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## **Saudi Arabia**

### **COUNTRY FAIRS REPORT**

#### **FAIRS Country Report**

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**Report Highlights:**

This FAIRS Country Report details regulatory requirements and import procedures for food and agricultural imports imposed by the government of Saudi Arabia. The Food Laws Section of this report is updated, providing information on the newly revised animal feed subsidy and the Saudi government's decision to eliminate or reduce duties on imported foodstuffs.

**Disclaimer**

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) 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 IMPORT 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.

## **Section I. Food Laws:**

### **A. Overview**

Saudi Arabia is the largest and fastest growing market for high value foodstuffs in the Gulf region. All food products are imported by the private sector. The vast majority of food products are subject to a 5 percent import duty while coffee, tea and fresh red meat enter the country duty free. Selected processed food products, however, are assessed higher import duties. In order to protect local food processors and production from competitively priced imports, the Kingdom ties import duties to the level of local production of similar products. As a general rule, a maximum import tariff rate of 40 percent is applied when local production of a food or agricultural product exceeds a self-sufficiency level. Currently, a 40 percent import duty rate applies to fresh, dried and processed dates. Imported ice cream is assessed a 20 percent import duty.

Recently, the Saudi government introduced an agricultural policy aimed at the phased elimination of water intensive agricultural crops such as wheat and alfalfa. In 2009, the Saudi government implemented its 2008 decree which called for a 12.5 percent annual reduction in local wheat production over an eight year period. The government's goal is to terminate local wheat production by the spring of 2016. Until then, Saudi Arabia will augment the percentage reduction in local wheat production by importing a similar percentage from the international wheat market. The government will maintain the guaranteed purchase price for locally grown wheat at \$267 per metric ton until 2016. In 2003, Saudi Arabia eliminated barley production to save water. Grain and forage production place large demands on non-renewable aquifer water, resulting in an imbalance between water recharge and water discharge. The new agricultural policy calls for selective agricultural development to achieve a balance between water and food security.

The Saudi government has continued to support selective agricultural production to encourage and support farmers by providing soft and interest-free loans, distributing free farm land, subsidizing some production equipment and animal feed. In January 2009, the government issued a revised animal feed subsidy list that consists of 17 energy and protein rich animal feed ingredients. Under the revised program, the government will provide rebates that range from \$26 (rice hulls) to \$101 (soybean meal) per metric ton, depending on the type of imported feed. The rebate will be paid directly to the local importer. The revised list added two new feed items-Rhodes grass and Sudan grass-to the subsidy list. The subsidy depends on the type of imported feed and is paid directly to the local importer.

In December 2007, the Saudi Arabian government issued a decree to subsidize rice imports at the rate of \$267 per metric ton. The decree also increased the government subsidy paid on imported powdered baby milk from \$0.53 to \$3.20 per kg. For religious reasons, Saudi Arabia bans imports of alcoholic beverages, live swine, pork and food ingredients or additives that contain pork products, including pork fat and gelatin. Meat and poultry shipments must be accompanied by a "Halal" slaughter certificate issued by an Islamic center in the country of origin. Additional statements on the health certificate accompanying poultry and livestock meat shipments must indicate that the animals slaughtered for export to the Kingdom were not fed with feed containing protein, fat or remnants of animal origin and were not treated with any growth hormones. The most important regulatory, non-tariff barriers that U.S. food product exporters encounter in Saudi Arabia include: biotech labeling, production & expiration date regulations, Arabic labeling requirements, a declaration that animals slaughtered and exported to Saudi Arabia were not fed with feed containing protein, fat or remnants of animal origin, and a Halal Slaughtering certificate for both livestock and poultry meat.

Saudi Arabia is the most influential member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes five other countries in the Arabian Peninsula: United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar. As a group, the GCC is striving to create a common set of food standards. The Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO) is a dominant standard setting agency in the GCC countries. Currently, SASO is the only Saudi organization responsible for setting national

standards for commodities and products, measurements, testing methods, meteorological symbols and terminology, commodity definitions, safety measures, and environmental testing. Since its establishment in 1972, SASO has issued more than 700 production and testing standards for food products and is presently working on new standards. Saudi standards are typically based on CODEX Alimentarius regulations and to some extent on European and U.S. standards, but are modified to reflect local conditions. Until recently, food standards were set by SASO, and Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) tested imported processed and packaged food items at various ports of entry.

## **B. Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA)**

In May 2009, the SFDA established in March 2003, took over the responsible for inspecting imported high value food products at the Kingdom's 27 ports of entry. The Authority will take charge of setting food standards and ensuring the safety of food products in the next few months. Currently, standards are set by the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO). Before May 2009 imported foodstuffs were tested by the Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) at ports of entry. The SFDA will take over inspection of imported animal feed, fruits, vegetables and drugs in the next few months.

The authority has hired a German company to help implement its three-year \$200 million dollar capacity building program, which involves upgrading food inspection laboratories, training staff, and developing advanced food inspection techniques.

The SFDA, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, has a Board of Directors consisting of eight ministers: Municipality & Rural Affairs, Defense, Interior, Health, Commerce and Industry, Agriculture, Water & Electricity, Finance, Economic & Planning plus the SFDA Executive Director General, and representation from other organizations such as the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO), the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Saudi food and drugs experts.

### **Regulatory Role of the SFDA**

The SFDA will regulate, oversee, and control food, drugs, and medical devices, as well as setting mandatory standards for both imported and locally manufactured products. Testing activities for these products will be conducted in SFDA or other government-operated laboratories. In addition, the SFDA will be responsible for educating consumers on all matters related to food, drugs and medical devices.

Principal work objectives of the SFDA are summarized below:

- Monitor the safety, security, and effectiveness of food and drugs for human and animal consumption.
- Monitor the safety of complementary biological and chemical substances, cosmetics and pesticides.
- Monitor the safety of medical diagnostic devices and their impact on public health.
- Establish and implement clear policies and procedures for food and drugs.
- Conduct research and applied studies to identify health problems, their causes, and set methods for research evaluation. The Authority will establish scientific guidelines for specialized consulting services and executive programs in the fields of food and drugs. This may be accomplished through the recruitment of experts or through a partnership with research bodies such as King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) and/or university research centers.
- Control and supervise the licensing of factories producing food, drugs and medical devices.
- Disseminate and exchange information with local and international scientific and legal agencies.

