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Czech Republic

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

FAIRS Country Report

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Report Highlights:

This report provides information on the laws and regulations for food, import rules for food, and contact information in the Czech Republic. It is recommended to read the EU-27 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards report ([EU-27 FAIRS report](#)), prepared by the [US Mission to the EU](#) in Brussels, because the Czech Republic, a member of the European Union, follows the EU directives and regulations. The following sections were updated: I.,II., and Appendix I-II. **Please note new labeling requirements for spirits in section II.**

Section I. Food Laws:

Disclaimer:

This report was prepared by the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Prague, Czech Republic, for U.S. exporters of domestic 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 the respective FSIS or APHIS Inspection offices or their foreign importer, 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.

In May 2004 the Czech Republic became a member of the European Union so all EU directions apply. Any exporter from the United States must be familiar with Czech food laws and EU regulations and directions which overrule any Czech legislation.

Any food industry area that is not regulated by the EU (so called non-harmonized), is regulated by every member state individually. However, this regulation cannot restrict free movement of goods. This report provides summary information on the Czech food legislation.

All EU regulations and directives can be obtained at the following web page:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

The Czech Republic follows the EU initiative called 'From the Farm to the Fork' based on risk analysis and traceability, with the aim of guaranteeing food safety. Therefore an important part of the food legislation is the EU 'hygiene Package'. The hygiene package covers food hygiene, hygiene for food of animal origin and official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption. For more detailed information on the hygiene package and additional acts in English language, please read the legislation summary at

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/food_safety/veterinary_checks_and_food_hygiene/index_en.htm

The most important Czech national acts and regulations regarding food are:

Food Act

The food act 110/1997 is amended in 224/2008 by 227/2009 and 281/2009.

The act regulates requirements related to:

- hygiene and sanitary condition of food production,
- general requirement related to food, additives, foods for special diet, irradiation of food,
- classification of slaughter animals,
- packaging of food,
- food labeling,
- placing food on the market,
- transportation of food and tobacco products,
- the system of official control of food,
- penalties for not meeting the requirements.

Basically, imported food products have the same status as domestically produced products according to food act 110/1997 and amendments and decrees.

Most important laws and regulations regarding food include:

- 326/2001 (meat, meat preparations, fish, other aquatic organisms and preparations from them, egg and egg preparations) amended by 264/2003 and 169/2009.
- 194/2004 (carcasses and animals intended for slaughter) amended by 324/2005.
- 77/2003 (milk, dairy products, frozen creams, edible fats and oils) amended by 124/2004, 78/2008 and 370/2008.
- 329/1997 (starch, legumes and oil seeds) amended by 418/2000.
- 330/1997 (tea and coffee) amended by 91/2000 and 78/2003.
- 331/1997 (spices, salt, dehydrated products, flavors and mustard) amended by 419/2000.
- 157/2003 (fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and vegetables, nuts, mushrooms and potatoes) amended by 650/2004 and 291/2010.
- 333/1997 (cereals, grains, pasta and bakery products) amended by 93/2000, 268/2006.
- 76/2003 (sweeteners, honey, cocoa and chocolate) amended by 43/2005.
- 335/1997 (non-alcoholic beverages, wines, beer, spirits and vinegar) amended by 45/2000, 57/2003, 289/2004, 115/2011.
- 275/2004 (packed water) amended by 404/2006.
- 366/2005 (frozen foods).
- 225/2008 (special nutritional foods) amended by 352/2009.
- 344/2003 (tobacco products) and 467/2003 (labeling tobacco products) amended by 276/2005.
- 113/2005 (labeling foods and tobacco products) amended by 368/2005, 497/2005, 101/2007 and 127/2008.
- 450/2004 (nutritional value) amended by 330/2009.
- 211/2004 (methods on expertise testing) amended by 611/2004, 238/2005 and 459/2005.
- 235/2010 (food additives).

Decrees of the Ministry of Health connected to the Food act include:

- 296/1997 (epidemiological risks).
- 475/2002 (mushroom classification).
- 54/2004 (special diets) amended by 402/2006, 473/2006 and 157/2008.
- 133/2004 (food irradiation).
- 299/2012 (toxins and contaminants regulated by Commission Regulation (EC) No 1881/2006, the national legislation only sets limit for erucic acid – at maximum 5 percent).
- 260/2012 (aromatic additives).
- 450/2004 (nutritional value labeling).
- 4/2008 (additives and extract solvents) amended by 130/2010.
- 225/2008 (nutritional supplements) amended by 352/2009.
- 235/2010 (requirements and identification of additives) amended by 319/2010.

