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Costa Rica

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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Report Highlights:

This report provides information on the export certification requirements of the Government of Costa Rica. This report supplements Costa Rica's Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) 2015 report.

Disclaimer: This report was prepared by the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in San José, Costa Rica for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been 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 is 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) :

According to Article 51 of Costa Rica's Phytosanitary Law ([Law #7664](#)) all plant products (seeds, plant cuttings, whole plants, etc.) and plant origin products (fruits, grains, vegetables, flours, tree nuts, etc.) require a previous authorization to enter the country. By-products which have been processed and do not present any phytosanitary risk, for instance, dried or frozen fruits, enriched flours, spices, etc. are exempt from this procedure. However, even these products are subject to inspection at the port of entry if the authorities decide to conduct an inspection.

An importer has to submit a written request for each importation through the Customs Clearance Authorization Form (known as FAD) at the Ministry of Foreign Trade. Importers of products of plant origin used in the production of animal feeds must register at the Centro de Investigación y Nutrición Animal (Center for Animal Research and Nutrition) of the Ministry of Agriculture.

In addition to the above, packaged food products intended for retail sale have to be registered at the Ministry of Health. For details regarding the registration process, please see Costa Rica's FAIRS Report. For registration purposes, Costa Rica requires a Free Sale Certificate (FSC) indicating that the product is apt for human consumption and is of free sale in the country of origin. The FSC no longer needs to be consularized in the United States. This process has now been substituted by the Apostille. Costa Rica joined the Hague Convention in 2011 and the Apostille has been in effect since December 14, 2011. The Apostille reduces paperwork and time consumed in relation to the food product registration process.

Once the FAD is submitted and reviewed by Ministry of Agriculture officials, the Plant or Animal Quarantine Department (as the case may be) issues what is known as a preliminary phytosanitary authorization or phytosanitary import permit, which contains the phytosanitary requirements to be met by the imported product.

Costa Rican authorities will not issue a phytosanitary authorization for a product that has already arrived to the country. The phytosanitary import permit is valid for 30 days.

When the product arrives in the country, it must be accompanied by the Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the sanitary authority of the country of origin. The certificate shall comply with the requirements established in the preliminary authorization form. The three documents (FAD, Preliminary Authorization and the Phytosanitary Export Certificate) must be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture official at the port of entry, in addition to any other customs documents. The official will proceed to inspect the product at the port (including taking samples for testing if necessary) and authorize entry into the country once all requirements have been met.

Procedures to import animals and animal products are similar to the procedure described above. Costa Rica recognizes all federally inspected U.S. processing plants as eligible to export products to Costa Rica. Products coming from those plants are exported accompanied by FSIS Form 9060-5 (Export Certificate of Wholesomeness). Also, Costa Rica now accepts Form 9060-5 for processed meat products in lieu of the Certificate of Free Sale for registration purposes at the Ministry of Health.

Exporters of dairy products must fill-out two questionnaires issued by the Ministry of Agriculture. One is called the "Questionnaire for Dairy Establishments" and the other is a "Residue and Microbiology Questionnaire." The questionnaires may be obtained by contacting the Director of Quarantine of the Costa Rican Ministry of Agriculture at (506) 2587-1600, extensions 1710 and 1714 or (506) 2260-9046, or through the local importer/contact. Exporters of dairy products must fill-out the questionnaires and obtain approval from the Ministry of Agriculture prior to exporting their products. Approval is granted for a three year period.