The SFDA will initiate its regulatory tasks in two phases. The first phase began on March 2003 and will be completed in

the next few months. During the first phase, the SFDA will devote its efforts to establishing its organizational structure and resources to prepare itself for the second phase when it will take charge of regulating food, drugs, and medical devices, as well as setting mandatory standards for both imported and locally manufactured products. SFDA will execute the following tasks during the first phase:

- Work with concerned ministries and agencies to revise, develop and update regulatory laws to meet human/animal health safety and product quality requirements.
- Ratify food and drug policies in the Kingdom and set mechanisms to ensure the quality and safety of food and drugs.
- Establish specified systems to help concerned agencies accomplish administrative and field follow-up to ensure easy and safe application of laws and regulatory orders.
- Adopt methods and techniques that will enable food and drug regulatory agencies to verify the accuracy and validity of information contained on the labels of circulated foodstuffs and drugs.
- In coordination with the Ministry of Health and the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO), establish specifications and standards for production, distribution, importation and registration of drugs and medical devices.
- Together with SASO, set and certify texts of National Standard Specifications related to scaling, calibration, code identification of products and goods, including food & drug sampling methods.
- Prepare specifications, procedures and methods of detecting food and drug products.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, establish hygiene specifications and requirements that food industry facilities and workers should follow.
- Develop general policies that ensure the availability of appropriate drugs in the Kingdom.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs, establish hygiene requirements for all outlets linked with public health.
- In cooperation with the Ministries of Health, Finance (Customs Department) and Commerce and Industry, establish standards and methods that will regulate customs clearance procedures for imported drugs.
- Propose and issue rules for the application of penalties that will be imposed on violators of Saudi Arabia's food and drug laws.
- Coordinate with the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs to develop rules, procedures and requirements for the control and inspection of Saudi Arabia's animal slaughtering facilities and related sales outlets.

In the second phase, which starts at the end of May 2009, the Authority will assume responsibility for the following procedural, regulatory and calibration tasks:

- Inspect all agricultural, animal product and veterinary medicine imports customs clearance.
- Control imported food and drugs.
- Control animal and other agricultural products under agriculture and animal quarantine statutes.
- Control locally processed food items before and during the production process, under the terms of quality and compliance certificates.

- Test children's food, therapeutic potable water, tobacco and plant derivatives.
- Control and inspect markets, foodstuff commercial centers, restaurants, and food plants to ensure adherence to Saudi health and safety specifications, and laws related to commercial fraud in the areas of food and drugs.
- Ensure the safety of potable water supplies.
- Supervise the implementation of statutes and laws related to food and drugs.
- Monitor hygiene conditions for facilities producing food and drug products.
- Supervise the safety of food workers through periodic site examinations.
- Regulate, monitor and inspect animal slaughtering facilities and meat sales outlets.

## **Section II. Labeling Requirements:**

### **A. General Requirements**

All imported and locally produced prepackaged foodstuffs must meet labeling requirements as indicated in Gulf Standard 9/1995. According to this GCC-wide standard, prepackaged food product labels should be in Arabic or include an Arabic language translation of the label. Labels must contain at a minimum: the product name, packer's name, country of origin or manufacture, listing of ingredients, instructions where applicable, for the end use of the product, the shelf-life of the product.

GCC 9/1995 is a document of 10 pages. The labeling requirements for locally produced and imported food products are as follows:

- Labels of prepackaged foodstuffs and the attached labeling shall be in Arabic language. When one language or more is used in addition to Arabic language, all information in the other languages shall be the same as the information written in the Arabic language. Current Saudi Arabia allows U.S. suppliers to place an Arabic language sticker on the original English language label. The stickers translate key ingredient and product information into Arabic. SFDA officials inspect imported food products at the Kingdom's ports of entry to make sure they meet established food safety and labeling regulations.
- In case of food products containing animal fats, meat and meat derivatives, and their products such as gelatin and rennet, the kind of animal from which they are taken shall be declared on the label. Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO) has submitted a draft standard on halal requirements to the WTO and is in the process of incorporating comments received from trading partners. SASO expects to issue a revised halal standard similar to Codex in early 2009.
- In case of prepackaged foodstuffs prepared for feeding animals, the statement "Unfit for human consumption" or "Special for animal Feeding only" shall be clearly and prominently declared on the label.
- Name of foodstuff: Specific, not generic, name of the prepackaged food. Names and phrases provocative to Islamic religious feelings such as "made of pork flesh or its derivatives," "Alcoholic beverages," or any

doctrinally forbidden symbols and marks in Islamic countries such as the sign of the Cross, etc. should not be used.

- List of Ingredients: Complete list of ingredients in descending order of proportion, including additives permitted for use according to Saudi or International Standards and Legislation such as preservative, coloring matters, etc. In June 2006, Saudi Arabia dropped a requirement that labels on imported products be revised to reflect the exact seasoning versus the usual language of “natural flavorings” used by the industry. The requested label modifications were bordering on a demand for proprietary information which forced some U.S. exporters to contemplate removing their products from the market. Saudi Arabia’s decision not to request this additional information follows intervention by the Foreign Agricultural Service.
- Net contents in metric units (volume in case of liquids).
- Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor.
- Special Storage, transportation and preparation instructions, if any. Additives
- Country of Origin

## **B. Shelf Life**

In December 2005, Saudi Arabia implemented a voluntary shelf life standard (manufacturer-determined use-by dates) for most foodstuffs with the exception of selected perishable foods (fresh or chilled meat and poultry; fresh milk and fresh milk based products; margarine; fresh fruit juice; table eggs, and baby foods) that must meet SASO’s established mandatory expiration periods. The revised standard (SASO 457/2005) will no longer ban imports of food product with less than half of its shelf life remaining.

Shelf life can only be shown by clear and unambiguous production and expiration dates. The use of any of the following statements for expressing expiration date is permissible.

- Expiration Date
- Use by (date)
- Fit for (from the day of production)
- Use Before (date)
- Sell by date (for food products having an expiration period exceeding 3 months).

The production and expiration dates should be declared on the label of the package in uncoded manner as follows:

- Day-Month-Year: for foodstuffs with an expiration period less than three months.
- Month-Year: for foodstuffs with expiration exceeding three months.

Dates shall be engraved or in relief, printed to stamped with permanent ink directly on all packages or on their original label by the producer only. Adding stickers for production and expiration dates is not permissible. There shall be not more than one date of production or of expiration on the same package. Both dates shall not be subject to deletion,

change or deceit.

Products with No Specific Expiration Date: Products with no specified shelf life such as salt, spices, milled rice, etc. only the date of production or processing would be shown as: mm/yy.