Veterinary Act

Primary veterinary laws and decrees connected to the food act by regulating conditions for veterinary control, animal diseases and foodstuff safety include:

- Decree no. 291/2003 (regulations on feedstuffs for animals and their products intended for human consumption) amended by 232/2005, 375/2006, 129/2009, 51/2012
- Decree no. 94/2010 amended by 291/2012 (animal processing)
- Decree no. 298/2003 (national and reference laboratories)
- Decree no. 373/2003 (trade veterinary control) amended by 164/2005 and 375/2006
- Decree no. 376/2003 (import and transit of products from third countries) amended by 259/2005, 375/2006 and 59/2008.
- Decree no. 377/2005 (import and transit of animals from third countries) amended by 259/2005
- Decree no. 128/2009 (veterinary and hygienic requirements for food companies).
- Act no. 78/2004 (GMO) amended by 346/2005, 124/2008, 227/2009 and 281/2009, 18/2012 (Chapter 34)
- Decree no. 209/2004 (GMO) amended by 86/2006 and 29/2010.

Section II. Labeling Requirements:

Decree no. 113/2005 amended by decrees no. 368/2005, 497/2005, 101/2007, 127/2008, 117/2011, provide general rules for food labeling.

Labels must be on the packaging for the consumer, not easily removable. Labeling must be understandable, easily visible, not covered by other information, and inerasable.

All labels on products intended for a Czech consumer must be in Czech language. The standard U.S. label is not sufficient for being placed on the Czech market. Stick-on labels in Czech are widely

used on imported products; the text on the original and Czech translation has to be identical.

The Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority (CAFIA) and the State Veterinary Administration are the authorities for enforcing labeling requirements. CAFIA takes into account a general appearance of the label, if it is not in any way misleading. Czech label must be on the product for customs clearance, in other words before it enters the market.

Food samples do not have to be labeled. Products for the food sector have to be labeled like products for the end consumer, but not their packaging, which only has to carry name of the product, expiration date, quality category, and irradiation information. Other information from the label on products inside this package has to be in the documentation.

Information that has to appear on the label:

- Name of the product with the information about the product category and its preparation. Producer and importer with addresses.
- Quantity. Liquid products in milliliters, centiliters, or liters and solid products in grams or kilograms.
- Expiration date. Form of the expiration date information varies according to the product. Some products (such as fresh fruit and vegetables) do not require an expiration date.
- Storage instructions (such as temperature, exposure to daylight etc).
- Usage instructions.
- List of ingredients listed in the order of their amount in the product.
- Lot.
- Information on food additives, enzymes, flavors, fragrances and/or ionization.

Genetically Modified Foods

Genetically modified foods are to follow the same regulation as well as all applying EU regulations.

Decree no. 450/2004 about nutritional contents provides rules for labeling information on energetic value, protein, carbohydrates, fats, fatty acids, fibers, and others. This information should be given in a table or in a line (due to space reasons) in Czech language.

If the product is packaged at a different location than where it is processed it must be labeled with the name of the packaging company with address, name of the product, its quantity, additives, country of origin and other requirements mentioned in special laws.

Decree no. 54/2004 (amended by decrees 402/2006, 473/2006, 157/2008, 35/2012) gives regulations on labeling of special foods (diets, baby food, food for sportsmen etc.). These foods have to follow the same regulations as other foods regarding labeling and including some additional information as mentioned in 54/2004 – specifics in processing if those cause the foods characteristics, protein origin (if this protein is mentioned in contents), category and other specification.

There are specifics in labeling tobacco products as mentioned in decree 467/2003 about the size, placement, and custom look of information and requirements.

According to 225/2008 (amended by decree 352/2009) food additives such as vitamins and minerals must be labeled with the words “doplňěk stravy” (food additive) visibly on the packaging. The label must also carry information on the character, origin, and amount of content and also about the recommended daily intake and warnings against overdose.

Foods containing GMOs must be labeled with the words “geneticky modifikovaný organismus”, “tento výrobek obsahuje geneticky modifikovaný organismus” or “tento výrobek obsahuje geneticky modifikované organismy” and also with the information about the name of the product, name of the genetically modified organism(s), conditions of managing the GMO, information on safe use. Only GMOs listed in the EU GMO register are approved to enter the market.

Organic Products

For regulations and details regarding organic products and market please see [Czech Republic Organic report no. EZ1103](#). Please note that in Czech language a term “product of ecological agriculture” is used.

Alcoholic beverages

On September 27, 2012, Czech Republic published new legislation requiring certification of origin for certain types of spirits and distillates as a reaction to a nation-wide wave of bootleg alcohol poisonings. The [Government Regulation no. 317/2012](#) requires alcoholic beverages containing 20 percent vol. or more of ethanol to have a certificate of origin, part of which is a test certificate issued by an accredited laboratory located within the territory of a member state of the European Union or within the territory of a contracting party to the European Economic Area.

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:

All foods entering the market must be packed appropriately. The packaging must protect the product from damage and provide prevention against replacement or substitution of the product without changing or penetrating the original packaging. The packaging itself must not affect the content in any way. Containers and packages have to suit not only the content but also any other materials and objects that come into direct contact with the foods.

Foods that are not packed have to be labeled on the transportation/manipulation containers with the above mentioned information and also this information must be visibly placed while the product is being offered to the final consumer.

Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:

Decree 235/2010 regulates use of food additives. The decree provides a list of food additives with additional information such as chemical origin, identification, and purity of flavor and color additives and sweeteners.

A list of food additives and conditions of their use is mentioned in decree 4/2008. If an imported product contains an additive not mentioned on the list, the Ministry of Health may give an exception after testing and approval of the product by the State Health Institute.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

Maximum contents of contaminant and toxicologically significant substances are regulated by Decree 305/2004. Limits of contaminants in food products are given in mg.kg^{-1} or mg.l^{-1} . Several contaminants such as lead, mercury, and arsenic may be found in EU Acts 242/2004, 221/2002, 563/2002, 472/2002, 257/2002, 1425/2003, 2174/2003, 683/2004, 684/2004, 466/2001, 1014/90.

A list of approved pesticides may be found at www.srs.cz (State Phytosanitary Administration – see contacts).

Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

All importers of special diet foods from third countries that are not mentioned in a specific law or regulation are obliged to contact the Ministry of Health and to provide the labeling in Czech language before the product is first introduced to the market. If this product has been introduced elsewhere in the EU before, then the approving foreign office must be mentioned as well. The Ministry may request an expertise confirmation on this product. The Ministry also has the right to ban any product from the market that does not meet the regulating requirements. Food products must be protected from damage and depreciation whilst being transported and only appropriate transportation should be used.

Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:

Trademarks and brand names are protected by the following acts:

- 14/1993 on protection of industrial property (amended by 417/2004).
- 441/2003 on trademarks (amended by 501/2004 and 221/2006) and decree 97/2004 on trademarks.
- 452/2001 on protection of geographical location indication (amended by 131/2003, 501/2004 and 221/2006).
- 206/2000 on protection of biotechnology inventions.
- 408/2000 on protection of rights to plant varieties (amended by 147/2002, 149/2002, 219/2003, 377/2005, 554/2005 and 444/2005).

Trademarks can be registered at the Industrial Property Institute (contact provided in the list of contacts in Appendix I).

Section IX. Import Procedures:

Products can be cleared through customs by entering the EU or directly in the Czech Republic. Only GMOs listed in the EU approved register may be imported. All GMO imports to the Czech Republic, their type, amount and entry place must be announced to the Ministry at least 5 days prior to entering the country. The appropriate paperwork must accompany the content at all times.

Requirements for import of products of veterinary origin may be found in English on the web page of the State Veterinary Administration: http://www.svscr.cz/dokumenty/eu/dovoz/dovoz_en.html

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture

Marta Tepla (Director of Foreign Relations Section)

Tesnov 65/17, 117 05 Prague, Czech Republic

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Jitka Götzova (Director of Food Safety Department)

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E-mail: petr.benes@mze.cz

Jindrich Fialka (Director of Food Production and Legislation Department)

Tel: [00420]221-812-465

E-mail: jindrich.fialka@mze.cz

Antonin Kralicek (Head of Wine Dept.)

Tel: [00420]221-812-104

E-mail: antonin.kralicek@mze.cz

Customs Administration

Dr. Pavel Novotny (Managing Director)

Budejovicka 7, 140 96 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420]261-331-919

E-mail: informace@cs.mfcr.cz

URL: www.celnisprava.cz

State Veterinary Administration

Tereza Hola (Head of Import Control Department)

Slezska 7, 120 00 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420]227-010-185

E-mail: t.hola@svscr.cz

URL: www.svscr.cz

State Phytosanitary Administration

Iveta Zahalkova (Head Import and Export Section)

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Fax: [00420]235-010-363

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State Agricultural and Food Inspection

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Central Institute for Control and Testing in Agriculture

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Ministry of Health

Vladimir Valenta (Deputy Minister for Public Health Protection and Support, Chief Hygienist)

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Organic Agriculture Control

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Industrial Property Office

Dr. Svetlana Kopecka (Director of the Intl' Department)

Antonina Cermaka 2a, 160 68 Prague 6, Czech Republic

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Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:

All contacts listed in Appendix I.