’s import permits have a non-renewable period of validity of between 60 and 90 days, depending on the product:
 - *Sanitary health import permits are issued for animal products and livestock-farming inputs (valid for 60 days).*
 - *Phytosanitary import permits are issued for plant products (valid for 90 days).*
- Import permits are only valid for one shipment.
- Every shipment must be accompanied by an import permit and its corresponding APHIS or FSIS export certificate.

Import Licenses

Import licenses are valid for one year, and can only be renewed if, upon expiry, they have not been used for reasons outside the importer’s control. When applying for a license, established importers are required to submit a monthly list of imports actually realized, indicating volume and value, together with the invoice on the most recent import that indicates the volume and value of the merchandise. The importer must indicate the amount of the allocated quota that remains unused, which in some cases is reincorporated into the quota to be reassigned. The following is the list of products that are subject to import licenses:

List of Products that Require Import Licenses

1005 Yellow corn	1007 Sorghum
1201 Soya beans	1207 Palm nuts and kernels
1507 Soya bean oil	1510 Other oils
1511 Palm oil	1512 Sunflower seed oil
1513 Coconut oil	1515 Other vegetable fats and oils
2304 Soya bean cake	1518 Animal and vegetable fats
1522 Degras, yellow grease	0401 Milk and cream, not concentrated
0402 Milk in powder, not exceeding 1.5% fat	0402 Whole milk 26%
0406 Cheese	

2. Processed Animal Products

An FSIS certificate must accompany each shipment of meat and poultry and/or products. Below are the

certificate requirements of the Venezuelan Government currently included in the FSIS export certificate library. Importers are required to have an import permit before importing meat and poultry products. All FSIS inspected meat and poultry plants are eligible to export to Venezuela.

Eligible/Ineligible Products

A. Eligible

1. Pork is eligible to export to Venezuela. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004)
2. Natural pork casings. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004) Cooked
3. Poultry products.

B. Ineligible

1. Ruminant meat and ruminant meat products. (Most recent revision on 03/30/2004)

Documentation Requirements

A. Beef, mutton and lamb

- Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness

B. Pork and Pork Products

- Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness
- The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5:
 - a. *The meat was derived from animals that were born and raised in the United States or Canada;*
 - b. *The meat was received from slaughter and processing of clinically healthy swine, which originated from premises and localities free from infectious animal diseases, including swine vesicular disease and African swine fever; and*
 - c. *The meat comes from establishments or pork herds submitted under official control, in which in the last 24 months, trichinosis cases have not been detected or the product was submitted to freezing according to USDA 9 CFR 318.10 (c)(2), which guarantees the destruction of the parasite.*

(Note: for information only, this is not a required statement.) The term "infectious animal diseases" means that, at the time of slaughter, the animals were not under official quarantine or any other State or Federal restriction due to disease and passed ante mortem and postmortem inspection.

In addition to the above statements which are required for pork meat, exporters or their agents must provide the following certification on company letterhead:

- a. *The meat is shipped in refrigerated containers that guarantee its temperature; and*
- b. *The containers were washed and disinfected using products approved by the exporting country.*

Note: This certificate is not signed by FSIS personnel. However, it must include the MP number from

the FSIS 9060-5 for identification with a particular shipment.

C. Cooked poultry products - Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness. The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5:

"Cooked poultry product was cooked, reaching an internal temperature of not less than 68° C (155° F)."

D. Animal Casings - Obtain FSIS form 9060-18, Animal Casings Export Certificate for Countries Requiring Ante-Mortem, Post-Mortem, and Sound and Clean Statements.

E. Additionally, the importer must obtain a health import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands' Animal Health and Industry Administration.

3. Processed Food Products

All domestic and imported processed food products must be registered with the Government of Venezuela, through its Ministry of Health (MH) before it can be sold to Venezuelan consumers. With the exception of special cases, such as Government or military sales, as determined by the MH, all new-to-market foreign food products must be submitted for registration before being imported. The MH, through its Health Comptroller Division and its Food Hygiene Division, supervises food safety.

The registration of the processed food product is valid for five years. After five years, a new application may be made to MH to renew the registration. (Although Venezuelan law does not prohibit foreign exporters registering food products, a local consultant or agent may prove to be the best resource to complete the food registration process.) For further information, please refer to GAIN Report No. VE1153.

No specific certificate from the exporting country is required at the time of entering Venezuelan ports, if the product has been already registered with the MH

Sanitary Export Certificates/Free Sale Certificate

For processed food products, Venezuela requires sanitary export certificates issued by competent authorities in the country of origin. The certificate must state that the food is for human consumption, processing, or for use as an input in food for human consumption in the country of origin, with a period of validity of 12 months from the date of application. The Venezuelan authorities do not accept sanitary export certificates issued by state or local authorities.

