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Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards- Certification

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Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and
Standards - Certification

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Report Highlights:

Greece as a member of the European Union follows the EU directives and regulations. The export certification requirements for most products destined for the EU market have been harmonized and can be found in the FAIRS reports prepared by the Offices of Agricultural Affairs in the individual EU Member States: <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/>. For non-harmonized products, the competent Greek authority should be consulted as many issues are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

General Information:

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by USDA's Office of Agricultural Affairs/Foreign Agricultural Service in Rome, Italy (covering Greece) 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 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.

General Overview

All EU Member countries accept the whole range of principles, policies, laws, practices, obligations and objectives that have been agreed within the EU, and the international agreements to which the EU is a party. EU Member States share a customs union, a single market in which goods can move freely, a common trade policy and a common agricultural and fisheries policy. Regulation (EC) 178/2002 (General Food Law) is the harmonized regulation which sets out the general principles and requirements of EU harmonized food law. The EU food legislation has been translated into the 24 official languages in use in the EU-28 (including Greek) and is published in the Official Journal. The Eurlex website <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm> provides free access to European Union laws. This report should be read with the EU FAIRS Export Certificate report prepared by the FAS Office in the U.S. Mission to the European Commission (USEU) which can be found at the USEU Brussels website at <http://www.usda-eu.org/reports/> and the Greek FAIRS narrative report, which can be found at <https://gr.usembassy.gov/business/foreign-agricultural-service/>.

It is important to note that when EU-wide legislation is incomplete or absent, the laws of the Member States apply, often resulting in different rules in different Member States. National measures still exist, for example, for certain food contact materials, the addition of nutrients to food and food supplements, maximum levels for vitamins and minerals, and for official control fees. Imported products must meet Greek national requirements in cases where EU regulatory harmonization is not yet complete. The competent Greek authority needs to be consulted on a case-by-case basis to address requirements for non-harmonized products.

Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required By the Government:

Greece as a member of the European Union follows the EU's directives and regulations: <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/>. While certification requirements are developed at the EU level, the Greek inspection services are responsible for enforcement of EU legislation through inspection of imported goods and the corresponding certificates.

Greek language certificates can be found in the links below:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008R0376&from=EN>
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R1045&from=EN>
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0884&from=EN>
<http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/el/component/content/article/512-greek-content/eisagoges-ejogoges/trofima-zoikh-proeleush/1995-elegxos-ygeiinh-eisagoges>
http://www.opekepe.gr/faq_category.asp?id=25

In the cases in which the EU law may be incomplete or absent, the Greek law applies. The competent Greek authority needs to be consulted on a case-by-case basis to address requirements for non-harmonized products. The Greek authorities to be consulted if there is a certificate needed are the following: [Customs Office](#) and [OPEKEPE](#) (Greek Payment Authority of Common Agricultural Policy Aid Schemes). A list of the Designated Points of Imports (DPIs) in Greece can be found here: [List of Greek DPIs](#).

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

European Union (EU) legislation calls for many health and supervisory requirements that are meant to guarantee that imports meet the standards of production in Member States. Unfortunately for exporters, the EU's rules on certification for imports are complicated and some minor differences across Member States continue to exist. One main principle of the single market concept is to ensure that all food products, whether produced in the EU or imported from a third country, can move freely throughout the EU if they comply with uniform requirements. In reality, certain directives allow Member States to make exceptions (i.e., in cases where a country can identify unique concerns about a product intended for import). Free movement can only be guaranteed when all aspects are covered by harmonized legislation.

This report outlines the applicable legislation regarding the export of U.S. food products to Greece, particularly those rules that differ from EU legislation or regulation. While most certification requirements are developed at EU level, the Greek inspection services are responsible for enforcement of both the EU and national requirements. In this aspect, Greek authorities implement EU rules (directives and regulations) for food and agriculture through country specific laws and decrees.

For more info on additional harmonized regulations adopted by the Greek authorities please visit: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/farmer-menu-2/imports-export/importsodfeed-menu>

In Greece, food safety is the primary responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food in cooperation with the General Chemical State Laboratory of Greece and the Ministry of Citizen Protection. Occasionally, the Greek Ministry for Development and Commerce may play a role. The Hellenic Food Control Agency (EFET) is responsible for enforcing the regulations and collecting samples from selling points to check compliance with food legislation, both to ensure food safety and protect consumer health in accordance with EU Directive 89/397.

Responsible Greek Authorities for Approval of Certificates - Food and Animal Products:

Ministry of Rural Development and Food

Directorate of Plant Production

Phytosanitary and Plant Protection Division

150, Sygrou Avenue

17671 Athens, Greece

Phone: +30 210 9287232; +30 210 9287233

Fax: +30 210 9287234

Website: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/>E-mail: syg059@minagric.gr; syg042@minagric.gr**Veterinary Products:****Ministry of Rural Development and Food**

Directorate General of Veterinary Services

Animal Health Directorate

6, Kapnokoptiriou str.

10176 Athens, Greece

Phone: +30 210 88 36 030

Fax: +30 210 82 52 673

Website: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/>E-mail: syg059@minagric.gr**General Customs and Excise Department**

10, Kar. Serbias

10184 Athens, Greece

Tel: +30 210 3375 000; 210 3375 714; 210 3375 715

Fax: +30 210 3375 034

E-mail: gdcustom@otenet.grWebsite: <https://portal.gsis.gr/portal/page/portal/ICISnet/authority/customsOffices>**Payment and Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid (OPEKEPE)**

241, Acharnon str.