We recommend that when putting together an order for a Saudi importer, a U.S. exporter should cross check information contained on his/her food label, including Production/Expiration dates, with the Saudi buyer.

### **C. Additional Labeling Requirements**

In addition to requirements per GCC 9/1995, the following labeling information must be declared for food additives and antioxidants used in foodstuffs:

- For coloring matters, their mixtures, preparations and diluents used in foodstuffs, the following additional information must be declared:
    1. Common name
    2. Color index number
    3. Name of solvent or diluent
    4. Production and expiration dates in a non-coded manner (day-month-year)
    5. Dye purity
    6. The statement “Free from alcohol”
    7. The statement “Color matter for use in foodstuffs.”
  - For Flavors permitted for use in Foodstuffs common name and code number (if found) must be declared on food products containers contained flavors.
  - For preservatives permitted for use in food products, common name or EEC number and a statement “Preservative for Use in Food Products” in case of preservatives containers.
  - For emulsifiers, stabilizers and thickeners permitted for use in foodstuffs, the following additional information must be declared:
    1. Common name or EEC no.
2. In case of gelatin, lecithin and mono and diglycerides the source shall be mentioned.
- For Sweeteners Permitted for Use in Food Products:
    1. The name of sweeteners or INS numbers
    2. Food products formulated specifically for use by diabetics or for other special nutritional uses shall contain the statement “Food for special dietary use or food for diabetic.”
    3. The amount of sweeteners matter, mg/liter or kg in case of using combination of sweeteners, the amount of each in

combination shall be declared.

The following warning must be declared:

4. In case of aspartame, "Not to be used by persons who have phenyl ketonuria."

5. In case of saccharine, "Use of this product may be hazardous to your health because it contains saccharin which has been determine to cause cancer in laboratory animals."

6. In the case of sugar alcohol "Excess of consumed quantity may cause diarrhea."

- The following additional labeling information must be declared for antioxidants permitted for use in foodstuffs:

1. Common name or EEC number

2. A statement "Antioxidants permitted for use in foodstuffs" in case of antioxidant containers.

#### **D. Requirements Specific to Nutritional Labeling**

In addition to the general labeling requirements as stated in GS 9/1995, further information must be declared for prepackaged foods for special dietary use per Gulf Standard No. 654/1996 (General Requirements for Prepackaged Foods for Special Dietary Use). Following is some of the labeling information to be stated.

1. Name of the product followed by the characterizing essential features indicating that it is a food for special dietary use.
2. The amount of energy expressed in kilojoules and kilocalories per 100 grams or 100 ml of the food product and where appropriate per the specified quantity of food as suggested for consumption.
3. Its content of protein, carbohydrates, fat, dietary, fiber and each vitamin and mineral per 100 grams or 100 ml of the food (as sold) product and where appropriate per specified quantity of food as suggested for consumption.
4. The total quantity of the specific nutrients, which provide the characterizing essential features per 100 grams or 100 ml of the food product and where appropriate per specified quantity of food as suggested for consumption.
5. The special cases in which the food is used and the suitable amount permissible for daily consumption.
6. Storage conditions before and after opening of the package.
7. The procedures of preparation and use, and in the case of baby and infant foods the procedures shall be indicated according to the age of child.
8. The following cautionary statement shall be declared: "To be Used Under Medical Supervision," wherever applicable to certain food.
9. The amount of added sweeteners accompanied by the following cautionary statements:

- a) In the case of aspartame: “Not to be used by persons who have phenylketonuria,” “The maximum intake shall not exceed 40mg/kg of body weight.”
  - b) In the case of saccharin: “Use of this product may be hazardous to your health, because it contains saccharin which has been determined to cause cancer to laboratory animals.”
  - c) In the case of manitol: “Excess of consumed quantity of manitol over 20g per day may cause diarrhea.”
  - d) In the case of sorbitol or xylitol: Excess of consumed quantity of sorbitol or xylitol over 40g per day may cause diarrhea.
10. Not to be described or marked in such a manner that misleads the consumer.

### **E. Biotech Labeling**

In December 2001, MOCI implemented its biotech labeling decree for processed foodstuffs. The decree requires positive biotech labeling if a product contains genetically modified vegetable (plant) ingredients. In a similar move, the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) implemented in January 2004 a comparable biotech-labeling requirement on animal feed, fruit and vegetables while banning imports of GE seeds.

Following is a summary of the biotech labeling requirements implemented by the MOCI:

- A. Positive labeling: If a product contains one or more GE plant ingredient, the information should be clearly communicated to the consumer by labeling. A triangle should be drawn on the label with text that should read "Contains Genetically Modified Product (s). The Ministry will not accept a statement that says "This Product May Contain biotech Ingredients." Saudi Arabia does not permit imports of foodstuffs that contain GE animal products. According to the MOCI, local food producers must also abide by the biotech labeling requirements.
- B. Bilingual labeling: The biotech statement must be clearly written in Arabic and English languages with ink color different from that of the main product tag.
- C. Health certificate: Biotech products exported to Saudi Arabia must have been approved in the country of origin for human or animal consumption. Each shipment must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by a government agency stating that the GE ingredient used in the foodstuff is approved in the country of origin for human or animal consumption.
- D. PCR Real Time Method: MOCI approved the PCR Real Time Method for GE testing and set 0.9 percent threshold. If the test results reveal more than 0.9 percent of GE ingredient, the product is either destroyed locally or re-exported to the country of origin. Products with less than 0.9 percent of GE content are exempt from further testing for six months. If still on the market after six months, these products must be tested and recertified. Presently, no GE-labeled retail food products are marketed in Saudi Arabia, but GE-labeled bulk commodities and products destined for institutional end users are imported and marketed.
- E. Biotech health certificate: The Saudi Ministry of Commerce has agreed to accept health certificates issued by state

departments of agriculture for high value products instead of the previous requirement that the certificates be issued by a federal government agency such as USDA or FDA for U.S. products. The Ministry has reiterated its refusal to consider any health certificate issued by exporting companies or other private organizations including notary public statements.

F. For U.S. grains: The MOA has accepted a one-time biotech grains certification statement from the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) submitted to the Ministry in 2003. The statement certified that the exported transgenic grains are the same as those consumed in the United States. The approved statement eliminates the need for a shipment-by-shipment positive biotech certification for corn and soybean meal exported to the Kingdom. The MOA still requires each shipment of biotech fruits and vegetables to be labeled and accompanied by a biotech health certificate. In 2004, the MOA banned imports of all types of biotech seeds.