Export Certificate Matrix

Product(s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Dairy Products	Sanitary Import Permit	Attestation varies depending on the product.	Certificate indicates specific requirements to be met by export product.	Ministry of Agriculture
Live Animals	Sanitary Import Permit	Same as above	Same as above	Ministry of Agriculture
Beef	Sanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Pork	Sanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Poultry	Sanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Processed Meats	Sanitary Import Permit Free Sale Certificate		The Free Sale Certificate is required once for packaged meat products for registration purposes only. Registration valid for 5 years.	Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Health
Fish and Crustaceans	Sanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Pet Food	Sanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Grains	Phytosanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Phytosanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Plants and plant products	Phytosanitary Import Permit			Ministry of Agriculture
Processed Food Products	Certificate of Free Sale or FSIS Form 9060-5 (for processed meat products only).	Indicates that product is apt for human consumption and is of free sale in country of origin.	Required once for Registration purposes. Registration valid for 5 years.	Ministry of Health

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

Phytosanitary Import Permit: Also known as the Preliminary Phytosanitary Authorization, the purpose of this

certificate is to indicate any specific phytosanitary requirements that apply to the imported product. These requirements have to be certified in the Export Certificate of the country of origin by the exporting country authorities. This certificate is required by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Sanitary Import Permit: Also known as the Preliminary Sanitary Authorization, the purpose of this certificate is to indicate any specific sanitary requirements that apply to the imported product. These requirements have to be certified in the Export Certificate of the country of origin by the exporting country authorities. This certificate is required by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Certificate of Free Sale: This certificate is required for registration of processed food products with the Ministry of Health. The purpose of the certificate is to provide assurance to the local authorities that the product is appropriate for human consumption and is freely sold in the country of origin. It is required by the Ministry of Health only once for registration purposes. Registration of the product is valid for 5 years. This process must be completed before the product is imported into the country.

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

Costa Rica is in the process of reviewing specific attestations/import requirements for plant origin products which are not available online as of the time of writing of this report. Specific attestations and requirements for animal origin products may be accessed at SENASA's website (see link below). Requirements for specific products will be available in Spanish in the following addresses:

[SENASA](#) (for animal products) and, [SFE](#) (for plant products). Products that have not been imported in the past may require the development of specific import requirements, including a risk analysis, a process that may take considerable time.

Please note that, as indicated in the actual Costa Rican regulations, the requirements are subject to periodic revision and amendment and the valid attestation required is provided in the preliminary sanitary or phytosanitary import certificate upon submission of a permit request.

Specific Attestations for selected products:

Cheese

The export certificate should indicate that the establishment where the cheese was produced is approved by the competent local authority and is inspected by an official veterinarian.

The cheese was produced from milk produced in the country where the cheese is produced.

The establishment has a sampling plan to monitor chemical residues in milk and pathogens in cheese, including for E. Coli, Listeria Monocytogenes, Salmonella sp, Staphylococcus aureus and coliforms.

The establishment operates under a HACCP plan.

The ingredients and additives used in production are of food grade.

Yogurt

The export certificate should indicate that the establishment where the cheese was produced is approved by the competent local authority and is inspected by an official veterinarian.

The pasteurization process of the milk is certified by the competent local authority and is reviewed at least once a year.

The test for alkaline phosphate in pasteurized milk was conducted before adding the culture and resulted negative.

The establishment has a sampling plan to monitor chemical residues in milk and pathogens in yogurt, including for E. Coli, Listeria Monocytogenes, Salmonella sp.

The product complies with the following microbiological criteria: E. Coli should not exceed 10 ufc/g, Listeria Monocytogenes should not be detected in 25 gr. and Salmonella sp, should not be detected in 25 gr.

The establishment operates under a HACCP plan.
The ingredients and additives used in production are of food grade.

Live bovines

The United States is free of Foot and Mouth Disease, Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia, and Rinderpest. The animals in this shipment originated from premises where bovine leukosis has not been clinically diagnosed during the 12 months preceding exportation.

The animals in this shipment originated from premises where no clinical cases of campylobacteriosis, trichomoniasis, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), parainfluenza (PI3), bovine virus diarrhea (BVD), paratuberculosis, coital exanthema, malignant catarrhal fever and bluetongue have been reported to occur in the 6 months prior to this exportation.

The animals were born after the implementation of the ruminant to ruminant meat-and-bone-meal (MBM) and Greaves ban of 1997.

No cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) were detected in the premises of origin.

The animals were vaccinated against IBR using a killed product between 180 and 15 days prior to shipment.

The animals originate from a State or herd free from brucellosis and tuberculosis.

During the 30 days prior to exportation, the animals were treated for endo and ectoparasites.

Beef

For fresh/frozen boneless beef and beef tongues, kidneys, livers and hearts: Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5, Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness. The following statements must be provided on a letterhead certificate:

The United States complies with the conditions stated in Article 2.3.13.4 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code as a country with controlled BSE risk.

The beef meat and meat products (mentioned in the scope) were produced and handled in a manner which ensures that such products do not contain and are not contaminated with the following specified risk materials (SRM's) for BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy): the brain, skull, eyes, trigeminal ganglia, spinal cord, vertebral column (excluding the vertebrae of the tail, the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, and the wings of the sacrum) and dorsal root ganglia of cattle 30 months of age and older; and the tonsils and distal ileum of the small intestine of cattle regardless of age.

The beef meat and meat products were subject to testing for chemical residues in accordance with the USA National Residue Program sampling plans.

The product (beef, livers, tongues, hearts and kidneys) was inspected and passed and found fit for human consumption.

The beef meat and beef products were produced under mandatory HACCP regulations that require testing for Salmonella and Escherichia coli and were found to be in full compliance.

Pork

Fresh/frozen boneless pork, pork chops, ribs, bone-in ham, livers, skin and fat: Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5, with the following certification statements additionally provided on a letterhead certificate:

The United States is free of classical swine fever and vaccination against the disease is prohibited.

The pork and pork products were derived from animals that were subject to testing for chemical residues in accordance with the USA National Residue Program sampling plans.

The pork and pork products were inspected and passed and found to be wholesome and fit for human consumption.

The pork and pork products were produced under mandatory HACCP regulations that require testing for Salmonella and Escherichia coli and were found to be in full compliance.

Poultry

Fresh/frozen poultry: Obtain FSIS Form 90605, with the following certification statements additionally provided on a letterhead certificate:

The product was derived from birds originating from a zone free of exotic Newcastle disease and highly pathogenic notifiable avian influenza (HPNAI) for at least 21 days prior to slaughter, and from birds subjected to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections for NAI with favorable results.

The birds are the progeny of flocks participating in the National Poultry Improvement Plan which are routinely monitored and free from Salmonella pathogenic to poultry.

The slaughter plant or establishment where the birds were processed was under official inspection and is authorized to export poultry meat.

The product was inspected and passed and found fit for human consumption.

The poultry meat was produced under mandatory HACCP regulations that require testing for Salmonella and Escherichia coli and was found to be in compliance.

The poultry meat was produced in accordance with the U.S. National Residue Program.

Food Products containing meats (such as microwave dinners)

The export certificate must certify the following:

The establishments for slaughter and deboning of bovines, swine or poultry are approved by USDA-FSIS.

The bovines, swine or birds were inspected ante-mortem and post-mortem and were considered apt for human consumption and the meats were subject to freezing processes in order to destroy parasites.

The establishments for slaughter of bovines, swine and poultry have a sampling plan to determine the possible presence of residues of veterinary medications, chemical and environmental contaminants and bacteria, primarily escherichia coli, escherichia coli O157:H7 and Salmonella sp.

The bovine meat used in production of the processed food was not obtained through advance mechanical recovery systems for meat, and the risk materials for BSE, i.e. skull, brain, eyes, tonsils, trigeminal ganglia, vertebral column excluding the tail and the transverse processes of the thoracic and lumbar vertebrae, spinal cord, dorsal root ganglia or intestines (from duodenum to the rectum), were eliminated during the slaughter and deboning processes.

The establishments where the food is prepared must have in place a HACCP system. The meats passed satisfactorily through the controls established by the HACCP plan.

The products were subject to sampling for the detection of Listeria monocytogenes and the samples produced negative results.

The processed food products, once prepared, have not entered into contact with raw ingredients of any type (of animal or plant origin).

The ingredients and additives used in production are of food grade. The packaging material is approved to enter into direct contact with food.

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Attestations vary by product and area of origin. Attestation is provided for some of the main products imported from the United States. Please note that requirements are subject to periodic revision and amendment and the required valid attestation will be the one provided in the actual phytosanitary import certificate.

