

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY  
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT  
POLICY

Required Report - public distribution

**Date:** 12/31/2015

**GAIN Report Number:** TS1509

## **Tunisia**

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

### **2015 FAIRS Country Report**

**Approved By:**

Sarah Hanson, Agricultural Attaché

**Prepared By:**

FAS Tunis

**Report Highlights:**

The Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report provides an overview of the food laws and regulatory environment in Tunisia as it relates to U.S. food and agricultural exports. Sections I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VIII, IX and the Appendix have all been updated.

**Disclaimer:**

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Tunis, Tunisia 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 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.**

Please contact this office, if you have any comments, corrections or suggestions about the material contained in this report at: [AgTunis@usda.gov](mailto:AgTunis@usda.gov)

## **Section I. Food Laws:**

Despite the steady progress in Tunisia's political transition by holding democratic elections in late 2014 and establishing a new government with broad support in early 2015, very few laws and regulations regarding food regulatory infrastructure and import control policies were adopted. The new food law that was prepared by the Ministry of Trade in accordance with local and European food agencies is still pending and currently under review. The law is expected to harmonize Tunisian legislation with EU food regulation 178/2002 and to encompass all its principles, requirements, and procedures concerning food and consumers' safety. According to resources persons that worked on the project, the drafted food law will harmonize the regulatory food environment and will avoid overlaps through the creation of one institution in charge of import control regulations instead of the current multiple stakeholders. The drafted food law contains regulations on official controls, contaminants, additives, food contact materials, and pesticides.

Both the contents of the law, as well as the prerogatives of each ministry and enforcement of the law will be under debate in 2016. Pending a final decision concerning the adoption of the new food law, Tunisian food legislation currently consists of several general laws intended to organize the food sector and to protect consumers ([Law # 92-117, 1992](#)). Quarantine and phytosanitary requirements apply to unprocessed agricultural products of plant origin, as well as the sanitary control of live animals and animal's products as defined by [Laws # 92-72, 1992](#) completed by [Law # 99-5](#), and [Law # 99-24](#), respectively. Food distribution and marketing are structured by [Law # 94-86](#), which organizes market, distribution channels and retail services. Finally, [Law # 99-42](#) amended by [Law # 2000-66](#) establishes the procedures for seeds and seedlings production, propagation, import, marketing and protection of the rights relating thereto. These laws are implemented through a set of food regulations referred to as decrees and orders 'Arrêtés'. Food control activities are organized and coordinated by the National Agency of the Sanitary and Environmental Control of Products (ANCSEP) created by [Decree #99-769](#) in 1999. The ANCSEP also ensures the observance of national and international standards in matters of sanitary and environmental food controls. It is worth noting that in 2013, an order of the Ministry of Health canceled the mandatory character of Tunisian norms and local standards on certain food products including milk, milk products, cereals, vegetables and fruits ([Order 04/16/2013](#)).

The [Law #94-41](#) liberalized trade and abolished the import-licensing regime to ensure compliance with WTO trade rules and allow Tunisia to make steady progress toward reforming its trade policy and reducing barriers facing international trade of agricultural and food products. A large majority of goods can be freely imported to Tunisia, with only 3 percent of imported products needing prior authorization. Products under the free imports regime need an import certificate supported by commercial documentation in order to be cleared, while products not included in the free regime require an import authorization granted by the Ministry of Trade that generally lasts for one year. To obtain this license, a number of documents are required, such as the commercial contract (or other equivalent documents), as well as information about the contracting parties, the products, their origin and where they come from. Export companies and companies operating under the free trade zone regime can import freely without these requirements. The highest tariffs are applied to fruits, vegetables, and other imported agricultural products that compete with domestic products. Non-tariff barriers such as quotas still exist for many agricultural products.

