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## Mexico

**Post:** Mexico

### **Guidelines to Harmonize Import Inspection of Agricultural Products**

**Report Categories:**

Country/Regional FTA's

Dairy and Products

Livestock and Products

Policy and Program Announcements

Poultry and Products

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Trade Policy Monitoring

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**Report Highlights:**

The National Service of Health, Food Safety, and Food Quality (SENASICA) will soon implement new guidelines to harmonize import inspections. Currently 5 new guidelines have been issued, but SENASICA intends to issue 11 additional guidelines by the end of the year. There has been confusing and contradictory information, unofficial and official, in recent days related to the guidelines. USDA is seeking clarification to understanding how trade maybe affected.

**General Information:**  
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As part of an ongoing effort to harmonize import inspection requirements at border entry points, SENASICA recently issued five new guidelines for the inspection of imported food and agricultural products. The guidelines apply to: (1) meat and poultry products (including in-lieu-of certificates and combo inspection procedures), (2) non-refrigerated dairy products, (3) bovines for reproduction, and (4) sheep and goats. The fifth guideline is for agricultural products imported for non-commercial (personal) consumption. SENASICA intends to issue 11 guidelines by the end of the year.

There has been confusing and contradictory information, unofficial and official, in recent days related to SENASICA's possible changes. Furthermore, FAS Mexico finds parts of the recently issued guidelines to be unclear and ambiguous. FAS Mexico is in contact with SENASICA to clarify how these guidelines will be implemented at border entry points, including land border crossing points as well as air and sea ports.

In particular, FAS Mexico is requesting more information on one of the provisions in the guidelines for meat and poultry products which appears to limit the ability of exporters to use in-lieu-of export certificates. Currently, an in-lieu-of export certificate is issued by an FSIS inspector at a USDA-approved establishment (on the U.S. side of the border) to amend information declared on the original meat and poultry FSIS export certificate. Currently, SENASICA accepts in-lieu-of certificates for errors related to lot numbers, slaughter and production dates, labeling errors, product description/name of the product, number of cases, net weight of the shipment, and in some cases the establishment numbers. The new requirements for in-lieu-of certificates appear to limit their use to what SENASICA vaguely calls "commercial" reasons, which appears to mean that in-lieu-of certificates for routine clerical errors (lot number, labeling, etc.) will no longer be accepted. SENASICA, oddly, refers to such errors as "sanitary" errors. Hence, the exporter would likely have to obtain an entirely new certificate from the plant of origin, costing time and money.

FAS Mexico has learned that some parts of the guidelines could be implemented in the next two weeks. SENASICA is contacting freight forwarders and customs brokers to inform them of the new guidelines. An unofficial translation of the notice is below:

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION  
BEGIN TEXT

[Salutation Omitted]  
5 November 2010

ISSUE: New Requirements for Inspection Process

We are informing you of new requirements, derived from the new guidelines for the import procedures for meat, viscera and offal as related to the inspection process provided by this authority. We request you inform your membership of the following:

1. The “in-lieu-of” certificate will be accepted provided that it is accompanied by the original export certificate which required modification.

The only acceptable modification to the original export certificate are:

- Total amount of merchandise
  - Total number of boxes or containers
  - Packing date
  - Plant number
  - Lot
1. The laboratory analysis will not follow prior established timetables. At the time of import inspection a new laboratory analysis will be assigned as indicated in the attached designed chart.
  1. In any case that an authority breaks the SAGARPA seals assigned to the shipment, it must be notified in writing (same documents), to the DVM in-charge so that DVM in-charge is aware at the time of arriving of the shipment at the port-of-entry.

It is important to mention that these guidelines will be effective from November 24, 2010, and are subject to modification.

[Closure omitted]

END TEXT

### For More Information

**FAS/Mexico Web Site:** We are available at [www.mexico-usda.com](http://www.mexico-usda.com) or visit the FAS headquarters' home page at [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov) for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.

**FAS/Mexico YouTube Channel:** Catch the latest videos of FAS Mexico at work <http://www.youtube.com/user/ATOMexicoCity>

### Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS/Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX 0314	Cold Chain Management Crucial for U.S. Food Exports to Mexico	10/21/2010
MX0076	New Mexican Regulation for Milk and Milk Products	10/18/2010
MX0072	GOM announces structural changes to federal meat inspection system	10/13/2010
MX0064	Livestock and Products Annual	9/23/2010

**Useful Mexican Web Sites:** Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at [www.sagarpa.gob.mx](http://www.sagarpa.gob.mx) and Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at [www.economia.gob.mx](http://www.economia.gob.mx). These web sites are mentioned for the readers' convenience but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with, the information contained on the mentioned sites.