

Voluntary - Public

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Dubai Allows U.S. Suppliers to Use Free Sale Certificates

Report Categories:

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

The Dubai Food Control Department has agreed to accept U.S. Certificates of Free Sale in lieu of Health Certificates on a six-month trial basis. Currently, other Emirates and Gulf countries require that a health certificate from a state for federal authority accompany most food shipments. U.S. exporters have had difficulty meeting this requirement in the past. While temporary, the new policy should ease the regulatory burden for U.S. food exports to Dubai, the largest point of entry for food products in the Gulf.

General Information:

Disclaimer: This summary is based on a *cursory* review of the subject announcement and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be viewed as a definitive reading of the regulation in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests. In the event of a discrepancy or discrepancies between this summary and the complete regulation or announcement as published in Arabic, the latter shall prevail.

Summary: The Dubai Food Control Department has agreed to accept U.S. Certificates of Free Sale in lieu of Health Certificates on a six-month trial basis. Currently, other Emirates and Gulf countries require that a health certificate from a state for federal authority accompany most food shipments. U.S. exporters have had difficulty meeting this

requirement in the past. While temporary, the new policy should ease the regulatory burden for U.S. food exports to Dubai, the largest point of entry for food products in the Gulf. End Summary

Officials in the Dubai Food Control Department have agreed to accept U.S. certificates of free sale in lieu of health certificates for shelf stable grocery products and other processed food products that are not regulated by the Food Safety Inspection Service or the Food and Drug Administration. Previously, U.S. exporters had to acquire a health certificate from the state in which a product was produced and such certificates were not always available. Exporters can usually obtain a certificate of free sale more easily. This agreement only applies to products entering the Emirate of Dubai and does not apply to other emirates or other Gulf countries. The UAE is the largest importer of U.S. food products in the Gulf and about 65 percent of UAE imports enter Dubai.

The agreement will be in place until October 14, 2009, and requires that a certificate of free sale meet the following criteria.

1. The Dubai Municipality will accept the Free Sale Certificate in lieu of a health certificate issued by a U.S. state. This requirement applies principally to grocery items and food products that are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration or the Food Safety Inspection Service
2. Free Sale Certificates are not required to include a statement that the product is fit for human consumption.
3. Brand, production and expiry dates of the product, temperature and port of loading are not required to be listed on the Free Sale Certificate.
4. The name and description (e.g. cereal, juice) of the products are required and may be listed as an attachment to the Free Sale Certificate provided that the attachment references the certificate number.
5. The "Consignee" and "Country of Destination" must be mentioned on the Free Sale Certificate.

ATO Dubai will meet with officials at the end of the six-month trial period to discuss lessons learned and explore options for continuing and/or expanding this procedure.