## **Section II. Labeling Requirements:**

The Tunisian Ministry of trade published a new [Order in September 3, 2008](#) amending the old order dated on July 22, 1985. The order applies to the labelling of all the pre-packaged foodstuffs intended for consumption, collective catering and certain aspects concerning their presentation and does not apply to bulk and intermediate foods products intended for further processing.

## II-A General Requirements:

The 2008 Ministry of Trade's order issued on [September 3, 2008](#) stipulates that the label appended on the pre-packaged foodstuffs shall not describe or present the product in a wrong, deceptive, lying way or in a way to give a mistaken impression about its true nature. The pre-packaged stuffs shall not be described or presented on the label or during the labelling by words, pictures or by any other way referring directly or indirectly to another product with which they may be confused, or in a way making the buyer or the consumer think that the food is similar to the other product.

The foodstuffs labelling shall comply with the following provisions:

- Any pre-packaged food product may not be sold without labelling,
- The sale or the distribution for free of the pre-packaged food products is prohibited after the expiry date on the label,
- Only the products not passing half of their expiry date may be exported in Tunisia
- Any indication on the label must be done by an indelible ink or by molding or engraving. In case the product contains alcohol, the label must clearly bear the expression "*product containing alcohol*".
- In the case of mail-order sales, the catalogues, booklets, leaflets or advertisements which make the consumer know the products supplied for sale and allow him to place directly his order shall comply with the same provisions.
- The labels of the pre-packaged foodstuffs must be fixed in a way they may not be detached from the container. The use of a sticker to wholly or partially rectify or correct the essential information is prohibited
- In case the pre-packaged food product contains pork, pork fat or beef fat, it must be clearly mentioned by their specific names on the label
- In case the foodstuff contains genetically modified organisms, this must be clearly mentioned on the label.
- The label of any foodstuff which was processed by ionizing radiation shall bear either expression: "processed by ionizing radiation" or "processed by ionization" written for the purpose immediately close to the product name. The use of the international symbol of food irradiation shown below, indicated in the regulations in force is optional, but when it is used, it must appear immediately close to the product name.



*International Symbol of Food Irradiation*

- When an irradiated product is used as an ingredient in another product, it must be mentioned in the ingredients list and when a product made up of one ingredient is prepared from a raw material processed by irradiation, the product label must bear an expression indicating the applied processing.
- Arabic language is mandatory and shall appear from among the languages used in the label appropriate to the locally manufactured or imported foodstuffs. All the essential information for labelling must be easily understandable, inscribed in an apparent side in a way to be on view and clearly readable and indelible. It must by no means be hidden, warped or separated by other indications or pictures.

The following components are mandatory on the labeling:

- Product name,
- Ingredients full list in descending order of predominance (Ingredients that are supposed to be at the origin of allergy should be conspicuously labeled)
- Net weight using the international metric system in units of volume (*liter, milliliter...*) in the case of liquids, units of weight (*kilograms, grams...*) in the case of other products. Food items packed in a liquid container must carry an indication of the net drained weight
- Date of production and date limit of use for perishable food products has to be clearly indicated in this way: day/month/year.
- Date limit for use or date limit for optimum use, as well as the specific conditions of safety and use,
- Name or the trade name and the complete address of the manufacturer or the packager,
- Number of the lot,
- Place of origin
- Storage instructions: indications such as ‘keep in a cool place, protect from light or from dampness’ must be indicated when necessary, and the important use instructions, in case of its omission does not allow an appropriate use.

For goods having a shelf life of three months or more the mention of the month and the year is sufficient. For non-perishable goods a time limit for optimum use must be indicated using one of the following sentences: *‘to be consumed preferably before.../ to be consumed preferably before end of.../ to be consumed preferably within a period of...’*

## **II-B Specific Requirements to Nutritional Labeling:**

A Ministry of trade [Order dated September 3, 2008](#) partially inspired by the European Union regulations of 2006 on the use of nutrition and health claims for foods was adopted in Tunisia in 2008. This Regulation lays out rules for the use of health or nutritional claims (such as “low fat” and “helps lower cholesterol”) on foodstuffs based on nutrient profiles by means of positive lists of authorized claims that can be made on food. Health claims are prohibited on food intended for babies and children.

