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## **Panama**

### **Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification**

#### **2015 FAIRS Export Certificate Report**

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**Report Highlights:**

The U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) entered into force on October 31, 2012. As a result of the U.S.-Panama SPS/TBT agreement, which is an integral part of the TPA according to article 22.1, Panama issued special regulations that apply to imports of food and feed products from the United States, which recognize the high standards and certificates of the U.S. regulatory and sanitary inspection system.

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

The certificates required by the Government of Panama, Panamanian Food Safety Authority (AUPSA in

Spanish) that must accompany the shipments are:

- **For meats and poultry:** a FSIS Export Certificate of Wholesomeness (FSIS form 9060-5)
- **For fresh vegetables and fresh fruits, grains in bulk loads or in bags:** an APHIS Phytosanitary Certificate (PPQ Form 577)
- **For seafood and fishery products:** a NOAA's Health Certificate for fishery products.
- **For dairy products, other processed products, ingredients and additives for the process of a final food product:** A Certificate of Free Sale of the product, or any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority within the last 12 months, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your State authority (Agriculture or Health), in which certifies that the product is fit for human consumption and complies with the Sanitary regulations in your State. A list of States authorities can be found at: <http://www.nasda.org/6467.aspx>

Also, for dairy products the USDA/AMS Sanitary Certificate for Exports or, the USDA/APHIS Export Certificate for Animal Products (VS Form 16-4) can be used.

- **For shell eggs for human consumption:** USDA/AMS Disease Free Certification Statements for Panama, and USDA/AMS Fresh Shell eggs Grading Certificate for consumption (AMS Form PY-210S)
- **For Pet Food:** an USDA/APHIS Export Certificate for Animal Products (VS Form 16-4) with the additional statements mentioned on Section VII, paragraph c of this report.

## **Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)**

The purpose of the above certificates are intended for food safety requirements.

The Panamanian Food Safety Authority (AUPSA in Spanish) is the competent authority to require all the above certificates for food and feed imports into Panama.

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

AUPSA requires an additional certification under the Phytosanitary Export Certificate (issued by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)) for sprout inhibitor application on shipments of U.S. table stock potatoes. In order to meet this requirement, APHIS recommends that as part of the shipping documents the shipper provide a "Packer Affidavit" stating that a sprout inhibitor application on shipments of U.S. table stock potatoes has been given.

Potatoes must be free of the following pests: *Ditylechus destructor*, *D. dispaci*, *Phthorimaea operculella* and *Pratylenchus penetrans*. Also it needs to be produced in a free area of Potato purple top or apply anti sprout fumigation.

For the Importation of rice (*Oryza sativa* L.) milled, packaged or re-packaged for human consumption and /or for processing originating in Asia, coming from the United States of America, the shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary export or re-export certificate, issued by USDA-APHIS with

the following additional declarations:

1. The rice has undergone a process of inspection and sampling, and during the storage period in the United States of America, the grains were not exposed to the risk of pest infestation or infection or pollutants.
2. The rice comes free of live insects of any kind, as well as other biologicals, chemicals and physical contaminants, including soils.
3. The phytosanitary export or re-export certificate must include an additional statement certifying that the rice free of *Trogoderma granarium*.

#### **Section IV. Government Certificate's Legal Entry Requirements**

AUPSA is the Government of Panama agency created to oversee all aspects of food importation. In compliance with the bilateral SPS agreement, they receive requests for Food and feed Products sanitary registration and provide answers within 24 hours. This procedure can be made online, and it cost is free of charges. The submission of documentation as indicated in this section may be through AUPSA's website: [www.aupsa.gob.pa](http://www.aupsa.gob.pa) which is user friendly but, it is in the Spanish language only.

According to Article 54 of Law Decree 11 of February 22, 2006, all processed food products for retail, bottled or packaged in some form with given name and brand, must be registered at the Panamanian Food Safety Authority (AUPSA), prior to importation. This means that all food products intended for retail as a final product for direct consumption should be registered before import, sale or trade. i.e. alcohol beverages, snacks, canned food, among others.

Excluded from the above are raw materials such as fresh meats (which are not packed and ready for retail, used for food service or food processing), fresh vegetables and fresh fruits, grains in bulk loads or in bags, dairy product in bulk loads or in bags for further processing, ingredients and additives for the process of a final food product.

For the Food Product Registration, the Importer or the Exporter must send the following information:

1. Product Name
2. Name and address of the product manufacturer, packager, or distributor, as specified on the label.
3. Product description as stated on the label.
4. Product ingredients (in descending order by weight) as stated on the label.
5. For U.S. food products either:
  - a. A **Certificate of Free Sale** of the product, or any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority within the last 12 months, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your State authority (Agriculture or Health), in which certifies that the product is fit for human consumption and complies with the Sanitary regulations in your State.
  - b. A **Supplier or Manufacturer's Declaration** (if the product is for international sales only, not sold in the United States), on company letterhead, stating that the product is fit for human consumption.

In addition, so AUPSA may corroborate the above information, it is necessary to send the legible scanned copy of the label.

The originals of such documents shall be presented at the AUPSA's Registry office, within a period of time of 30 working days.

The Food Product Registration shall remain in effect as long as the information provided remains unchanged.

Upon arrival of the shipment to the point of entry into the country, should be supported with the following documentation:

- a) Import notification form, made online at [www.aupsa.gob.pa](http://www.aupsa.gob.pa)
- b) Certificate issued by the official authority of the United States, according to the type of food, as listed in Section I of this report.
- c) Product's certificate of origin
- d) Copy of the product's commercial invoice
- e) Pre-customs or customs declaration.