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Czech Republic

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

FAIRS Country Report 2017

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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-28 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards, because the Czech Republic, a member of the European Union, follows the EU directives and regulations. The following sections include updates: I - V, VIII - IX and Appendix I. Please note notification requirements for importers of certain foodstuffs of plant origin in Section IX.

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. All EU directions now apply. Suppliers 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. EU Regulations are explained in the EU-28 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report prepared by the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels, Belgium, available at <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>.

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

For questions, clarification, or copies of the following regulations, please contact the FAS office in Prague, Czech Republic, agprague@fas.usda.gov or call (011-420) 257-022-000.

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

Food Act

The Food Act 110/1997 as amended by legislative Acts: 166/1999, 306/2000, 119/2000, 146/2002, 131/2003, 274/2003, 94/2004, 316/2004, 558/2004, 392/2005, 444/2005, 229/2006, 296/2007, 120/2008, 224/2008, 227/2009, 281/2009, 375/2011, 279/2013, 128/2014, 138/2014, 139/2014, 180/2016, 26/2017, 183/2017 a 302/2017.

The Food Act defines requirements related to:

- hygiene and sanitary condition of food production
- food, additives, foods for special diet, irradiation of food
- classification of slaughter animals
- packaging of food
- labeling of food
- placing of food on the market
- transportation of food and tobacco products
- the system of official control of food
- penalty assessment for non-compliance

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

Most important laws and regulations regarding food include:

- 69/2016 (meat, meat preparations, fish, other aquatic organisms and preparations from them, egg and egg preparations)
- 194/2004 (carcasses and animals intended for slaughter) amended by 324/2005
- 397/2016 (milk, dairy products, frozen creams, edible fats and oils)
- 329/1997 (starch, legumes and oil seeds) amended by 418/2000 and 399/2013
- 330/1997 (tea and coffee) amended by 91/2000 and 78/2003
- 398//2016 (spices, edible salt, dehydrated products, condiments, cold sauces, dressings and mustard)
- 157/2003 (fresh fruits and vegetables, processed fruits and vegetables, nuts, mushrooms and potatoes) amended by 650/2004, 291/2010 and 153/2013
- 333/1997 (cereals, grains, pasta and bakery products) amended by 93/2000, 268/2006 and 182/2012
- 76/2003 (sweeteners, honey, cocoa and chocolate) amended by 43/2005 and 148/2015
- 335/1997 (non-alcoholic beverages and concentrates for the preparation of non-alcoholic beverages, fruit wines, other wines and mead, beer, potable alcohol, spirit drinks and other alcoholic beverages, brewed vinegar and yeast) amended by 45/2000, 57/2003, 289/2004, 115/2011 and 330/2013 – in 2017 a new regulation was established. For more details please see a notification detail [here](#)
 - 275/2004 (packed water) amended by 404/2006
 - 366/2005 (certain frozen foods)
- 225/2008 (requirements for food supplements and food enrichment) amended by 352/2009 – will be replaced in 2018 because it was found unsatisfactory by new legislation mentioned at the end

of this paragraph

- 261/2016 (tobacco products), 467/2003 (labeling tobacco products) amended by 276/2005, 72/2007 and 203/2011
- 417/2016 (some types of food labelling)
- 450/2004 (nutrition labelling) amended by 330/2009;
- 231/2016 (collection, preparation and test methods for control samples of foodstuffs and tobacco products)
- In 2018 a new regulation will come into force for food supplements and the composition of foodstuffs, for more details please see a notification detail [here](#)

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

- 296/1997 (epidemiological risks)
- 475/2002 (mushroom classification)
- 54/2004 (foodstuffs intended for special nutrition) amended by 402/2006, 473/2006, 157/2008, 35/2012 and 46/2014
- 133/2004 (food irradiation)
- 299/2012 (setting limit for erucic acid – at maximum 5 percent)
- 37/2017 (electronic cigarettes, refill containers and herbal products for smoking)