Nutritional labeling of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients is mandatory when a producer is making health or dietary claims on the label. This provision applies to fortified products and to food items intended for particular use (e.g. infant formula). Otherwise, nutrition information is voluntary.

If the nutritional elements content is declared on the label, it is mandatory to display on the energetic value, the quantities of proteins, similar carbohydrates (it means carbohydrates, food fibers excluded) and lipids, the quantity of any other nutritional element subject to a nutritional allegation.

The quantity of energy must be calculated according to the following coefficients:

<i>Carbohydrates</i>	<i>4 Kcal/g-17KJ</i>
<i>Polyalcohol</i>	<i>2.4 Kcal/g-10KJ/g</i>
<i>Protein</i>	<i>4 Kcal/g-17KJ</i>
<i>Lipid</i>	<i>9 Kcal/g-37KJ</i>
<i>Alcohol (ethanol)</i>	<i>7 Kcal/g-29KJ</i>
<i>Organic acid</i>	<i>3 Kcal/g/13KJ</i>

The quantity of protein shall be calculated according to the following formula:

*Protein = total nitrogen (kjeldhal) x 6.25*

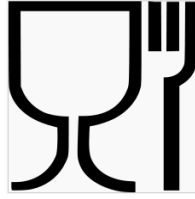
## **II-C Food Quality Label:**

A decree by the Ministry of Industry and Technology ([Decree #2010-2525](#)) that was published on September 28, 2010 creates for the first time in Tunisia a quality label called "*Food Quality Label*" granted to the processed foodstuffs with a higher, specific or traditional quality. The label is granted to products that meet certain quality attributes as traditional and premium products. The first group of products to benefit from the quality labeling includes bottled olive oil, sardines, and dates. A special committee called the "*Committee of label quality*" is created within the Ministry of Industry and Technology and is in charge of granting, monitoring and suspending the quality labels for the producing companies.

For each type of foodstuffs or category of foodstuffs, the label is managed exclusively by a single institution of management designated by decision of the Minister of the Industry.

## **Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:**

Materials intended to come into contact with foodstuffs, i.e. packaging materials, must meet Tunisian standards and bear a food grade international logo shown below ([Decree #2003-1718 dated August 11, 2003](#)). However, the decree does not apply to coating materials covering foodstuffs. This requirement entails either clearly stating on the container a short message (mandatory in Arabic and optional in other languages) such as "*material fit for food contact*", or featuring the logo.



*Food Grade Logo for Packaging and Container*

#### **Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

A departmental [Order issued in May 20, 1998](#) validated the Tunisian standard NT 117-01 (1995) which governs the use of food additives. The purpose of this standard is to give an exhaustive listing of authorized additives (positive list), their conditions of use as well as their respective identification E-numbers. This standard is largely based on European regulations (directive 94/35/CE on sweeteners for use in foodstuffs, directive 94/36/CE on colors for use in foodstuffs, and directive 95/2/CE on food additives other than colors and sweeteners).

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

The trade, distribution and use of pesticides for agricultural purposes have been systematically regulated in Tunisia since 1961. The last amendments to this law were approved in 1992 ([Law # 92-72](#)) and completed in 1999 ([Law # 99-5](#)). Any pesticide entering in the country has to be at first imported by an approved importer in accordance with a specifications book “cahier des charges” established by a departmental [Order dated May 5, 2003](#). Secondly the pesticide itself has to be registered and officially authorized by the laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture (Laboratoire de Contrôle et d’Analyse des Pesticides, created in 1985). The registration procedure last 2 years including 1 year of experimentation. In 1994, [the Decree #94-1744](#) made the control of the formulation of imported pesticides mandatory. Obligatory labeling items are set by the law, particularly the necessity to use French and Arabic language. Tunisian imports of pesticides amount to 3600 tons per year with more than 725 pesticides distributed in the market.