G. In February 2005, the Saudi Government announced the establishment of a national high-level biotech committee consisting of four ministries, the Saudi Arabian Standard Organization (SASO), universities and the private sector to conduct a comprehensive policy review of current biotech labeling requirements based on two ministerial decrees. The committee distributed its first draft standard for public comment in early May 2005 and received comments in August 2005. After taking into consideration comments received from all interested parties including USDA, SASO distributed another set of draft standards listed below for public comment in early 2006.

SASO Draft No 3002 /2006 “General Requirements for Genetically Modified Processed Food and Feed”

SASO Draft No 3195 /2006 “General Requirements for Genetically Modified unprocessed Agricultural Products”

SASO Draft No 3196 /2006 “General Requirements for Risk Assessment and Traceability”

Comments on the above three draft standards were delivered to SASO by the end of March 2006.

After working on the above mentioned three biotech draft standards three years, SASO decided to abandon its efforts to issue national biotech standards and opted to join hands with other members of the GCC (U.A.E., Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain) to work on promulgating GCC wide agricultural biotech standards under the auspices of the Gulf Standards Organization (GSO). In February 2008, the GSO established an Agricultural Biotech subcommittee and converted the three SASO biotech draft standards to GSO draft standards. The subcommittee is expected to review the three draft standards in November 2009. According to SASO, the three biotech draft standards contain some of the comments provided by the U.S. and other countries in 2006.

I. Following is a sample certificate issued by a state department of agriculture and accepted by Saudi port authorities:

*Certificate of Health and Free Sale, Sanitary and Purity*

"I, (name of state official), do hereby certify that (name of U.S. company and address) operates a food manufacturing plant which is inspected at regular intervals by full-time inspectors employed by the (name of state) Department of Agriculture. The facility's equipment and raw materials, as well as the processing and packaging procedure, meets all sanitary requirements and the operation is in good standing in every respect. We certify the following listing of products as freely, and without qualification, sold and used in the United States of America (USA).

This product may contain genetically modified organisms.

This certificate shall be good for one year from the date of issue.

This certificate is not to be construed as either an expression of implied warranty of any products of said company, nor shall it be used for propaganda, advertising, or other simple purposes.

This certificate shall not be altered after the issue date, or it will be deemed void by the (name of state) Department of Agriculture and the undersigned.

(The certificate should be issued with the seal of the State Department of Agriculture, notarized, and signed by the appropriate State Department of Agriculture official)."

II. Below is GIPSA's one-time grains certification statement accepted by the Saudi Ministry of Agriculture in lieu of a shipment-by-shipment biotech certification requirement.

<b>Crop</b>	<b>Statement</b>
Soybeans	We hereby certify that the soybeans may come from genetically modified soybeans of the type Monsanto Roundup Ready Soybeans that have been approved for import into the EEC under directive 96/281/ EC. The soybeans may come from genetically modified soybeans of the type Monsanto Roundup Ready Soybeans. Transgenic soybeans commercially produced in the United States have completed the necessary review under the U.S. regulatory process for determining the safety of new agricultural biotechnology products. This well coordinated regulatory process sets U.S. standards for human, animal, and plant health, and environmental safety. The transgenic soybeans used for domestic purposes are the same as those used for export.
Corn	Transgenic corn commercially produced in the United States has completed the necessary review under the U.S. regulatory process for determining the safety of new agricultural biotechnology products. This well coordinated regulatory process sets U.S. standards for human, animal, and plant health, and environmental safety. The transgenic corn used for domestic purposes is the same as corn used for export.
Testing Parameters	The sample was tested using a method equal to or exceeding the performance of the A's GIPSA testing recommendations, as set out in Directive 9181.1.

### Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:

In 1997, Saudi Arabia issued standard No. SSA 1149/1997 entitled Food Packages-part 1-General Requirements. Some of the main requirements are listed below:

- All packaging materials used in fabricating, forming, or treating packages shall be of food grade for contact with foods and in compliance with relevant Saudi standards.
- They shall be clean and in a condition that does not allow any contamination probabilities of the contained material.
- They shall maintain the properties of the packaged material and protect it from gaining undesirable odors, flavors and tastes.

- They shall offer protection to the product against contamination with microorganisms, insect, rodents, and dirt in the cases of products that requires it.
- They shall be impermeable to moisture in the cases of food products that require it.
- They shall offer necessary protection against environmental conditions and mechanical hazards such as impacts, vibration, static stresses, and they shall be in an intact appearance during handling.
- They shall not affect the container as a result of migration of some of their constituents that may react or be mixed with the food materials.
- It shall not be in a pharmaceutical shape.

Saudi standard No. SASO 1301/1997 deals with specifications for the general requirements of plastic packages used for packaging food materials. The three page regulations require limits among other things that the concentration of a vinyl chloride monomer not to exceed 1 mg per kg of the plastic material, or 0.01 mg per kg of the packaged food material if the packages are made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

Per the standard, the following labeling information should be written on labels of plastic packages used to package foodstuffs:

1. Type of plastic material
2. Weight, capacity, number, or dimensions based on the type of packages
3. Statement of food grade
4. Purpose and type of application
5. Directions for usage
6. Warnings if applicable

#### **Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

1. The Kingdom and the other five Gulf Cooperation countries have established the following major gulf-wide standards that regulate additives used in foodstuffs. Each standard contains a positive additive list.

An eight-page Gulf Standard No. 285/1999 entitled “Coloring Matter Used in Food Stuff.” See appendix II for coloring matter permitted.

Gulf Standard No. 707/1997 deals with flavors permitted for use in foodstuffs. The standard lists all natural and artificial flavors as well as flavor enhancers permitted for use in food products intended for human consumption.

Gulf Standard No. 356/1994 lists preservatives permitted for use in food products. See appendix II for preservatives permitted in foodstuffs.

Gulf Standard No. 381/1994 lists emulsifiers, stabilizers and thickeners permitted for use in foodstuffs (see appendix II for permitted list).

Gulf Standard No. 995/1998 deals with sweeteners permitted for use in food products. Refer to appendix II for the list.

SSA 73/1978 is concerned with Benzoic Acid, Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Benzoate Used in Preservation of Foodstuffs.

SSA 106/1978 lists permitted food additives in edible oils and fats

English copies of the above and other standards are available at the SASO. Interested U.S. exporters can purchase them from SASO's information center. Please refer to appendix 1 for coordinates of the center.