Veterinary Act

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

- Act no. 166/1999 (veterinary Act) amended by 29/2000, 154/2000, 102/2001, 120/2002, 76/2002, 320/2002, 131/2003, 316/2004, 444/2005, 48/2006, 186/2006, 124/2008, 182/2008, 298/2009, 291/2009, 223/2009, 227/2009, 281/2009, 308/2011, 18/2012, 359/2012, 279/2013, 64/2014, 139/2014, 264/2014, 250/2014, 126/2016, 243/2016, 183/2017 and 302/2017. Another amendment no. 225/2017 will come into force in January 2018.
- 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, 59/2008 and 108/2013
- Decree no. 377/2003 (import and transit of animals from third countries) amended by 259/2005 and 133/2014
- Decree no. 289/2007 (veterinary and hygienic requirements for animal products) amended by 61/2009, 11/2015
- Decree no. 128/2009 (veterinary and hygienic requirements for food companies) amended by 191/2013
- Act no. 78/2004 (GMO) amended by 346/2005, 124/2008, 227/2009, 281/2009, 18/2012 (Chapter 34), 279/2013, 243/2016, 371/2016 and 183/2017

- Decree no. 209/2004 (GMO) amended by 86/2006, 29/2010, and 372/2016. Please note that the following products sourced in the United States and imported into the EU must originate from an EU-approved U.S. establishment: red meat, meat products, farmed and wild game meat, ratites, milk and milk products, seafood, bovine embryos and semen, porcine and equine semen, gelatin, and animal casings.

For veterinary certificates and information related to trade with commodities subject to veterinary controls, please see our FAIRS Export Certificate Report for the Czech Republic available at <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>.

Section II. Labeling Requirements:

EU labeling requirements and instructions on how to comply with the EU system are provided on our USEU website at <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/eu-labeling-requirements/>.

In the Czech Republic, decree no. 417/2016 provides general rules for some types of food labeling. Complete guidance, available only in the Czech language, can be found on the [food safety website](#), provided by the Ministry of Agriculture. The key principles and requirements are following:

Consumer labels on food packages must be understandable, easily visible, permanent (i.e. not erasable), and not covered by other information or easily removable.

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, and confirms that it is not in any way misleading. A Czech label must be on the product in order to 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 includes the following:

- Name of the product with the information about the product category and its preparation;
- Producer and importer information 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 number for identification tracking
- Information on food additives, enzymes, flavors, fragrances and/or ionization

Decree no. 450/2004 (amended by 330/2009) about nutrition provides rules for providing information on energy 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 the 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 and 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 and 46/2014) gives regulations on labeling of special foods (diets, baby food, food for sportsmen etc.). These foods must 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.

Tobacco products labeling is specified under decree 467/2003 (amended by 276/2005, 72/2007 and 203/2011) which defines requirements for size, placement, and custom look of information and requirements.

Decree no. 225/2008 (amended by decree 352/2009) defines food supplements - such as vitamins and minerals - they must be labeled with the words “*doplněk stravy*” (food supplement) visibly on the packaging. The label must also carry information on the character, origin, amount of content, the recommended daily intake and warnings against overdose. This decree will be replaced in 2018 by new piece of legislation, for more details please see a notification detail [here](#).

Health and nutrition claims

Regarding health and nutrition claims, the Czech Republic follows the EU regulations. They can be found, along with a list of permitted nutrition claims and their conditions of use here:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/claims/register/public/?event=register.home.

Genetically Modified Foods

Genetically modified foods (i.e. GMOs) are to follow the same regulation as well as those that apply under EU regulations. There is however, one exception: animal product labels cannot have a “GMO-free” statement on them. As there are no GE animals available for consumption on the European market, it would be considered as misleading to the consumer.