The laboratory of the National Institute for Nutrition of the Ministry of Public Health (Laboratoire de l’Institut National de Nutrition) and the Central Laboratory of the Ministry of Industry (Laboratoire Central) are responsible for pesticide residue analysis in foodstuffs. Maximum pesticide residues tolerated in food items are set in the Tunisian standard NT 117-03 enacted in 1983 and technically equivalent to the Codex Alimentarius Standard #100-1981 (Codex CAC/RS 100-1978). It must be noted that Tunisian MRL could differ from the Codex MRL in case of a particular threat to the Tunisian consumer's health is identified.

In addition to pesticides, Tunisia also sets admissible maximum limits for other contaminants in foodstuffs, such as metals, metalloids, aflatoxins (B1, B2, G1, G2, M1, M2, ochratoxins and histamines). Maximum limits that were laid out in Tunisian standard NT 117-02 were canceled in 2013.

A new decree published in May 2013 ([Order #05/13/2013](#)) set up the Maximum Limits Residues for food contaminants.

The implementation of these regulations is not always rigorous, particularly the regulations that govern labeling, conditioning, handling, transport and storage of agricultural and food products. Banned

compounds were still being illegally imported from Algeria and Libya where their use is authorized.

## **Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:**

### **Technical controls:**

Any trade operation, import or export, must comply with the Decree #94-1743 of August 29, 1994 laying down the procedures for trade operations. The main requirement for the majority of food products is the technical quality control which aims to verify the conformity of products with technical regulations implemented, especially those related to the safety and health of consumers, as well as fair trade.

Prior to customs clearance. Importers must apply for a consumption authorization document called 'Autorisation de Mise à la Consommation' (AMC). The list of the products concerned by the technical control is regularly published in departmental orders. In general it focuses more on ready-use foods and beverages rather than products shipped in bulk in a protecting consumer approach. In general, products submitted to the technical check are the imported products intended for sale in its state and for the final consumption. However products free from the procedures of the technical check include raw materials, semi-finished materials intended for the professional use of the importer in the framework of his industrial, agricultural, craft or touristic activity and also the imported samples.

The decree [#94-1744](#) of 29 August 1994 amended in July 2010 ([Decree #2010-1648](#)) and the departmental [Order dated August 30, 1994](#), published three lists of imported goods that are subject to technical controls according to three distinct modalities:

#### **1. List A:**

Includes all goods submitted to a systematic technical control i.e. a conformity assessment with or without sampling for further laboratory testing to be undertaken at each shipment regardless of whether the product has or has not been already tested in the past. This list includes virtually all processed agricultural products,

#### **2. List B:**

Includes products submitted to the so-called certification regime whereby customs clearance is granted for goods accompanied by a certificate issued by the country of origin and stating that those goods are in compliance with international standards. Agricultural products are not among products subject to the certification regime.

#### **3. List C:**

Includes products submitted to a conformity assessment with the conditions defined by a GOT-sanctioned specifications book (Cahier des charges). Agricultural products submitted to 'cahier des charges' are, in their majority, bulk and intermediate agricultural products. Conditions set out in 'cahier des charges' very often go beyond sanitary and phytosanitary aspects and set out conditions about the importer's eligibility in terms of storage capacity, funding availability, production data disclosure, etc.



### **Dioxin and Radio-contamination:**

A certificate indicating the amount of dioxin residue is required for all imports of bulk and processed food items. A certificate of non-contamination from radioactivity issued at the country of origin or to be delivered in Tunisia by the National Center for Radioprotection after testing is also required.

