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Voluntary - Public

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## Taiwan

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### Taiwan Tightens Labeling Requirements for Imported Chicken

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

Livestock and Products

Policy and Program Announcements

Poultry and Products

Trade Policy Incident Report

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**Report Highlights:**

On September 30, 2019, a number of Taiwan media outlets began reporting on differences in labeling between domestic and imported poultry meat and products, which presaged a successful effort to introduce new requirements for imported poultry. On August 13, 2019, the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration published a recommendation encouraging retail outlets to voluntarily label slaughter and/or production dates on imported poultry products. In 2018, Taiwan produced roughly 170 thousand metric tons (MT) of poultry meat and products and imported 216 thousand MT. The United States accounted for 93 percent of Taiwan's poultry imports.

## General Information:

### **Taiwan Moves Towards Voluntary Labeling Requirement on Imported Poultry**

On September 30, 2019, a number of Taiwan media outlets began reporting on differences in labeling between domestic and imported poultry meat and products. Taiwan media interviewed a number of local poultry organizations, including the Taichung Chicken Association and the Republic of China Chicken Association. Both Associations noted they are under increasing pressure from U.S. imports, with 2018 poultry imports exceeding 55% of the total market.

In an effort to differentiate themselves from imported products, the Associations noted that Taiwan poultry products routinely include voluntary information on the label that imported products do not contain. Domestically raised and slaughtered Taiwan poultry products voluntarily label the slaughter and packaging dates, in part to boost efforts to market the freshness of local products. Imported poultry products comply with Taiwan's current regulations of labeling only the expiration date. After extensive reporting in mass media, the Associations questioned the safety of U.S. poultry imports given their longer frozen shelf life and called for stricter labeling requirements on imported poultry products. The unsubstantiated claims failed to acknowledge the differences in supply chains and handling procedures between fresh and frozen poultry. Moreover, some industry observers see this as an effort to increase local producers' marketing efforts rather than provide additional information for consumers.

Responding to pressure from Taiwan's poultry industry, on August 13, 2019 the Taiwan Administrative Committee of the Executive Yuan called an interagency meeting between the Food Safety Office of the Executive Yuan, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the Council of Agriculture, and the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA). After the meeting, TFDA released a public statement, citing Taiwan authorities' intention to move forward with voluntary labeling of the slaughter or production date on all imported poultry products. Before full implementation, Taiwan regulators intend to put forward a trial program, requesting voluntary labeling on all poultry meat and products sold at convenience stores, supermarkets, and hypermarkets. There was no date announced for when the trial program will begin. Roughly ten percent of all U.S. poultry imports go to retail markets and would be affected by this new voluntary rule.

In year 2018, Taiwan produced roughly 170 thousand metric tons (MT) of poultry meat and products and imported 216 thousand MT; the United States accounted for 93% of Taiwan's poultry imports at a value of \$202 million, according to import data from Taiwan's Ministry of Finance.

Poultry Meat and Products*						
	2018 Annual Imports		2018 First 6-months Imports		2019 First 6-months Imports	
	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value	Quantity
World	\$ 220,112	216,036	\$ 140,687	135,583	\$ 115,188	131,238
United States	\$ 202,261	200,495	\$ 130,016	126,031	\$ 104,543	120,166

*\*Taiwan Ministry of Finance Import Statistics*

An unofficial translation of the TFDA announcement is included below.

## **BEGIN UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION**

### **Taiwan Food and Drug Administration**

The inter-agency will cooperate to strengthen meat labeling management and consumer rights will be more secure. [Release Date: 2019-08-13]

On the (13th) day, the Administrative Committee of the Executive Yuan Linyi invited the Food Safety Office of the Executive Yuan, the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the Council of Agriculture to hold a consultation meeting on meat labeling management on the recent concerns about the labeling of chicken products. The meeting discussed imported and domestic chicken.

With regards to labeling standards, each unit has reached a consensus that they will strengthen management to ensure consumer's rights, and have the same norms for all suppliers to follow. After an implementation trial period, companies will use the information on the product packaging to indicate the date of the slaughter (or the date of production) and the expiry date to provide sufficient information on the consumer side to ensure the interests of the consumer.

Regardless of whether the domestic or imported foods are subject to the relevant provisions of the Food Safety and Health Management Law, management of dates and specifications for products must be consistent. The industry can refer to the "Guidelines for Effective Date Assessment of Commercially Packaged Foods" by the Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health to assess the raw materials used, the manufacturing process, and the environment for transportation, storage, and sale. In the case of chicken, the date of its slaughter or the date of manufacture plus the expiration date should all be labeled. When entering border inspection, compliance will be checked to insure the new date requirements are met.

In order to ensure that consumers can obtain sufficient information, the Ministry of Health and Welfare will encourage industry to mark the date of slaughter (or date of production) and the expiry date on the product packaging, and the consumer can judge the time from the factory to the current sales stage. This is to protect consumers' right to adequate information.

The Food Safety Office of the Executive Yuan stressed that in order to give industry time to adjust, voluntary labeling requirements for imported and domestic chicken products will be piloted first at convenience stores, supermarkets, and hypermarkets. These new voluntary standards are to insure sufficient information is marked on the product packaging. This pilot period will allow industry to have sufficient time to adjust the production and sales model of its import or domestic production, while also insuring the consumer can obtain sufficient information to make the Chinese people feel more at ease and safe when eating meat.

## **END UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION**

Link to TFDA Announcement

<https://www.fda.gov.tw/TC/newsContent.aspx?cid=4&id=t528962>