SASO depends heavily on CODEX Alimentarius regulations and to some extent on European and U.S. standards when drafting most of Saudi or Gulf Standards including food additives, pesticide and other contaminants. The Kingdom sometimes bans CODEX's approved food additives if they are banned on health grounds by developed countries (mainly the United States and/or Europe) or if they contain substances banned for religious reasons.

**A. Coloring Matters Used in Foodstuffs per Gulf Standard No. 23/1984**

Table-1: Natural colors permitted for use in coloring of foodstuffs

Color	Color Index Number 1971	Notes
<u>Red to Yellow Shades</u>		
Annatto Extract	75120	Bixin, Norbixin
Beta-Carotene	75130	
Beta-Apo-8-Carotenal	40820	
Beta-Apo-8-Carotenoic Acid	40825	
Canthaxanthin	40850	
Carrot Oil		
<u>Red to Purple Shade</u>		
Enocianina	-	Grape skin extract (anthocyanine)
Beet Powder	-	
Paprika	-	
<u>Orange and Yellow Dyes</u>		
Saffron	75100	
Turmeric Powder	75300	
Curcumine	75300	
Turmeric Oleoresin	-	
Riboflavin	-	
<u>Green Dyes</u>		
Chlorophyll	75810	
Chlorophyll copper complex	75810	

<u>Brown Dyes</u>		
Caramel Caramel	- -	Plain Made by the ammonium sulphite process
<u>Black Dyes</u>		
Toasted partially defatted cooked cotton seed flour	-	
<u>Inorganic Dyes</u>		
Titanium dioxide	77891	White dye 6
Iron oxides	77489	
Gold	77480	Metallic
Aluminum	77000	Metallic
Silver	77820	
<u>Different Dyes</u>		
Fruit juices Vegetable juices	- -	

TABLE – 2: Permitted synthetic colors for use in foodstuff

Color	Color Index Number 1971	Chemical Formula	Notes
<u>Red Colors</u>			
Azorubine	14720	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>12</sub> N <sub>2</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>7</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food Red 3 (carmoisine)
Erythrosine	45430	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>6</sub> I <sub>4</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Food Red 14
Ponceau 4 R	16255	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>11</sub> N <sub>2</sub> Na <sub>3</sub> O <sub>10</sub> S <sub>3</sub>	Food Red 7
Red 2G	18050	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>13</sub> N <sub>3</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>8</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food Red 10
FD & C Red 40	16035	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>14</sub> N <sub>2</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>8</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food Red17 (Allura Red)
<u>Yellow Colors</u>			
Sunset Yellow FCF	15985	C <sub>16</sub> H <sub>10</sub> N <sub>2</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>7</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food Yellow 3
Tartrazine	19140	C <sub>16</sub> H <sub>9</sub> N <sub>4</sub> Na <sub>3</sub> O <sub>9</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food Yellow 4
Quinoline Yellow	47005	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>9</sub> N Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>8</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food brown 13
<u>Brown Colors</u>			
Chocolate brown HT	20285	C <sub>27</sub> H <sub>18</sub> N <sub>4</sub> Na <sub>2</sub> O <sub>9</sub> S <sub>2</sub>	Food brown 3

<u>Green Colors</u>			
Fast green FCF	42053	C37 H34 N2 Na2 O10 S3	Food green 3
<u>Blue Colors</u>			
Indigotine	73015	C16 H8 N2 Na2 O8 S2	Food blue 1(Indigo carmine)
Brilliant Blue FCF	42090	C37 H34 N2 Na2 O9 S2	Food blue 2
<u>Black Colors</u>			
Brilliant Black PN	28440	C28 H17 N5 Na4 O14 S4	Food black 1

TABLE – 3: Requirements for synthetic colors

Property	Purity (dye) % Min.	Volatile* Matter at 135C % Max.	Water Insoluble % Max.	Ether Extract % Max.	Subsidiary % Max.
Azorubine	85	15	0.2	0.2	2
Erythrosine	85	15	0.2	0.2	-
Ponceau 4R	82	18	0.2	0.2	2
Red 2G	82	18	0.2	0.2	2
Sunset Yellow FCF	85	15	0.2	0.2	4
Tartrazine	85	15	0.2	0.2	1
Quinoline Yellow	-	-	0.2	0.2	-
Chocolate Brown HT	80	20	-	0.2	15
Fast green FCF	85	15	0.2	0.2	1
Indigotine	85	15	0.2	0.2	1
Brilliant Blue FCF	85	15	0.2	0.2	3
Brilliant Black PN	84	15	0.2	0.2	4
FD & C Red 40	85	14	0.2	-	-

TABLE – 4: Number of containers selected as sample from coloring matter

Lot size	Number of containers to be selected
2 - 15	2
16 - 40	3
41 - 65	4
66 - 110	7
More than 110	10

Permissible Daily Intake of the Coloring Materials Per Body Weight (Appendix 1)

Colors	*ADI	Colors	*ADI
Annatto	0-1.25	Iron oxides	0-0.5
Azorubine	0-1.25	Ponceau 4 R	0-0.125
Beta-Carotene	0-5	Quinoline Yellow	0-0.5
Beta-Apo-8-Carotenal	0-5	Red 2 G	0-0.006
Beta-Apo-8-Carotenoic acid	0-5		
Beet powder	-	Riboflavin	0-0.5
Brilliant black PN	0.2.5	Sunset yellow FCF	0-5
Brilliant blue FCF	0-12.5	Tartrazine	0-7.5
Canthaxanthine	0-25	Titanium Dioxide	
Caramel	-	FD & C Red 40	
Caramel made by ammonium Sulphite process	0-100	Aluminum	
Chlorophyll	-	Enocianine	
Chlorophyll copper complex	0-15	Carrot oil	
Chocolate brown HT	0-0.25		
Turmeric	0-2.5		
Curcumine	0-0.1		
Erythrosine	0-2.5		
Fast green FCF	0-12.5		
Gold	-		
Indigotine	0-5		

\* <<Acceptable Daily Intake>> expressed as mg/kg body weight.

