

Voluntary - Public

Clearance Office: Office of Scientific and Technical Affairs (OSTA)

Date: 6/15/2009

GAIN Report Number: TC9026

United Arab Emirates

Post: Dubai

UAE Decrees New Import Requirements for Cooked Red Meat

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

FAIRS Subject Report

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Report Highlights:

The UAE's Ministry of Environment and Water has issued new requirements for the importation of cooked red meat, a product previously regulated by the General Secretariat of Municipalities. The decree states that meat must come from animals that were not treated with hormones and requires both a veterinary and health certificate for shipments, these and other requirements could pose a significant challenge to U.S. exporters and regulators.

General Information:

Disclaimer: This summary is based on a *cursory* review of the subject announcement and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be viewed as a definitive reading of the regulation in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests. In the event of a discrepancy or discrepancies between this summary and the complete

regulation or announcement as published in Arabic, the latter shall prevail.

ATO Dubai Summary: The UAE Ministry of Environment and Water has issued a decree outlining new conditions for the importation of thermally treated red meat. The decree contains a number of requirements that will likely pose challenges for U.S. exporters and certifiers of cooked red meat. Some of the most obvious challenges include a requirement that the meat come from animals that were not treated with hormones, that shipments must be accompanied by both health and veterinary certificates, that products must be free of fat and that certificates include detailed information such production and expiry dates. ATO Dubai encourages exporters of cooked red meat products to the UAE to contact their respective trade associations or ATO Dubai with their concerns about this decree. An unofficial translation of the complete text of the decree is included in this report.

ATO Dubai Analysis: On May 25, 2009, the UAE Ministry of Environment and Water issued decree No. 217 “Regarding the Conditions of Importing Thermally Treated Red Meat.” The decree did not go through a period of public comment, nor was it notified to the World Trade Organization. The UAE’s General Secretariat of Municipalities, the federal level organization charged with coordinating the food regulatory actions of the UAE’s seven emirates or municipalities, has traditionally regulated the importation of processed meats. The emergence of the Ministry of Environment and Water in this capacity is a new development. Previously, the Ministry’s focus was on regulating the importation of live animals and plants. The decree presents a number of requirements that may present challenges for U.S. exporters and certifiers of cooked red meats. The following is a list of potential concerns based on ATO Dubai’s review of the decree. Experts in certification will likely find other potential issues.

- Meat must come from animals that were not treated with hormones.
- Consignments will have to be accompanied by both veterinary and health certificates.
- The veterinary certificate will have to have information such the type of transportation, production and expiry dates, type of packaging and loading information.
- Cooked and dried meats must be free of fat.

The decree will become effective after publication in the federal gazette. ATO Dubai is still trying to confirm if the decree has been published in the gazette. To date, no exporters or importers have contacted ATO Dubai with concerns about certification requirements. It is not clear how much of this language will have to be added to specific certificates. While U.S. exports of cooked red meats to the UAE are relatively small and are limited primarily to deli meats, hot dogs, jerky and sausages, the requirements are particularly onerous and could effectively halt exports of these products to the UAE. ATO Dubai understands that officials are considering a similar decree for uncooked meats.

Comment: ATO Dubai requests that Washington-based regulators review and analyze the decree. ATO Dubai encourages exporters to contact ATO Dubai and their respective trade associations to raise their concerns.

For More Information:

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Begin Text of Decree:

Ministerial Decree No. (217) for 2009 A.D.
Regarding the Conditions of Importing Thermally Treated Red Meat

Minister of Environment and Water:

Having reviewed the following:

- Federal Law number (1) for 1972 with regards to the specialization of the ministries and the authorities of the ministers and its amendments;
- The Decree of Federal Law number (1) for 2006 pertaining to adjusting the federal jurisdictions of Federal Law number (1) for 1972 regarding the specialization of the ministries and the authorities of the ministers;
- Federal Decree number (6) for 1979 regarding the veterinary quarantine and its amendments;
- Council of Ministers Decree number (5) for 2006 regarding authorizing us some ministerial tasks.
- The Ministerial Decree number (460) for 2001 regarding the Executive Law for the Veterinary Quarantine of the countries of the GCC;
- and based on the conditions recorded in the bulletin of the World Organization of Animal Health (OIE) issued in 2008, the conditions stipulated by the Codex Alimentarius of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization;
- and based on the preoccupation of the Ministry to execute its strategic goals regarding its contribution to achieving the nation's food security;
- and based on the requirements of national interest;

The following has been decreed:

Clause (1)

All incoming shipments of thermally treated meat must abide by the veterinary quarantine and food safety laws, regulations and decrees applied in the country in addition to the rules and regulations of this decree.

Clause (2)

Thermally treated red meat is permitted to be imported according to the following conditions:

1. A pre-authorized import permit is to be obtained from the Ministry of Environment and Water mentioning the port of entry.
2. The exporting country should have a compulsory warning program and epidemiological tracing of the epidemiological and contagious diseases and testing of suspected animals for any disease symptoms in accordance with the conditions recorded in the bulletin of the OIE.
3. Animals must not be nurtured on feeds which contain any animal protein source.
4. The shipment should be accompanied with the following documents:
 - a. Certificate of origin
 - b. A valid veterinary health certificate originating from a government (official) department and authenticated by the exporting country with the following information:
 - Names of the exporter, the importer and the veterinary health authorities issuing the certificate.
 - The meat should be from areas that are free of epidemiological or contagious diseases for a period of not less than 3 months before slaughtering.
 - The meat should be of animals that have not been given hormones and have been examined externally before and after slaughtering; it should be free of any epidemiological and contagious diseases and should be fit for human consumption.

- Name of the product, trade mark, and number of seal on the container, kind of packaging, packages and number of packages, production date, expiry period, storage temperature, kind of transportation and loading station.
 - The animals should be slaughtered in accredited abattoirs at the exporting country in accordance with Islamic pre-conditions. This is given that the internal organs, the nerve and lymph tissues, and tissues and parts that constitute risk (SRM) have been removed and provided that the carcasses have been stored immediately after slaughtering at a temperature of (+2) degree centigrade for a period of not less than 24 hours.
- c. An authenticated certificate from the relevant food control authority in the exporting country that gives the following information:
- The meat has been produced and dealt with in a safe way which guarantees that it has not been tainted, has not been in proximity with other animal products, and no artificial colorings or harmful preservative material has been added to it in accordance with the Codex standards.
 - In case of canned meat: it must be exposed to temperature of not less than (70) degrees centigrade and for not less than (30) minutes. Or it may be treated using any method accredited by the relevant international organizations to kill the microbes.
 - In case of cooked meat: it must be free of fat and nerves and must be exposed to temperature of (70) degrees centigrade or more and for not less than (30) minutes.
 - In case of dried and salted meat: it must be free of fat and nerves and it must be dried after having been cooked and must be salted with regular salt (sodium chloride). It must also be free of any disease infecting germs, parasites, hormones, or anti-biotics and should be fit for human consumption.

Clause (3)

In the case that any of these conditions have not been adhered to or have been violated, the shipment will be rejected and will be returned at the expense of the importer or it will be confiscated and destroyed according to the quarantine regulations followed in the country.

Clause (4)

The department in charge at the ministry must coordinate with the relevant department in the county to execute this decree.

Clause (5)

The relevant departments in the country must execute this decree each in its area of authority and it must be applied since the date of its issuance and published in the official Gazette.

Issued on: 5/25/2009