This requirement can be challenging for US exports since US Federal agencies do not issue sanitary export certificates. State and local authorities often issue Free Sale Certificates but these are not in the

list of requirements of the Venezuelan Custom Authorities (SENIAT). This sometimes leads to situations where customs officials may not accept certain semi-processed and processed food products that are normally exempt from “sanitary certificates” issued by third countries.

When this occurs, the Venezuelan APHIS equivalent, INSAI, has the authority to recommend whether SENIAT should accept the Free Sale Certificate. INSAI has a long history of accepting “Free Sale Certificates” from third countries, based on common sense and scientific knowledge.

The certificate of free sale and consumption issued by competent authorities in the country of origin **should be “apostilled” or stamped by a Public Notary** as per The Hague Convention on Foreign Public Documents. These certificates usually work better if they are accompanied by a letter from FDA or APHIS (depending on the product) that confirms and clarifies the relevant Federal regulations that apply to the export of the product.

4. Wood Packing Material

All wood packaging materials arriving into Venezuela must to carry the agreed international seals certifying that the wood has been treated as recommended by the international conventions after August 1, 2005, “Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade” under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificate(s)

Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are determined by INSAI’s authorities on a case-by-case basis. They are provided by INSAI authorities when an application for an import permit is submitted by an importer.

Section IV. Government Certificate’s Legal Entry Requirements

- Original Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin need to accompany the product at the time of entry.
- Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin are only accepted for one shipment and one specified port of entry.
- The BRV does not accept “Suppliers or Manufacturers Export Declaration” as proof of compliance.
- For processed food products no specific certificate from the exporting country is required at the time of entering Venezuelan ports, if the product has been already registered with MH.
- The BRV does not accept sanitary export certificates by US state-level authorities.

Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

The BRV provides information about import requirements through its harmonized tariff schedule (Spanish: Arancel de Aduanas). The following table lists the import requirements (Regimen Legal):

Import Requirements

Legal Regime	Description
Note 1	Prohibited Import
Note 2	Imports reserved to the Government
Note 3	Permit from the Ministry of Health
Note 4	Permit from the Ministry of Commerce
Note 5	Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin
Note 6	Sanitary Permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 7	Permit from the Ministry of Defense
Note 8	Import License administered through the Ministry of Food
Note 9	Import License administered through the Ministry of Commerce
Note 10	Permit from the Ministry for the Environment
Note 11	Permit from the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum
Note 12	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Health
Note 13	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 14	Permit from the Ministry of Food
Note 15	Permit from the Ministry of Basic Industries and Mining

Products being imported into Venezuela must also comply with other requirements. Details of these requirements are contained in the Food and Agriculture Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report, updated in July 2011. The report can be downloaded on the FAS website.

Author Defined:

APPENDIX I

A. Services and Agencies under the MINISTRY OF HEALTH

(Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Salud –MPPS)

Servicio Autónomo de Contraloría Sanitaria

Dirección de Higiene de Alimentos (equivalent to the FDA)

Address:

Edificio Sur, Piso 3, Of. 313

Centro Simón Bolívar, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 408-0474 / 408-0482

Fax: (58-212) 483-1533

<http://sacs.mpps.gob.ve/siacs/index.php>

<http://sacs.mpps.gob.ve/siacs/servicios.php>

Director: Dr. Luis Angel Millán

lmillan@mpps.gob.ve

Instituto Nacional de Higiene Rafael Rangel

Gerencia de Control y Registro de Alimentos

divcalimentos@inhrr.gob.ve.

<http://www.inhrr.gob.ve/rc/registroycontrol.html>

B. Services and Agencies under the MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND LANDS (MAT)

Ministerio de Agricultura y Tierras (equivalent to the Department of Agriculture)

Address:

Av. Urdaneta, Esquina de Platanal a Candilito,

Edificio MAT (antiguo edificio Fondo Común)

La Candelaria

Caracas, Venezuela

Tel: (58-212) 509-0188/0121/0111

Tel: (58-243) 672-6880

Fax: (58-212) 574-2432

<http://www.mat.gob.ve>

Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral -INSAI

(Equivalent to the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-APHIS)

Address:

Avenida Principal Las Delicias

Sector El Toro, Edificio INIA, dirección El Castaño,

Maracay, Estado Aragua

Tel/Fax: (58-243) 241-4090

E-mail: insaipresidencia@gmail.com

presidencia@insai.gob.ve

<http://www.insai.gob.ve/>

Contacts:

Maria Fernanda Sandoval – President (E) INSAI

Luz Elena Rivas – Director General

Wilmer Alcázar – Director Salud Animal

Raul Lira – Director Salud Vegetal

C. MINISTRY OF FOOD

Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Alimentación

Address:

Av. Andrés Bello, Edif. Las Fundaciones

Caracas, Venezuela

Contact:

Vanessa Avendaño – Director of International Relations

Tel: (58-212) 507-2649/ 2647

The Ministry of Food has information on its web site regarding changes and improvements for import procedures “MINAL-Taquilla Unica.” These data can be found at the following web site:

<http://www.minpal.gob.ve/>

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