Foods containing GMOs must be labeled with the words, “*Tento produkt/výrobek obsahuje geneticky modifikovaný/ou/é* (name of the organism),” 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. Example in English

(label must be in Czech language though): “*Product contains soybean oil from genetically modified soybeans.*”

For more information on the treatment of biotech foods in the Czech Republic, please see our report [Agricultural Biotechnology Annual 2017](#).

Organic Products

For regulations and details regarding organic products and market please see Czech Republic Organic report at <http://gain.fas.usda.gov>. Please note that in Czech, a term “product of ecological agriculture” is used.

Alcoholic Beverages

Products have to comply with the food safety and traceability requirements as set by Czech and EU legislation (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Czech Act no. 335/1997 (amended by 45/2000, 57/2003, 289/2004, 115/2011 and 330/2013 – in 2018 a new regulation will be valid) and the Food Act no. 110/1997 with later amendments listed in the Section I.).

For alcoholic beverages containing more than 1.2% alcohol by volume, the alcohol content must be indicated by a figure with no more than one decimal place. It will be followed by the symbol ‘% vol.’ and may be preceded by the word ‘alcohol’ or the abbreviation ‘alc’. Tolerances vary by beverage type. Net quantity, allergens, name or business name and address of the food business operator, country of origin or place of provenance, instructions for use where necessary, and date of minimum durability or the ‘use by’ date (for beverages less than 10% vol. of alcohol) are required.

Health warnings are not required.

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. This area is regulated via Decree no. 38/2001 (amended by 186/2003, 207/2006, 551/2006, 271/2008, 386/2008, 127/2009, 111/2011).

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:

The EU regulations 1332/2008, 1333/2008 and 1334/2008 regulate the usage food enzymes, food additives, and flavorings. A list of food additives and conditions of their usage is mentioned in Regulation (EC) 1333/2008.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

Several contaminants such as lead, mercury, and arsenic are regulated via EU regulations 396/2005 and 1881/2006.

A list of approved pesticides may be found on the Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture's website – <http://www.ukzuz.cz> (Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture – contact is provided in the list of contacts in Appendix I).

Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

Importers of all 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 can be introduced on the market. If the product has been introduced elsewhere in the EU previously, then the approving EU member state office must be mentioned as well. The Ministry may request expert review and confirmation on the efficiency and safety of the product. The Ministry also retains the right to ban any product from the market that does not meet regulatory requirements. Food products must be protected from damage and depreciation whilst being transported and only appropriate transportation should be used.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards:

N/A

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, 250/2014)
- 441/2003 on trademarks (amended by 501/2004, 221/2006, 296/2007, 303/2013, 183/2017 and 196/2017) and decree 97/2004 on trademarks
- 452/2001 on protection of geographical location indication (amended by 131/2003, 501/2004, 221/2006, 375/2007, 256/2011 and 196/2017)
- 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, 184/2008, 227/2009, 281/2009, 279/2013 and 183/2017). In general Czech agricultural associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) support the [UPOV](#) plant certificate system rather than the patent system.

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

Section IX. Import Procedures:

Products can be cleared through customs on entry directly into the Czech Republic or indirectly through another EU member state (e.g. countries with seaports like Germany or Netherlands).

Notification duty for importers of selected foodstuffs pursuant to Decree No. 172/2015 Coll.:

Decree No. 172/2015 Coll. (repealing decree No. 320/2014 Coll., amended by 141/2017) on notification obligation of the food recipient in the place of destination related to certain sorts of foodstuffs is applicable since August 1, 2015. The Decree is implementing regulation to Act on Foodstuffs (Act No. 110/1997 Coll.), which in its Section 3d Para 3 provides for the obligation of the food business operators to inform relevant supervisory authorities on the reception of selected sorts of foodstuffs originating in another EU Member State or a third country.

The Decree applies only to those foodstuffs which are destined for the territory of the Czech Republic where the goods are received, handled or manipulated for the first time. That means that it concerns all subjects that are the first recipients or handlers of foodstuffs of plant origin including subjects that import or directly sell foodstuffs of plant origin including various types of mobile shops.