### **Biotech-derived products:**

New legislations on biotech products that were expected to be finalized and adopted by the Tunisian parliament five years ago have been indefinitely postponed. Nonetheless, the new legislations are expected to be heavily influenced by EU policy. Pending the expected debate and adoption of a law on biotech, imports of biotech products will continue to be handled in a manner similar to conventional agricultural products. That is, Tunisian officials recognize the existence of biotech materials in imported animal feed products, the dependence of Tunisia's agriculture on these imports, and the increased international acceptance of biotech products which should allow for the import of these biotech products to continue.

### **Environmental labeling:**

Tunisia has an environmental labeling requirement that applies for pre-packaged food items made entirely or partially of plastic, canned food made of white iron metal and aluminum cans with capacity greater than 100 milliliter. So far this requirement is only enforced for bottled water and soft drinks. [Decree #97-1102](#) dated on June 2, 1997 and amended by [Decree #2001-843](#) dated on April 10, 2001 mandates for a national system managed by the ANPE, the National Agency for Environmental Protection, to collect and recycle used packaging. The manufacturer or the importer has four options to comply with this regulation:

- Tacking back and recycling the used packaging
- Entrusting the implementation of this obligation to an approved companies on a contractual basis
- Enrolling in the state-owned recycling system, which gives the right to print the Eco-lef logo, shown below on the product's label.
- Re-use the package or use it in another industrial process.



*Tunisian Eco-lef Logo*

### **Section VII. Other Specific Standards:**

## **A. Cereals:**

The Tunisian Office of Cereals (the Grain Board) enjoys a monopoly on the import of durum wheat, soft wheat and barley. Physical, chemical as well as phytosanitary requirements are usually laid down in a tender document referred to as ‘cahier des charges’. The latter stipulates that in case wheat is originated in the United States, the required quality is the one defined by the USDA/FGIS relevant standards for the grade mentioned in contracting documents. In 2012, the GOT decided through the [Decree #2012-621](#) to amend the decree #2007-1401 and to harmonize the quality requirements for imported and locally produced wheat. The ministry of agriculture outlined in the cited decree all details required for importing wheat (soft and durum).

Concerning corn, imports has been liberalized since the mid-90s. Technical and phytosanitary requirements are defined by an Order jointly issued on January 11, 1997 by Ministers of Agriculture, Finance and Trade.

## **B. Milk Products:**

Title V, Chapter III of [Law # 2005-95](#) dated October 18, 2005 sets legal conditions relating to milk production, processing and marketing. Some of the applicable standards are listed below:

- TS 14-01 Milk definition
- TS 14-02 Raw and natural milk
- TS 14-28 Determination of milk density
- TS 14-32 Determination of milk fat content

Most of the milk being processed or imported into Tunisia is essentially semi-skimmed, UHT (Ultra High Temperature), thus permitting dairy plants to recover fats for butter production. A new sanitary certificate for exporting U.S. dairy products to Tunisia has been successfully negotiated between USDA/FDA and the Tunisian regulatory authorities.

### **B-1 Dry Milk:**

Import of dry or powdered milk, which is subject to a quotas allocation system run by the Ministries of industry and trade, shall be undertaken according to specifications set in the so-called ‘Cahier des Charges’. Quotas are allocated on the basis of the annual requests presented by the end-users (cheese and yoghurt processors). Importing out of the quotas is almost impossible with a duty of 300%.

## **C. Animal Feed :**

The Ministers of Agriculture, Public Health and Trade [Orders dated July 29, 1999](#) and [September 12, 2001](#) lay down rules for feed production and marketing. To import ingredients for compound feed production, importers are required to maintain a register showing:

- Name and quantities of imported ingredients

- Name and address of supplier
- Date of production of ingredients
- Name and address of buyers
- Quantities and numbers of lots of ingredients sold or in stock
- Analysis certificates giving contents of noxious elements

In addition, the same decree defines marketing and labeling regulations and animal feeds quality controls.

The Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture outlined in the order issued on [January 11, 1997](#) all details required for importing soybean meal.