**B. Preservatives Permitted for Use in Food Products per Gulf Standard No. 356/1994**

Preservatives	EEC No.	Preservatives	EEC No.
Sorbic acid	200	Diphenyl (Biphenyl)	230
Sodium sorbat	201	Orthophenyl phenol	231
Potassium sorbat	202	Sodium Orthophenyl phenate	232
Calcium sorbat	203	Thiabendazole	233
Benzoic acid	210	Formic acid	236
Sodium benzoate	211	Sodium formate	237
Potassium benzoate	212	Calcium formate	238
Calcium benzoate	213	Hexamine (heamethylene tetetamine)	239
Ethyl P-Hydroxy benzoate	214	Potassium nitrite	249
Ethyl P-Hydroxy benzoate Sodium	215	Sodium nitrite	250
Propyl P-Hydroxy benzoate	216	Sodium nitrite	251
Propyl P-Hydroxy benzoate Sodium	217	Potassium nitrite	252
Methyl P-Hydroxy benzoate		Acetic acid	260
Methyl P-Hydroxy benzoate Sodium	218	Potassium acetate	261
Sulphur dioxide	219	Sodium diacetate	262
Sodium sulphite		Calcium acetate	263
Sodium bisulphite	220	Lactic acid	270
Sodium metabisulphite	221	Propionic acid	280
Potassium metabisulphite	222	Sodium propionate	281

Calcium sulphite	223	Calcium propionate	282
Calcium bisulphite	224	Potassium propionate	283
Natamycin (pimaricin)	226	Carbon dioxide	290
Nisin	227	Calcium disodium ethylene diamine tetra-acetate	-
	-	Disodium ethylene diamine tetra acetate	-
	-	Heptyl Paraban	-

**C. Antioxidants Permitted for Use in Foodstuffs per Gulf Standard No. 357/1994**

EEC NO.	Antioxidant
220	Sulphur dioxide
221	Sodium sulphite
222	Sodium bisulphite
223	Sodium metabisulphite
224	Potassium metabisulphite
226	Calcium sulphite
300	L-ascorbic acid
301	Sodium ascorbate
302	Calcium ascorbate
304	Ascorbyl palmitate
306	Tocopherol (from nature sources)
307	Alpha-tocopherol (synthetic)
308	Gamma-tocopherol (synthetic)
309	Delta-tocopherol (synthetic)
310	Propyl gallate
311	Octyl gallate
312	Dodecyl gallate
320	Butylated hydroxyanisole
321	Butylated hydroxy toluene
322	Lecithin
-	Isoascorbic acid (erythorbic) and its sodium salt
-	Tertiary butyl hydroquinone
-	Trihydroxy butrophenone
-	Thiodipropionic acid
-	4-Hydroxymethyl 2-6 ditert butyl phenol
-	Guaiaic resin (guaiaic gum artificial )
270	Lactic acid
325	Sodium lactate
326	Potassium lactate
327	Calcium lactate
330	Citric acid
331	Sodium citrate
332	Potassium citrates

EEC NO.	Antioxidant
333	Calcium citrates
334	Tartaric acid
335	Sodium tartrates
336	Potassium tartrate
337	Sodium Potassium tartrate
338	Orthophosphoric acid
339	Sodium orthophosphate
340	Potassium orthophosphate
341	Calcium orthophosphate
472	Citric acid esters of mono and di-glycerides of fatty acids (citroglycerides)
-	Phosphoric acid
385	Ethylenediamine tetra-acetic calcium disodium
-	Ethylenediamine tetra-acetic disodium

**D. Emulsifiers, Stabilizers and Thickeners Permitted for use in Food Products \***

E.E.C No.	NAME
322	Lecthins
339	Sodium orthophosphates : - mono sodium dihydrogen phosphates - di sodium mono hydrogen phosphates - tri sodium phosphates
340	Potassium orthophosphates - mono potassium dihydrogen phosphates - di potassium mono hydrogen phosphates - tri potassium phosphates.
341	Calcium orthophosphates. - mono calcium tetra hydrogen di phosphates. - mono calcium mono hydrogen phosphates. - tri calciums di phosphates.
400	Alginic acid.
401	Sodium alginate
402	Potassium alginate
403	Ammonium alginate
404	Calciums alginate
405	Propane-1,2-diol alginate (Glycol propalin alginate)
406	Agar
407	Carrageenan
410	Locust bean gum
-	Ghatti gum
412	Guar gum
	Tragacanth

413	Acacia
414	Xanthan gum
415	Karaya gum
416	Sorbitol, sorbitol syrup.
420	Mannitol
421	Glycerol
422	Polyoxyethylene (8) stearate
430	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monolaurate.
432	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan mono-oleate.
433	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan mono-palmitate.
434	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan mono-stearate.
435	Polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan tri stearate.
-	Polyoxyethylene (8) sorbitan tri-stearate.
436	Polyoxyethylene (40) stearate.
-	
-	Amylose and amylopectin
-	Calcium acetate
-	Cholic acid
-	Desoxy cholic acid
-	Modified starch
-	Polydextroses A x N
-	Potassium sodium L (+) tartrate
-	Tartric acid
-	Polyvinyl pyrrolidone
-	Sodium casinate
-	Succinylated monoglycerides
-	Sodium stearyl fumarate
-	Gelatin edible
-	Sorbityl palmitate
-	Stearyl citrate
-	Stearyl tartrate
-	Stearyl monoglyceridyl citrate.

## Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

The Kingdom and other members of the Gulf Cooperation have developed positive pesticide and other contaminants lists. Per SASO the lists have international context as they were mainly adapted from CODEX Alimentarius standards. The following are the major Gulf/Saudi standards enforced in the Kingdom:

Gulf Standard No. 382/1994 “Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Agricultural Food Products-Part 1” established the maximum limits for ten pesticide residues in foods and agricultural commodities or animal feed: Malathion, Bromophos, Diquat, Fenchlorfos, Pyrethrins, Quintozense, Parathion, Orthophenyl Phenol, Methidathion and Fentin. Gulf Standard No. 422/1994 “Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Agricultural Food Products-Part 2” establishes the maximum limits for nine pesticide residues in agricultural and food products intended for human consumption. The residues are: dimethoate, chlorfenvinphos, crufomate, diazinon, dioxathion, diphenyl, diphenylamine, ethoxyquin and folpet.

Gulf Standard No. 357/1994 “Antioxidants Permitted for use in Foodstuffs” lists antioxidants and antioxidants synergists permitted for use in food products. Refer to appendix II for permitted antioxidants.

Gulf Standard No. 841/1997 regulates the maximum limits aflatoxins permitted in foods and animal feeds.

