

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

Voluntary - Public

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United Arab Emirates

Post: Dubai

Dubai Continues to Accept U.S. Free Sale Certificates

Report Categories:

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

In response to a request from ATO Dubai, officials at the Dubai Food Control Authority have agreed to accept free sale certificates issued by local and state regulatory authorities in the United States for certain grocery and processed food products for which exports are not certified by the USDA Food Safety Inspection Service or the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. These free sale certificates can substitute for a health certificates in the export certification process. The new policy will be in place for one year and will expire on April 20, 2011.

General Information:

The Dubai Food Control Department has agreed to renew the trial period for accepting U.S. certificates of free sale in lieu of health certificates. This time the municipality agreed to extend the policy to one year starting April 21, 2010. The exception will expire on April 20, 2011. This policy applies to shelf-stable grocery products and other processed food products that fall outside of the export certifications issued by the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and the U.S. 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. This agreement only applies to food 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. Other Emirates and Gulf countries continue to require that a health certificate from a state for federal authority accompany most food shipments.

The agreement will be in place until April 20, 2011, 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.