#### **D. Feed Additives:**

The list and conditions of production and marketing of additives used as feed components are set by the Ministers of Public Health, Agriculture and Trade [Orders dated January 4, 1996](#) and [September 7, 2005](#).

Additives that may be included in compound feeds are:

- Antibiotics
- Substances with anti-oxygen effects
- Coccidiostatics and medicinal substances
- Colorants, including pigments
- Emulsifying, stabilizing, thickening and jellying matters
- Vitamins and pro-vitamins
- Trace elements
- Conservation elements
- Binding, coagulating and anti-lumping agents
- Growth factors
- Aromatic substances
- Acid regulators

#### **E. Live Animals/ Animal Semen:**

A health certificate approved by the Tunisian Veterinary service must accompany all shipments of live animals (dairy heifers and bull-calves). At the present time, U.S exports of live animals to Tunisia are almost non-existent, due to cost considerations. For US bovine semen export must comply with a ‘Cahier Charge’ issued by Ministry of Agriculture. There are no specific restrictions on US imports.

#### **F. Meat:**

Imports of bovine and sheep meat are governed by a set of specifications (cahier des charges) included in a model health certificate that has not been established between Tunisia and the United States. It is important to know that slaughtering according to the Halal ritual is mandatory and that meat from

hormone-fed animals cannot be allowed into the country.

### **G. Plant Products:**

A Phytosanitary certificate conforming to the model established by the International Convention of plant protection must accompany all shipments of plants to Tunisia ([Order dated 05/28/2013](#)). The certificate has to be issued, in Arabic, English or French, by the exporter country sanitary authority with a maximum 14 days prior to the shipment day. The sanitary certificate has to stipulate that the plants are free of certain diseases listed in the Order dated [May 31, 2012](#).

Imports of seeds and seedlings must comply with Decrees [#2007-1104 dated May 2, 2007](#) amending [Decree #2002-621](#) dated March 19, 2002 and [Decree #2000-101](#) dated January 18, 2000 and Decree [#2004-2179](#) dated September 14, 2004. These decrees set rules to import all seeds and seedlings. Of particular interest is the impact of systematic technical controls applied to planting seed imports. These imports are subject to a redundant system of phytosanitary controls. This delays clearance by several weeks in some cases, making the seeds not available for farmers at sowing time or obliges them to sow late. Apart from the phytosanitary aspects, main provisions are the obligation for the importer to apply for a license, to have a minimum storage capacity (300 meter cube at least), to keep records for its inventories and to display the importer name on the seeds and seedling packaging. Seeds and seedlings covered by these decrees are: potato, citrus, strawberry, pulses, horticultural seeds, forages, cereals and vines.

### **H. Fruits**

According to an [Order in June 26, 2015](#) imports of several fruits including apples and citrus into Tunisia are banned. The reason for the ban is to prevent the spread of Fire blight (*Erwinia amylovora*) which is a contagious disease that affects apple and pear cultivations. It is worth mentioning that despite the official ban there are apples imported illegally into Tunisia, though in small quantities. The Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture has no intention of removing this import ban soon. The 2015 Order includes other fruits from medlar family, as well as, dates.

### **Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:**

Tunisia has a copyright law ([Law #94-36](#) dated February, 1994). The Law establishes the Tunisian Institution for the Protection of Copyright (Organisme Tunisien de Protection des Droits d'Auteur). The Institution has several functions, including the protection of copyright. According to Article 18 of the Law, the copyright shall be valid during the author's lifetime and must continue for fifty calendar years after the author's death. The law established monetary sanctions for violations or infringements. A person who violates the law may be obliged to pay fines ranging from \$ 500 to \$5,000.

It is important to note that Tunisia is a member of WIPO since 1975 (World Intellectual Property Organization) and has signed most WIPO conventions. Tunisia is also an original WTO member and a signatory of several trade's agreements specially the TRIPS agreement that sets down minimum standards for many forms of intellectual property (IP).

The [Law # 2001-36](#) enacted on March 17, 2001 and completed by the [Law # 2007-50](#) dated July 23, 2007 protects trademarks and brand names. Registration with the National Institute for Standardization and Industrial Property (INNORPI) is required to obtain protection and is normally issued upon filling an application for registration. A trademark registration is valid for fifteen years from the date on which the application for registration is filled. It may be renewed indefinitely for similar periods of time. Tunisia does not require use of a trademark as a condition for maintaining registration.

## **Section IX. Import Procedures:**

In addition to phytosanitary and sanitary certificates, the majority of consumer-oriented food products are subject to a technical quality control prior to customs clearance mandated by [Decree # 94-1744](#) dated August 1994 and Ministry of Trade, Agriculture and Health [Order dated on September 18, 2010](#). In order to expedite customs clearance, the importer is entitled to a temporary document called “Autorisation Provisoire d’Enlevement (APE)” but must refrain from distributing or further processing the imported good until the AMC is delivered by the Ministry of Trade, Directorate of Quality and Consumer Protection.

The importer shall, before the arrival of the goods and before starting the customs formalities, present to the technical control department the following documents:

- A request for APE or consumption authorization (AMC) bearing the signature of the importer, in accordance with the model of the single bundle enacted by the Order of the Minister of Trade dated on November 14, 2000
- Commercial invoice: Since October 2006, customs clearance requires domiciliation of the commercial invoice with an approved financial intermediary (i.e. commercial bank). An invoice domiciled at an approved intermediary,
- certificate of origin,
- Packing list,
- Bill of lading
- Technical notice describing the composition of product, the number of lot, the date of production and the validity period, safety requirements, rules of storage, compliance certificate, and analyses...
- Other document (s) at the discretion of the Authorities

The above mentioned documents must be provided in Arabic, French or English. Local agents/distributors are crucial to introducing new products into the Tunisian market. Both commission agents and distributors may represent foreign businesses in Tunisia. The agency-principal relationship is governed by [Articles 625](#) and [626](#) of the Commercial Code of Tunisia. Tunisian law prohibits the flow of currency out of Tunisia as payment for imports before documents are presented to the issuing bank confirming that the merchandise has entered the country. Imports have to be domiciled at a bank in order to make international payments in hard currency. It should be noted that in 2010 Tunisia upgraded its electronic trade information systems that allowed a faster way for assembling import and export documents.

The process of customs clearance is composed of two essential operations:

## 1-Declaration:

Import declarations could be completed on-line with the Tunisian customs office. As a result, the time required to make an import declaration has been reduced significantly to 45 minutes. The declaration consists in an application form which has to be submitted along with documents cited above.

## 2- Custom control:

All merchandise that arrives for entry are systematically sorted by the information system of customs called SINDA (Système d'information douanier automatisé) according to certain criteria, particularly the type of the product and the importer. The products are then inspected accordingly to the procedures described in section VI in order to receive the approval for market distribution the AMC (Autorisation de Mise à la Consommation). This operation can take up to 20 days depending on the product. The entire customs clearance process for a product imported under the free regime takes, on average, less than 12 days. Customs fees are assessed at about 3%.

## **Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:**

### **Directorate General for Veterinary services (DGSV)**

Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Hydraulic Resources

30, rue Alain Savary, 1002, Tunis, Tunisia

Phone: 216 71 786 833

E-mail: mag@ministeres.tn

**Directorate General for Agricultural Production (DGPA)**

Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Hydraulic Resources  
30, rue Alain Savary, 1002, Tunis, Tunisia  
Phone: 216 71 786 833  
E-mail: : mag@ministeres.tn

**Directorate General for Crop Protection and Quality of Agricultural Products (DGPCQPA)**

Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Hydraulic Resources  
30, rue Alain Savary, 1002, Tunis, Tunisia  
Phone: 216 71 786 833  
E-mail: : mag@ministeres.tn