Gulf Standard No. 988/1998 is concerned with limits of radioactivity levels (gamma rays, cesium 134, 137) permitted in foodstuffs, drinking water and animal feeding stuffs. The limits of radioactivity levels permitted in food products shall not exceed the following limits:

- 10 becquerel/kg or liter in water
- 30 becquerel/kg or liter in milk and its products
- 30 becquerel/kg liter in liter in baby foods
- 75 becquerel/kg or liter in other food products
- 300 becquerel/kg in animal feeds

For dried products requiring reconstitution, the limits are determined after it is reconstituted with water.

English copies of the above and other standards are available at the Saudi Arabian Standard Organization. Interested U.S. exporter can purchase them from SASO’s information center. Please refer to appendix 1 for coordinates of the center.

The Ministry of Agriculture’s (MAW) registers and enforces Saudi Arabian or Gulf standards on feed additives as well as pesticides used in agricultural products. Coordinates of the Ministry are found in Appendix I.

## **Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:**

### **A. Product Registration**

Herbal preparations, health and supplementary foods must be registered with the General Directorate of Medical and Pharmaceutical Licenses of the Saudi Ministry of Health in order to be marketed in the Kingdom. The registration is done through a local agent by submitting sample products and product brochures, which are studied and tested by the ministry’s central laboratory. It takes about six months for the ministry to approve and license a product. The ministry charges about \$300 as a registration fee.

A U.S. exporter needs to submit the following documents through its local agent to the Ministry in order to initiate the product registration and licensing process:

1. Table of contents
2. An Authenticated copy of the agency registration certificate at the Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
3. When registering for herbal products, a copy of pharmaceutical wholesale license should be submitted by the local agent.
4. Certificate (s) issued by the health authorities in the country of origin clearly stating that the following should be provided:
  - The company is licensed to manufacture the products in the country of origin (state license number and date).
  - The company is permitted to sell the product in the country of origin (certificate of free sale)

- The company follows good manufacturing practice.
- Coloring agents, diluents and other incorporate substances in the product formula are permitted in the country of origin (if the free sale certificate states such information it will be sufficient).
- Package insert and applicable information stated on the pack are the same as that approved and currently marketed in the country of origin. Package insert shall be in Arabic and English languages. The company is obliged to add and/or delete any information required for handling the product in the Kingdom as determined by the registration committee.

5. A certificate issued by the company and authenticated by the relevant authorities in the country of origin clearly stating the following information about the product:

- Registration number and date and date of marketing in the country of origin.
- Trade and/or generic name.

Full composition (the scientific name of active and inactive ingredients and their quantities)

- Therapeutic category (if any).
- The composition of product to be exported to the kingdom is the same as that market in the country of origin.
- Names of countries where the product is currently marketed.
- A certificate of analysis indicating the results of completed analyses for the submitted samples.
- If the product contains ingredients of animal source the kind of animal must be specified.
- Percentage of alcohol in the finished product, if present, should be indicated with justification of that percentage.

6. Full specifications and methods of analyses of the finished product, as well as stability study and data including storage conditions.

7. Six samples of the product as well as samples of the outer package and product's label.

8. Abstracts of scientific references brochures and international scientific periodicals testifying to the efficacy and safety of the product.

## **B. Products Inspection**

With the exception of herbal preparations, health and supplementary foods (inspected by the Ministry of Health) and live animals, plants, seeds and animal feed (inspected by the Ministry of Agriculture), all imported foodstuffs are inspected by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry inspectors at the port of entry. If a consignment is rejected for not adhering to pertinent Saudi Standards or gulf standards, the importer is requested to re-export or destroy the product.

## **C. Imports of Samples**

Samples destined to potential Saudi buyers or for display in Food Shows are exempt from Saudi labeling and shelf life regulations, but are subject to inspection at ports of entry. A commercial invoice specifying that the product is not for sale and has no commercial value must accompany samples, which are usually sent to Saudi Arabia by D.H.L. and similar carriers.

## **D. Foodstuff Monitoring**

The Environmental Protection Department at the Ministry of Municipality and Rural Affairs is responsible for establishing nationwide food sanitation laws and guidelines. Inspectors at the municipality levels do monitoring of products already in the market. The authorities inspect retailers, wholesalers, restaurants, bakeries, fast food chains, vegetable and meat markets for expiration dates, sanitary and storage conditions as well as product handling. Outlets found selling unhygienic or expired products are exposed to stiff financial fines, temporary closure or both.

## **F. Certification and Documents Requirements**

All food products, whether imported for commercial purpose, or for display, or for sampling, must be fit for human consumption and should be within the shelf life set. The products must have a label or sticker showing the statutory information such as product name, country of origin, producer's name and address, production and expiry dates, etc. Bilingual labeling (Arabic/English) is required if the products are commercially imported. English labeling is sufficient for foodstuffs imported for display or sampling purposes.

For commercial importation, the following documents are required:

1. Commercial invoice showing FOB price, freight and CFR value
2. Certificate of origin
3. Halal slaughter certificate for meat and meat products. Halal certificate is also required for cheese and cheese products if they contain rennet of animal origin.
4. Health certificate from the country of origin
5. Phytosanitary certificate for grain, grain products, edible nuts, fruits, vegetables, etc.,
6. Bill of lading or airway bill.
7. Packing list (highly recommended to expedite product inspection and clearing process)
8. Weight list (for grain)

Saudi Customs accepts the original commercial invoice and country of origin certificate attested by a local chamber of commerce and industry located in a city or area where the foodstuffs are purchased and shipped. Certificates number three to five listed above must be attested by any of the Saudi missions located in the States. Before taking the certificates to a Saudi mission, U.S. exporters must make sure that the certificates were first authenticated by any U.S./Arab Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Saudi Arabian Business Council, or U.S. Chamber of Commerce located in the city or area where the exporting firm is based.

For small samples, simple documentation as follows is required:

- Invoice, showing consignee's name and address, details of product/s and also origin of goods.
- Packing list, if there are many items.

The above documents do not require legalization by the Saudi mission. An exporting company stamp and signature are sufficient. It is advisable to show on the invoice a nominal value of \$5 -\$10 for Customs purpose, with a statement that the goods are "Not For Sale – No Commercial Value"

For clearance of sea or airfreight cargo, a full set of documentation is required while for cargo sent by courier which do not require special certifications such as Halal, an invoice and country of origin certificate will be sufficient, provided the value is not more than \$3,000.

## **Section VII. Other Specific Standards:**

### **A. Certificate of Islamic Slaughter**

Per Saudi Arabia Standard No. SSA 630/1990 (Animal Slaughtering Requirements According to Islamic Law), a Certificate of Islamic Slaughter must be issued for all meat and poultry products entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This certificate issued by Islamic institutions recognized by the Saudi Embassy or Consulates in the United States.