10446 Athens, Greece

Tel: +30 210 212 49 03

Fax: +30 210 867 0503

Website: <http://www.opekepe.gr>**Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificate(s)**

At the EU level, [Regulation \(EC\) 178/2002](#) sets out general principles and objectives in food law. In Greece, the EU Regulations (EC) [852/2004](#) and [853/2004](#) are being applied through the National Law [KYA 15523/2006](#) published in August 2006, which outlines the basic Greek food and feed regulations based in the Regulation (EC) 178/2002. This law sets out each organization's responsibility for applying the EU Regulations and the coordination mechanisms between the different public administrations with responsibilities in official food control.

Greece has some specific labeling and ingredient rules for select food products (i.e. [re-frozen meat products](#), [prepared fishery products](#), and [allergen foods](#)) which are described in detail in the Greek Food Code (hereafter referred to as the Food Code) published by the General Chemical State Laboratory (GCSL). There is no electronic version of the Food Code. However, a hard copy can be obtained in Greek from the GCSL.

General Chemical State Laboratory

Directorate of Foods

16, A. Tsoha Str,

11521 Ambelokipi, Athens, Greece

Tel.: +30 210 6479 221

Fax: +30 210 6468 272

Email: alcohol_food@gcsl.gr

Website: http://www.gcsl.gr/index.asp?a_id=136

GCSL is the Greek agency responsible for the documentary inspection upon arrival, labeling and product ingredient review, and the analysis of laboratory tests to grant import approvals for foodstuffs in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and the individual Port Authorities. It is essential for U.S. exporters to work with a Greek agent who has a suitable background and is able to manage customs procedures involving more than two authorities.

In order to have a more harmonized Member State application of EU legislation, Commission Decision 2007/275/EC lists the animals and animal products that are subject to veterinary checks. Products subject to veterinary checks typically need to be accompanied by a veterinary certificate, issued by the competent authority in the United States. This regulation also provides clarification on which composite products are subject to veterinary checks. Composite products are defined as foodstuffs intended for human consumption that contain processed products of animal origin and ingredients of plant origin. Composite products include a wide variety of products, including cheesecakes, high protein food supplements, pizza, and lasagnas.

While the U.S. is eligible to ship hormone-free meat, dairy products, egg products, and fishery products separately, it is often no longer possible to ship the composite products that combine these eligible ingredients. All composite products containing a processed meat product are subject to a veterinary check.

Whenever the EU publishes model veterinary certificates for use by eligible third country suppliers, U.S. regulatory agencies will cross-out any statement that refers to health situations that are not relevant to the United States. Certificates for plants and plant products are issued by APHIS inspectors, who attest to the specific requirements of EU legislation with the necessary declarations in the space provided on the phytosanitary certificate.

A link to the required format in the Official Journal of each export certificate is provided (if available) in Appendix 1 of the EU FAIRS Export Certificate report prepared by the FAS Office in the U.S. Mission to the European Commission (USEU) which can be found at <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/>.

Section IV. Government Certificate's Legal Entry Requirements

On December 4, 2013, Greece applied obligatory electronic forms to be submitted to the Customs office, through the platform ICIS net – [Greek Customs](#). Import certificates must be in the official language of Greece, which is Greek.

All products must be accompanied by the proper certification at port of arrival. Import licenses are required for all agricultural commodities, processed food products, and ingredients. Special licenses and phytosanitary certification are required for imports from third countries where certain plant and animal diseases occur. Special import licenses are required for goods, including plant propagation material, textiles, meat products, pet foods and wood products. A number of products are under surveillance according to EU quotas (i.e., beef).

Some products may also take additional certificates, as in the case of organic products where the [US-EU Organic Equivalency Arrangement](#) applies. There are voluntary certificates that may help reduce the level of import controls, for example the [tree nuts and peanuts aflatoxin certification](#). Following the publication of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1269](#) on July 14, 2017, the U.S. pre-export program for peanuts is no longer recognized by the EU. There is no restriction on the export of U.S. peanuts; however, shipments are no longer benefitting from the reduced testing level for aflatoxin upon entry in the EU.

U.S. Competent Authorities

The U.S. issuing agencies are identified by their acronyms. The following is a list of the issuing agencies with a link to the relevant pages on their websites:

AMS: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA

European Union Health Certification Program

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/european-union-health-certification-program>

APHIS: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA

International Animal Products Export Regulations

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/products/>

Plant Export Services

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_exports/index.shtml

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/ImportsExports/Exporting/default.htm>

Federal Grain - FGIS: Federal Grain Inspection on Service, GIPSA: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA

<https://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/marketdocuments.aspx>

FSIS: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA

Export Requirements for Greece: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international->

[affairs/exporting-products/export-library-requirements-by-country/Greece](#)

NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/export/export_certification/export_certification.html

Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

Please note that imports of red meat, meat products, pet food, farmed and wild game meat, all dairy products, seafood, bovine embryos and semen, porcine and equine semen, and animal byproducts to the EU from the United States may originate only from EU approved U.S. establishments. In alignment with EU requirements, Greece requires certificates in some cases of imports of cereals, rice, sugar, dairy, bovine meat, poultry meat, garlic, apples, bananas, ethanol, canned mushrooms, manioc starch, and sweet potato. In order to clarify if a certificate is required, the exporter should contact the Greek Customs Office and OPEKEPE http://www.opekepe.gr/faq_category.asp?id=25.

For further information about Greek import requirements for U.S. exports please contact the Greek specialist in USDA's Office in the U.S. Embassy-Rome:

Office of Agricultural Affairs,

Foreign Agricultural Service,

American Embassy, Via Veneto 119a

Rome, 00187, Italy

Webpage: <http://athens.usembassy.gov/fas.html>

E-mail: AgRome@fas.usda.gov

Tel: +39 06 4674 2396

Fax: +39 06 4788 7008