The food business operator shall notify the foodstuffs in the place of destination.

Further detailed information are available on the CAFIA website:

<http://www.szpi.gov.cz/en/article/notification-of-selected-foodstuffs-pursuant-to-decree-no-172-2015-coll.aspx>.

Only GMOs listed in the EU approved register may be imported through a “Designated Point of Entry” (DPE) in the Czech Republic – Vaclav Havel Airport Prague, CU Praha Ruzyne, Aviaticka 12/1048, 160 08 Praha. Importers have to inform Customs Administration and CAFIA or CISTA (Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture).

Requirements for import of products of veterinary origin may be found in English on the web page of the State Veterinary Administration (SVA):

<http://eagri.cz/public/web/en/svs/portal/trade-with-vet-commodities/>. It is highly recommended by the SVA officers to contact them prior importing any veterinary commodities for current requirements, as they are often a subject to change. Please see the SVA contact information in the Appendix I.

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture

Karolina Bartosova (Deputy Director of Foreign Trade Cooperation Department)

Tesnov 65/17, 117 05 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 221-812-452

E-mail: karolina.bartosova@mze.cz

URL: www.eagri.cz

Jitka Gotzova (Director of Food Safety Department)

Tel: [00420] 221-812-254

E-mail: jitka.gotzova@mze.cz

Jindrich Fialka (Director of Food Production Department)

Tel: [00420] 221-812-465

E-mail: jindrich.fialka@mze.cz

David Filip (Head of Wine Department)

Tel: [00420] 221-812-095

E-mail: david.filip@mze.cz

Customs Administration

Vendulka Hola (Director of International Relations Division)

Budejovicka 7, 140 96 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 261-331-919

E-mail: informace@cs.mfcr.cz URL: www.celnisprava.cz

Current contact information for helpdesks dedicated to specific topics can be found here:

<https://www.celnisprava.cz/en/about-us/contacts/Pages/helpdesk-contacts.aspx>

State Veterinary Administration

Amer Mustafa Ali (Director of Department of External Affairs and Import and Export Control)

Slezska 7, 120 00 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 227-010-187

E-mail: a.mustafa@svscr.cz, int@svscr.cz URL: www.svscr.cz

Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority

Petr Cejka (Director of Law and Foreign Affairs Department)

Kvetna 15, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 543-540-204

E-mail: petr.cejka@szpi.gov.cz, sekret.opz@szpi.gov.cz URL: www.szpi.gov.cz

Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture

Vladislav Rasovsky (Director of Import and Export Dept.)

Zemedelská 1752/1a, 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 545-110-490, [00420] 724-247-362

E-mail: vladislav.rasovsky@ukzuz.cz URL: www.ukzuz.cz

Ministry of Health

Palackeho nam. 4, 128 01 Prague 2, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 224-971-111

Fax: [00420] 224-972-111

E-mail: mzcr@mzcr.cz

URL: www.mzcr.cz

Ministry of Industry and Trade

Na Frantisku 32, 110 15 Prague, Czech Republic

Tel: [00420] 224-851-111

Fax: [00420] 224-811-089

E-mail: posta@mpo.cz

URL: www.mpo.cz

Organic Agriculture Control

Jan Dehner (Director)

Podebradova 909, 537 01 Chrudim

Tel: [00420] 469-625-026 ext. 37

E-mail: jan.dehner@kez.cz

URL: www.kez.cz

Industrial Property Office

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

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

Tel: [00420] 220-383-327

E-mail: skopeccka@upv.cz

URL: www.upv.cz

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:

All contacts listed in Appendix I.

For additional information on the information provided in this report, please contact the Foreign Agricultural Service:

Czech Republic, American Embassy, Office of Agricultural Affairs, Prague

Telephone: (011-420) 257-022-000

Email: agprague@fas.usda.gov

Website: <http://fas-europe.org/countries/czech-republic/>