Information related to the approved Islamic institutions may be obtained from the Saudi Embassy in Washington or the nearest Saudi Consulate (New York, Houston, or Los Angeles). Such certificates contain language certifying Islamic slaughter. The following language was taken from a recently issued Islamic Slaughtering certificate issued in the United States:

“ This is to certify that an Islamic representative inspected the above slaughter facility. The healthy animals and/or poultry were inspected within 12 hours previous to slaughter by the United States Department of Agriculture official veterinarian. After processing, inspection was made and approved by the USDA Government Health inspector. Further, the animals and /or poultry were slaughtered under the following statement, “slaughtered and processed in the name of God, the Almighty, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, God is Greatest.” Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim-Allahu Akbar. The animals and /or poultry covered by this certificate were slaughtered by means of a sharp knife, cutting through the skin, jugular vein, and trachea, to result in thorough bleeding of the carcass in preparation for dressing and evisceration.

## **B. Baby Foods**

There are two Saudi Arabian standards that establish quality specification for baby foods. Canned Baby Foods and infant foods based on milk are regulated by SSA 676/1992 and SSA 675/1994 respectively. Copies of the standards can be purchased from the SASO’s Information Center.

## **C. Frozen Chickens**

SSA 117/1979 deals with frozen chickens standard. Per the regulation, imported frozen chickens must meet the Islamic slaughtering requirements mentioned above. The standard also calls for salmonella testing for imported frozen chickens. If the result of the test is positive in more than one sample out of five samples tested, the whole shipment is rejected.

## **D. Animal Feed Requirements**

In 2001, the Saudi Ministry of Commerce issued a new requirement for poultry meat, beef and further processed meat and poultry products imports to the Kingdom. This directive requires that health certificates for imported poultry, and beef products clearly indicate that the animal slaughtered was not fed animal protein, animal fats, or animal by-products before it is allowed entry into the Kingdom. In January 2006, the Kingdom implemented a two-certificate approach for U.S. poultry and bovine meat products exports. The two-stage approach consists of: (1) an official FSIS export certificate and (2) a producer or manufacturer self-certification to cover any additional requirements not related to food safety or animal health. These requirements have sharply reduced imports of U.S. livestock and poultry meat and products to the Kingdom.

## **E. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)**

On February 9, 2003, the Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued the Ministerial decree number 2436 to all Chambers of Commerce in the country requiring the insertion of a new clause in health certificates accompanying imported meat and meat products to make sure that the abattoirs used to produce meat & meat products exported to the Kingdom implement the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) as a system of production process control.

Following is the summary of unofficial translation of a copy of the new decree number 2436:

Reference is made to the Ministerial decree #123 of April 10, 2001 which spelled out the rules and regulations to be followed when importing all types of meat: chilled, frozen or canned beef, veal, mutton, goat meat and poultry meat and their by products from safe origins to the Saudi Arabian.

Based on the need to protect consumer safety and health, it is required to implement the HACCP regime in all abattoirs producing meat and meat products. To facilitate this, a further Ministerial decree number 2436 was issued on February 8, 2003. The decision requires the insertion of a new clause, referred to as number 13, to the general regulations and condition to be followed when meat and meat products are imported to Saudi Arabia. The text of the clause # 13 should

read as follows:

“The abattoir (s) implements HACCP procedures in all stages of meat and meat”

#### **F. Animal Quarantine Regulations**

Over the years, Saudi Arabia has banned cattle, meat and meat products imports for health reasons. Cattle imports from countries affected by Mad Cow" disease, or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), Foot and Mouth, and Cattle Plaque diseases have been banned for several years. Cattle imports from countries not affected by the diseases are subjected to strict quarantine regulations on arrival at Saudi ports. The country also bans meat and meat derivatives from countries affected by BSE (the Kingdom banned live cattle and cattle meat imports from Washington State, Alabama and Texas due to confirmed cases of BSE in those states). Saudi Arabia also banned transshipped livestock meat through countries banned from exporting meat and meat products because of infestation by BSE, FMD and other animal diseases. In addition it requested additional statements on the health certificate accompanying livestock and poultry meat shipment to indicate that the animals slaughtered for export to the Kingdom were not fed animal ruminants and were not treated with growth hormones.

Imports of live poultry, poultry meat (mostly from developing countries) and hatching eggs are banned from countries affected by bird flu. Imports of live poultry are also banned from countries with the West Nile Virus epidemic.

#### **Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:**

Royal Decree No. M/5 and Resolution of Council of Ministers No. 75 dated 1984 regulate trademark registration laws in the Kingdom. According to the decree, trademarks are registered with the Trademark Registration Department of the Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry through a local agent or lawyer.

Once registration application is received, the Trademark Registration Department will require one month time to study the presented documents to decided on the request. If an application is approved, the department will publish the trademark in the official government Arabic language newspaper (Hum Al-Qura) with the cost of publication paid by the agent or owner of the trademark. The total registration cost is estimated at about \$2,000. Registered trademarks are protected for 10 years and can be renewed for another similar period or periods without any new inspection after republishing it in the official paper.

#### **Section IX. Import Procedures:**

##### **IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES**

The majority of Saudi food imports enter the country via Jeddah port on the Red Sea or Dammam port on the Arabian Gulf. About 70 percent of all foodstuffs enter Jeddah port. Imports from Jordan, Syria, and nearby countries enter the Kingdom by truck.

King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah also receive significant quantities of food items, particularly fresh fruits, vegetables and chilled meat. Fresh and chilled products are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival.

##### **Customs Clearance**

As stated earlier, foodstuff shipments must be accompanied by commercial invoice, health certificates and other documents listed in Section VI (Certification and Documents Requirements). An importer translates the commercial invoice into Arabic language (per Saudi customs requirements) and hands it to his customs clearing agent along with the other required documents in order to start customs clearing process. Containers can be cleared in less than ten days provided all required documents are in order and imported products meet Saudi Arabian/Gulf specifications. If products

are rejected by one of the Saudi Ministry of Commerce and Industry laboratories at a port of entry, an importer can appeal for re-test to the Director General of the Quality Control and Inspections Department of the Ministry. If an appeal is accepted, the Director General orders a sample (s) sent and re-tested by another Ministry's laboratory located in a different port (city). If the second test authenticates the initial results, the exporter is ordered to re-export or destroy the product.