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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 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards report no. E80065 prepared by USEU Brussels, because the Czech Republic, a member of the European Union, follows the EU directives and regulations. The following sections were updated: I, II, III, V, VIII, IX and Appendix I. Please note new notification duty for importers of certain foodstuffs of plant origin in Section IX.
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 orAPHIS 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.
Section I. Food Laws:

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.

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 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.

Basically, 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:
326/2001 (meat, meat preparations, fish, other aquatic organisms and preparations from them, egg and egg preparations) amended by 264/2003, 169/2009 and 159/2014;
194/2004 (carcasses and animals intended for slaughter) amended by 324/2005;
329/1997 (starch, legumes and oil seeds) amended by 418/2000 and 399/2013;
331/1997 (spices, salt, dehydrated products, flavors and mustard) amended by 419/2000;
76/2003 (sweeteners, honey, cocoa and chocolate) amended by 43/2005;
275/2004 (packed water) amended by 404/2006;
366/2005 (frozen foods);
225/2008 (special nutritional foods) amended by 352/2009;
113/2004 (food irradiation);

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

296/1997 (epidemiological risks);
475/2002 (mushroom classification);
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);
450/2004 (nutritional value labeling) amended by 330/2009;
4/2008 (additives and extract solvents) amended by 130/2010 and 122/2011;

Veterinary Act

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


Labels must be on packaging for consumers, and 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. A 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 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 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.

Genetically Modified Foods

Genetically modified foods are to follow the same regulation as well as those that apply under EU regulations.

Decree no. 450/2004 (amended by 330/2009) about nutritional contents provides rules for labeling 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 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 and 46/2014) 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.

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 additives such as vitamins and minerals must be labeled with the words “doplněk stravy” (food additive) 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.

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**

The Government Regulation no. 307/2012 requiring specific certification of origin for certain types of spirits and distillates was cancelled as of September 1, 2014 by the Czech Government. The certificate of origin is no longer required. However, all original legislative requirements are still in place, which means products still have to comply with the food safety and traceability requirements as set by Czech and EU legislation (EU Regulation EC/178/2002 and Czech Act no. 307/2013 and the Food Act no. 110/1997 with later amendments listed in the Section I).

**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:**


If an imported product contains an additive not mentioned on the list, the Ministry of Health may issue an exception after the State Health Institute tests and approves the product.

**Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:**

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 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 efficacy and safeness 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);
- 206/2000 on protection of biotechnology inventions;

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 on entry directly into the Czech Republic or indirectly through another EU member state.

New notification duty for importers of certain foodstuffs of plant origin:
The Government of the Czech Republic issued on October 2, 2014 Regulation no. 211/2014 that, inter alia, orders the food business operators to inform the Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority (CAFIA) on their imports of certain sorts of fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and potatoes. The Regulation concerns only foodstuffs imported into the CR with the aim of further sale or processing on the territory
of the Czech Republic, not the foodstuffs destined outside the CR. The operator has to inform the relevant CAFIA Inspectorate 48 hours before the foodstuffs are delivered at the latest. The operators can send the information as a spreadsheet “Nahlášení potravin-formulář” (available at http://www.szpi.gov.cz/ViewFile.aspx?docid=1065609). Further detailed information are available on the CAFIA website, where also an on-line form will be launched in by the end of 2014 in order to streamline the notification process (http://www.szpi.gov.cz/en/).

An amendment to this regulation is in preparation and as soon as it is released, a separate GAIN report will follow.

Only GMOs listed in the EU approved register may be imported. All GMO containing products imported into the Czech Republic, their type, amount and entry point must be announced to the Ministry at least five days prior to entering the county. 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:

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture
Petr Jezek (Director of Foreign Relations Section)
Tesnov 65/17, 117 05 Prague, Czech Republic
Tel: [00420] 221-812-736
E-mail: petr.jezek@mze.cz        URL: www.eagri.cz

Jitka Götzova (Director of Food Safety Department)
Tel: [00420] 221-812-254
E-mail: jitka.gotzova@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
Vendulka Hola (Director of Internaionsl Relations Dept.)
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
Maria Cemanova (Head of Import Control Department)
Slezska 7, 120 00 Prague, Czech Republic
Tel: [00420] 227-010-187
E-mail: m.cemanova@svscr.cz    URL: www.svscr.cz

Czech Agriculture and Food Inspection Authority
Petr Cejka (Director of Law and Foreign Affairs Dept.)
Kvetna 15, 603 00 Brno, Czech Republic
Tel: [00420] 543-540-204
E-mail: petr.cejka@szpi.gov.cz    URL: www.szpi.gov.cz

Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture
Daniel Jurecka (Director)
Hroznova 2, 656 06 Brno, Czech Republic
Tel: [00420] 235-010-302    Fax: [00420] 235-010-363
E-mail: daniel.jurecka@ukzuz.cz    URL: www.ukzuz.cz

Ministry of Health
Vladimir Valenta (Deputy Minister for Public Health Protection and Support, Chief Hygienist)
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
Milan Berka (Director)
Podebradova 909, 537 01 Chrudim
Tel: [00420] 469-625-026 ext. 37
E-mail: milan.berka@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: skopecka@upv.cz    URL: www.upv.cz

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:
All contacts listed in Appendix I.