**Trade Board of Tunisia (OCT)**

65, Rue de la Syrie 1002 -Belvédère- Tunis  
Phone: 71800040  
E-mail: octmail@gnet.tn

**Directorate of Quality and Consumer Protection (DQPC)**

Ministry of Commerce  
37,av.Keireddine Pacha, 1002 Tunis  
Phone: (216) 71 890-070 / 890 337  
E-mail: [mcmr@ministeres.tn](mailto:mcmr@ministeres.tn)

**Packaging Technical Centre (PACKTEC)**

Cité El Khadra, par la rue Alain SAVARY. BP 64 .1003 Tunis.  
Tel. : +216 71 772 755  
Fax. : +216 71 773 300  
Email : [Packtec@packtec-tunisia.com](mailto:Packtec@packtec-tunisia.com)

**Directorate General for Customs Services**

5 rue ichbilia, Tunis, Tunisie  
Tel. : +216 71 353 685  
Fax. : +216 71 353 257  
Email : dgd.dg@douane.gov.tn

**The American Chamber of Commerce in Tunisia (TACC)**

10 Av Mosbah Jarbou El Manar 3, Rue Mosbah Jarbou, Tunis, Tunisie  
Tel. : +216 71 883 226  
Fax. : +216 71 889 880  
Email : media@tacc.org.tn

**National Agency of the Sanitary and Environmental Control of Products (ANCSEP)**

Ministry of Public Health

Address : Appt. Idriss - 3ème Etage - Bloc N°9 - Cité Elmhiri - Berges du Lac - 2045 Tunis  
Phone : +216 71 960 222  
E-mail : thouraya.attia@ms.tn

**National Institute for Standardization and Industrial Property (INNORPI)**

Standards setting and intellectual property enforcement authority  
BP 23 - 1012 Tunis Belvédère  
Phone: 216 71 785 922  
Fax: 216 71 781 563  
E-mail: inorpi@email.ati.tn

**The Packaging Technical Centre (PACKTEC)**

Address: Cité El Khadra, par la rue Alain SAVARY. BP 64 .1003 Tunis.  
Tel. : +216 71 772 755  
Fax. : +216 71 773 300  
Email : [Packtec@packtec-tunisia.com](mailto:Packtec@packtec-tunisia.com)

**The Tunisian Institution for the Protection of Copyright**

Address: 37 Rue Mikhaïl Nouaïma, 1005 El Omrane Tunis Tunisie  
Tel. : + 216 71 840 668  
Fax. : + 216 71 847 125  
Email : otpda@planet.tn

**US Embassy/ USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service Contacts :**

**Sarah Hanson, Regional Agricultural Attaché (Resides in Rabat, Morocco)**

E-mail : AgRabat@usda.gov  
Phone : 212 537 637 200  
Fax : 212 537 637 201

**Office of Agricultural Affairs (Tunis, Tunisia)**

Phone : 216 71 107 486  
Fax : 216 71 107 101  
E-mail: AgTunis@usda.gov

**Other relevant websites**

- [www.Tunisie-commerce.com](http://www.Tunisie-commerce.com): A directory of trade Tunisian companies
- [www.tunisianindustry.nat.tn](http://www.tunisianindustry.nat.tn): The website of the Industry promotion agency
- [www.bct.gov.tn](http://www.bct.gov.tn): The website of the Tunisian Central bank
- [www.utica.org.tn](http://www.utica.org.tn): the website of the Tunisian union Management



- [www.TunisiaOnline.com](http://www.TunisiaOnline.com): a digital gateway to news and information resources on Tunisia, Tunisia's history, government, culture and environment.
- [www.tradenet.com.tn](http://www.tradenet.com.tn) : a data-processing network which connects the various stakeholders in the foreign trade procedures in Tunisia (Banks, Administrations, Customs...).