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Mexico

Post: Monterrey ATO

Report Update - Exporting to Mexico – Managing Border Entry Issues

Report Categories:

Exporter Guide

FAIRS Subject Report

Livestock and Products

Poultry and Products

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Report Highlights:

This report was updated to inform U.S. exporters on how to prevent border entry difficulties when shipping food and agricultural products to Mexico, during the border entry process. Most often border difficulties result in shipment delays and additional costs. To avoid delays at ports of entry (POE), exporters should ensure that their product meets applicable Mexican import regulations, has the proper documentation and certification, and is correctly labeled. In addition, U.S. exporters and Mexican importers should use experienced U.S. freight forwarders and Mexican customs brokers (correspondingly) to minimize shipment delays at ports of entry. In the event that a shipment is detained or rejected, the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) in Monterrey, Mexico, can assist U.S. exporters and Mexican importers in clarifying the problem and determining how best to proceed in resolving the issue.

General Information:

Disclaimer: This report was prepared by the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Monterrey, Mexico, 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 inspection.

Introduction

Shipments of U.S. food and agricultural products destined for export to Mexico may encounter difficulties during the inspection process at the border. The purpose of this report is to provide exporters a reference guide on managing border entry problems. At the time of this update, documentation and clerical errors represent over 95 percent of border entry problems. Other issues that can result in the detention or rejection of shipments include non-compliance with sanitary, phytosanitary, or labeling requirements. This guide outlines key steps exporters should take in the event that a shipment is detained at ports of entry on the Mexican side of the border, and explains how ATO Monterrey can assist exporters in resolving specific border entry difficulties. U.S. exporters should take note that over 95 percent of U.S. exports of agricultural and food products cross into Mexico through nine principal inland ports of entry. The following map shows the principal inland ports of entry along the United States and Mexican border in order of importance.

- 1 – Colombia, Nuevo Leon/Laredo, TX
- 2 – Nuevo Laredo, Tamps/Laredo, TX
- 3 – Juarez, Chih/El Paso, TX
- 4 – Nogales, Son/Nogales, AZ
- 5 – Piedras Negras, Coah/Eagle Pass, TX
- 6 - Tijuana, BC/San Ysidro, CA
- 7 - Mexicali, BC/Calexico, CA
- 8 – Reynosa, Tamps/McAllen, TX
- 9 – Matamoros, Tamps/Brownsville, TX



Avoiding Border Entry Problems

Keys to avoiding border entry problems include:

- Verify the product's eligibility for entrance into Mexico;
- Confirm that certificates and accompanying documents contain accurate product information;

- Confirm that USDA certificates attest for current and applicable Mexican import regulations;
- Verify compliance with Mexico's labeling regulations;
- Verify that documents accompanying the shipment are originals and are signed by the corresponding U.S. authorities; and
- Maintain close communication with the U.S. freight forwarder responsible for crossing the shipment.

The use of freight forwarders and Mexican customs brokers, who specialize in handling food and agriculture products, is highly recommended. These trade service providers can assist the U.S. exporter and the Mexican importer in meeting the above criteria to avoid border entry problems. The freight forwarder and/or Mexican customs broker can determine the eligibility of a product and verify that it meets Mexico's sanitary/phytosanitary requirements, as well as labeling and other applicable requirements. The freight forwarder and/or Mexican customs broker can also detect problems before the product crosses into Mexico and, in many cases, can correct the problems. The FAS Mexico FAIRS (Food and Agricultural Import Regulations) Country Guide and Export Certificate reports contain information on Mexico's import requirements (see *Other Relevant Reports* section below).

Problem Solving Guide

If a shipment is detained or rejected during the border entry process, U.S. exporters and Mexican importers can contact the ATO in Monterrey for assistance in resolving the problem. Before contacting the ATO, however, the exporter/importer should establish communication with the freight forwarder and/or Mexican customs broker to gather the following information, which will help the ATO provide assistance:

1. Description of the product, location, and port of entry. A detailed description of the product and its harmonized tariff schedule (HTS) code must be provided. Is the product on the U.S. side of the border, or has it crossed the border into Mexico? If the product is still in the United States, what is the contact information for the freight forwarding company responsible for crossing the product? If the product has crossed the border, what is the contact information for the Mexican customs broker responsible for clearing the product?
2. Nature of the issue. Is the product held on the U.S. side because it lacks or has incomplete documentation? Is the product held on the Mexican side because it lacks or has incomplete documentation? Which Mexican authorities are involved? What are the Mexican authorities requesting? Are Mexican authorities requesting a replacement certificate or additional statements and /or amendments to an export certificate? Is the product detained on the Mexican side because the documentation does not attest to compliance with current Mexican import requirements or is the product held due to sanitary or phytosanitary issues?
3. If the product is rejected by Mexican agricultural inspectors, the exporter or importer should obtain a copy of the "RTI", also known as the *Registro de Trámite de Importación*. This document is issued by Mexican agricultural inspectors verifying that the product complies with Mexican import regulations. If a shipment is rejected, the Mexican inspector will explain the reason for the rejection on the RTI. The Mexican customs broker responsible for clearing the product and /or the importer are the best sources to obtain the RTI.

Report the issue to ATO Monterrey via email or phone once the above information is obtained, along

with any relevant documents such as export certificates and contact information for freight forwarders and Mexican customs brokers responsible for crossing the product. ATO staff will help the exporter/importer to clarify the nature of the problem to determine how best to proceed in resolving the issue.

Author Defined:

For More Information

FAS/Mexico Web Site: We are available at www.mexico-usda.com or visit the FAS headquarters' home page at www.fas.usda.gov for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting. Contact information for the USDA Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) in Monterrey, Mexico, from the United States:

Telephone: 011-52-81-8333-5289 Fax: 011-52-81-8333-1248. Within Mexico: Telephone: 01-81-8333-5289 Fax: 01-81-8333-1248 Email: atomonterrey@usda.gov

Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS/Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX1509	Update- Principal Border Entry Points for U.S. Agricultural Exports	3/19/2011
MX1529	FAIRS Export Certificate Report	12/21/2011
MX0344	Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative	12/27/2011

Useful Mexican Web Sites: Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at www.sagarpa.gob.mx the equivalent to the U.S. Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at www.economia.gob.mx, and the equivalent to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (SALUD) can be found at www.salud.gob.mx. These web sites are mentioned for the readers' convenience, but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with, the information contained on the mentioned sites.