Prune (*prunus domestica*)

Peach (*prunus persica*)

Nectarine

Apricot (*prunus armeniaca*)

Pear (*Pyrus communis*)

From California: Must come from areas free of *Bactrocera dorsalis*. Indicate that the product comes from areas where there is a trapping program for the pest. It also has to indicate that the product is free of *Maconellicoccus hirsutus*, *Pseudococcus calceolariae*, *Pseudococcus maritimus*, *Diaspidiotus perniciosus*, *Gropholita molesta*, *Cydia pomonella*.

Grape (*vitis vinifera*)

From California: Must come from areas free of *Bactrocera dorsalis*. Indicate that the product comes from areas where there is a trapping program for the pest. It also has to indicate that the product is free of *Maconellicoccus hirsutus*, *Pseudococcus calceolariae*, *Pseudococcus maritimus*, *Planococcus ficus*, *Aspidiotus nerii*, *Murgantia histrionic*, *Colomerus vitis*.

Chipping Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*).*

From Idaho: The product comes from an area officially inspected by the National Organization of Phytosanitary Protection of the country of origin during the period of active growth, harvest and packaging, and was found to be free of *Globodera rostochiensis* and *Globodera pallida*. In addition the certificate must indicate that the product is free of *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*, *Ditylenchus destructor*, *Ditylenchus dipsaci*, *Meloidogyne chitwoodi*, Potato wicthe's broom phytoplasma, and *Candidatus Liberibacter solanacearum*.

It also has to indicate that the product was treated with an anti-sprouting agent at the country of origin (before or after the harvest). Product should be only for industrial use according to the Bilateral Agreement SFE-PPQ. Product will be monitored upon entry into the country according to procedure CFI-PO-08 of the Ministry of Agriculture. Product samples will be collected upon entry and tested for pesticides and pests. Product must be free of soil.

Onion (*allium cepa*)

From California: The product is free of *Maconellicoccus hirsutus*, *listroderes costirostris*, *Naupactus leucoloma*, *Aceria tulipae*, *Ditylenchus destructor*, *Ditylenchus dipsaci*, *Puccinia allii*, *Puccinia asparagi*, *Urocystis cepulae*.

From Idaho: The product is free *Ditylenchus destructor*, *Ditylenchus dipsaci*, *Puccinia allii*, *Puccinia asparagi*.

*Please note that as of the date this report was written, potato imports from the United States are not allowed into Costa Rica. Negotiations are underway to reopen the market. Please check with your importer, APHIS, or with the Ministry of Agriculture for updates on the situation.

Section IV. Government Certificate's Legal Entry Requirements

The three original documents (FAD, Preliminary Authorization and the Phytosanitary Export Certificate) must be submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture official at the port of entry, in addition to any other customs documents.

The import permit is valid for 30 days and can be applied only to the individual shipment for which it was requested.

The country does not accept Suppliers or Manufacturers Export Declaration as proof of compliance with the import requirements. Certification must be issued by an official entity (FDA, AMS, FSIS or APHIS, as the case may be).

Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

Costa Rica only requires the certificates described above for the importation of plant, animal and processed food products.

Appendix I. Electronic Copy or Outline of Each Export Certificate

The Customs Clearance Authorization Form (FAD) requires the following information:

Name, address and telephone number of the importer.

Importer's identification number

Invoice number (optional)

Name and address of supplier in country of origin

Estimated arrival date of the product

Expiration date of the certificate (it is valid for 30 days after it is issued)

Name and address of the consignee (the name of the importer is valid as well)

Bill of lading

Shipping port and port of arrival

Type of product and type of packaging

Country of origin (if U.S. origin, State where the product comes from)

Customs where the product will be cleared in Costa Rica

Name, telephone and license number of Customs Agent

Transportation type (air, ocean, land)

Product classification (HTS code)

Product description (common name, scientific name and use of the product)

Quantity (kilograms, liters or units)

C.I.F. Value (optional)

Observations (optional)

Name and identification number of importer's representative