

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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Phytosanitary Requirements for EU Imports of Nuts

Report Categories:

Tree Nuts

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

A phytosanitary certificate is NOT required for the import of nuts from the United States into the European Union (EU). This understanding of the EU's plant health legislation has been confirmed by the European Commission and is applicable in all EU Member States.

General Information:

EU import requirements with respect to phytosanitary certification of plants and foods of plant origin are laid down in COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2000/29/EC of 8 May 2000 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.

Directive 2000/29/EC contains a list of all plants/foods of plant origin that are banned in the EU. Plants that are not on this list are allowed to enter the EU, provided the “special requirements” laid down in part A of Annex IV are met. The special requirements are specific for each of the plants/foods mentioned. Examples are requirements for specified heat and other treatments or for sourcing from pest free areas. The exporting country’s plant protection authorities must guarantee that these special requirements are met. Guarantees are made in the form of a phytosanitary certificate, on which space is provided for the necessary declarations attesting to the specific requirements of EU legislation. USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issues phytosanitary certificates for goods consigned from the United States. Plants/foods for which no special requirements are listed may enter the EU without any guarantees and do not require a phytosanitary certificate from the exporting country.

In the absence of any special requirement in Council Directive 2000/29/EC for nuts originating in the United States, a phytosanitary certificate for import in the EU is not legally required. Such a certificate also does not provide any added value to Member State inspection services.

This understanding of the EU’s plant health legislation has been confirmed by the European Commission and by several EU Member State inspectors for the following list of tree nuts for human consumption, irrespective of their stage of processing (e.g., shelled versus unshelled), if produced in the United States:

- Almonds (*Prunus dulcis*)
- Pistachios (*Pistacia vera* L.)
- Walnuts (*Juglans* spp.)
- Pecans (*Carya illinoensis*)
- Macadamia nuts (*Macadamia* spp.)
- Pine nuts (*Pinus* spp.)
- Chestnuts (*Castanea* spp.)
- Hazelnuts (*Corylus* spp.)

EU importers may still need a certificate if they plan to re-export these nuts to other markets outside the EU that require a phytosanitary certificate.

In the case in which nuts consigned from the United States originate in another country, the phytosanitary requirements in Council Directive 2000/29/EC for import from the country of origin must be verified. For example, there are no EU documentation requirements for imports of Mexican pecan nuts to the EU. Therefore, consignments of nuts of mixed U.S./Mexican origin consigned from the United States to the EU also do not have to be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate.