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Jordan

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Annual

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Approved by:

Fredrick Giles

U.S. Embassy

Prepared by:

Hala y. Khoury

Report Highlights:

This report covers Jordan's Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Table of Contents

SECTION I. FOOD LAWS 3
SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS 3
SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS 3
SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS 4
SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINATES 4
SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS 4
SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS 4
SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS 5
SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES 5
- **CUSTOMS VALUATION:** 5
- IMPORT TAXES AND OTHER RELATED FEES: 5
APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS 7
APPENDIX II: OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS..... 8

SECTION I. FOOD LAWS

The current food control regime in Jordan falls under two laws: Agriculture Law No. 44 of 2002 and Jordanian Food Control Law No. 32 of 2003. Monitoring of imported food for compliance with Jordan technical regulations and other international standards relies on risk based system, which was adopted at Aqaba Special Economic Customs Center in May 2002 and at Amman Customs Center in January 2004. Food products are classified in a three-tiers according to the associated health risk and incorporated the criteria of inspection into an electronic channeling with computerized system. This system will be applied at all border centers once infrastructures for these centers are completed. Imported agricultural and food products are inspected by a border committee composed of representatives from Jordan Food and Drug Administration (JFDA), Ministry of Agriculture, the Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology (JISM), and Customs. The criteria and the levels of inspection are based on three categories: high, medium and low risk.

- 80 – 100% of foodstuff consignments falling within the high risk category shall be subject to inspection and samples collection for laboratory analysis.
- 25 –50% of foodstuff consignments falling within medium risk category shall be subject to inspection and 50% of food shipments, which are subject to inspection, shall be further subject to sample collection for laboratory analysis via an electronically programmed method.
- 5-10% of foodstuff consignment falling within low risk category shall be subject to inspection and samples collection for laboratory analysis via an electronically programmed method

Document review is mandatory regardless of level of inspection.

The current food control system attempts to limit human health hazards associated with microbial, parasitical and fungal contamination. Import consignments are also routinely tested for radiation levels and chemical contaminants, including heavy metals, hormones and residue from medicines. Food additives are determined by testing. Less frequent testing is done for pesticide residues.

SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

A. Imported products must comply with labeling and marking requirements issued by the Institute of Standards and Metrology. Legal requirements for labeling are fairly standard although a statement of ingredients in order of preponderance is not required. All labels must either be in Arabic or have a stick-on label in Arabic. In general, the label should contain the name of the products, the manufacturer's name and address, net weight, fortifying matter, lot number and "use before" or "best before" date. Local labeling requirements do not include Recommended Daily Intake (RDIs).

Shelf life: This requirement will be cancelled by the end of this year. It will be replaced by the -"Best Before"- standard.

B. Requirements Specific to Nutritional Labeling is mandatory in certain categories of food such as infant formula, food for dietary use, etc.

SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

No restrictions are applied to either packaging or container type at the Port of Aqaba. However, a maximum weight restriction 30.5 tons is applied to the discharging of container

at the gantry crane of 30.5 tons, units weighing more than 30.5 tons will be discharged using shore cranes.

There is no special municipal waste disposal law at the port. In case a cargo needs to be disposed of, an application is filed at the concerned department at the port (i.e. customs, environment) and they approve or reject the request according to type of cargo and its expected damage to the environment.

No specific restrictions are applied on the type of packaging used.

SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

Food additives are regulated by JISM and JFDA. In general, permissible additives and their concentrations are those approved by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. However, the technical standards for foods contain specific lists for food additive and their permissible levels of use. These standards should be consulted to make sure that additives are permitted.

SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINATES

Pesticide residue in the food chain in Jordan is a sensitive issue. There is only one laboratory in Jordan that is capable of testing for pesticide residue in fresh fruits and vegetables and its turn around time is about two weeks. Therefore, it is not possible to test fresh products and get a result back before the fresh products are consumed. However, non-perishable local and imported agricultural products may be tested for pesticide residue. The technical standards for food and agricultural products require that pesticide residues not exceed the recommended maximum residue levels of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Pesticides used in Jordan must be approved for use and registered. Anyone who attempts to import unregistered pesticides is subject to civil penalties. Small quantities of a new pesticide may be imported for the purposes of submitting the product for registration. New pesticides are approved by the "Pesticides Registration Committee" in the Ministry of Agriculture.

SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Any imported agricultural or food product may be inspected and tested to ensure that it is fit for human consumption. Virtually all prepared and mixed foods are tested at the border. This is likely to change under the new agriculture and food law.

The JFDA has the authority to inspect food product at the retail and wholesale distribution levels. A representative may enter any place and collect samples for testing. If a product fails to meet technical requirements or is found unfit for human consumption, it is removed from distribution channels and destroyed.

SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

All imported foods should conform to the Jordanian standards issued by the Jordan Institute for Standards and Metrology (JISM). All agricultural products may be imported by the private sector (with the exception of wheat and barley) if the products meet local quality standards, which are set by JISM on the basis of the CODEX Alimentarius. In 2003, JISM instituted a pre-shipment inspection program, which is entirely voluntary for food importers. Import licences are not required for most imported goods. Some products require prior approval from either the Ministry of Agriculture or the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Agricultural products for which prior approval is required from the Ministry of Agriculture are live animals: fresh, chilled and frozen meat and frozen animal semen and powdered milk for adults and babies. Prior approval is required to ensure that the animals and animal products meet local health standards. The importation of special flour and powdered milk for manufacturing purposes is subject to prior approval from the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture. Importation of rice, sugar, and wheat derivatives has been liberalized. The private sector may import these items into Jordan if prevailing customs duties and taxes are paid and the product meets local quality standards. Alcoholic beverages may be imported into Jordan but high tariffs are applied (50-180%) – as a revenue source for the government

SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS

Interest in property (moveable and real) is recognized, enforced and recorded through reliable legal processes. The legal system facilitates and protects the acquisition and disposition of all property rights.

Prior to its accession to the WTO, Jordan passed several new laws to improve protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), patents, copyrights and trademarks. TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)-consistent laws now protect trade secrets, plant varieties and semiconductor chip designs. The law requires registration of copyrights, patents and trademarks. Copyrights must be registered at the National Library, part of the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Patents must be registered with the Registrar of Patents and Trademarks at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. Jordan committed to acceding to the Patent Cooperation Treaty and to the protocol relating to the Material Agreement Concerning the registration of marks by the end of 2004.

SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES

As a member of the WTO, Jordan must reduce its import tariff ceiling to 20 percent. Under the terms of the U.S.-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (FTA), import duties and other trade barriers between Jordan and the United States must be phased out by 2010, with tariffs less than 5 percent having already been eliminated. Companies operating in the Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) gain quota and duty-free access to the U.S. market and benefit from special import provisions for raw inputs

- CUSTOMS VALUATION:

The customs law of 1999 was amended in March 2000 to include GATT-compliant criteria for customs valuation (which is based on certified invoices) and to make the valuation process clearly defined and more transparent. The law restricts customs officers' mandate to use arbitrary valuation but still rewards those who uncover invoice misreporting and imposes penalties on importers.

The customs valuation price is CIF-based. The value of the imported good is converted into JD at the official central bank exchange rate (1 JD = USD 1.41). In some cases, invoice or export discounts have been included in the valuation by the customs department. Still, the exporter should consult the local importer to determine how to best grant any such discounts or rebates.

- IMPORT TAXES AND OTHER RELATED FEES:

Customs tariffs are based on the Harmonized System coding practice. Commodities fall under one of five different tariff rates: zero, 5 percent, 10 percent, 20 percent, and 30 percent, with the exception of tobacco and alcoholic beverages which are subject to a tariff

range of 50–180 percent, and unwrought gold which is subject to a 0.5 percent tariff rate. Under the terms of the FTA, these tariffs will be phased out over 10 years (with year one being 2001) depending on the initial tariff rate: goods with an initial tariff rate of 5 percent will be duty-free in two years; with an initial rate of 10 percent within four years; with an initial rate of 15-20 percent within five years; and with an initial rate of 20 percent or more, within ten years. Excepted goods as mentioned above will not be affected. The tariff schedule may be accessed at the following web site: www.customs.gov.jo

In addition to customs duties, both imported products and locally produced goods are subject to a 16 percent value-added tax based on the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value at the border. Goods such as pharmaceutical products, agricultural goods, and some petroleum products are exempt from the 16 percent sales tax. There is a special sales tax that applies to specific items such as, but not limited to, passenger vehicles, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages and lubricants. The tax rate on these items varies. Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 13 percent general sales tax in addition to the special sales tax. Non-basic foodstuffs are subject to a 4 percent general sales tax. For a complete description of these commodities and detailed lists of the general and special sales tax, please visit Jordan's General Sales Tax Department's website at www.gst.gov.jo

Import licenses are required for imports of:

- Non-commercial shipments exceeding JD 2,000 in value
- Biscuits of all types
- Mineral water
- Dried milk for industry
- Used tires
- Items requiring prior clearance from specific authorities (for a complete list, see "special import provisions" below)

Goods entering the country under temporary entry status, bonded goods and goods benefiting from the investment promotion law are exempt from import licenses (refer to www.jordaninvestment.com).

All Jordanian and foreign trading companies must obtain an importer's card from the Ministry of Industry and Trade for customs clearance purposes. At the Ministry a complete and updated list of all import requirements and provisions is periodically issued. For non-trading entities such as banks, hospitals and hotels, the ministry issues a special, "limited" card that allows the import of goods specific to that entity's purpose.

Import / Export Documentation

According to Article 31 of the Customs Law of 1998 and its amendments, every customs declaration must include the following:

- Maritime or air bill of lading.
- Commercial invoice indicating value, weight, freight and insurance charges etc. All invoices should be notarized by the Jordanian diplomatic mission in the country of origin. Certification by the local chamber of commerce is sufficient, subject to the approval of the customs department director, in cases where a Jordanian consulate is not available.
- A notarized certificate of origin issued by the relevant authority in the exporter's local area.
- Value declaration form for shipments exceeding JD 2,000 (USD 2,820).

The customs department may request other documents related to the shipment as needed. All invoices should describe the imported goods in Arabic.

Special Import Provisions

Pre-import clearance is required for certain goods. The clearance, once obtained, acts as an import license. However, these clearances are non-automatic. The relevant pre-import license-issuing agency and the respective goods include:

Ministry of Industry and Trade (these are given out in the form of import licenses): rice, flour and its by-products, sugar, wheat, barely and corn;

Ministry of Agriculture: frozen animal semen, live animals, fresh/frozen meat, embalmed wild animals, imported milk products from countries engaged in bilateral trade protocols with Jordan;

Ministry of Health: all types of medical drugs and antibiotics, food supplements for athletes, potassium bromide, food dyes, asbestos pipes and panels, frozen ice cream, baby food and milk, laser pens, oxygen and nitrogen oxide and other medical equipment.

If a shipment is rejected, there is an appeal system and this is subject to the approval of the ministry under which the rejection took place.

APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Jordan Food & Drug Directorate

Tel: (962-6) 4612663

Fax: (962-6) 4612663

Web-site: www.jfda.jo

Ministry of Industry and Trade

Tel: (962-6) 560-7191/5663774

Fax: (962-6) 560-4691

Web-site: www.mit.gov.jo

Ministry of Agriculture

Veterinary Services Directorate

OR

Plant Protection Directorate

Tel: (962-6) 5686151

Fax: (962-6) 5686310

Jordan Institute of Standards and Metrology

Tel: (962-6) 5680139

Fax: (962-6) 5681099

Web-site: www.jism.gov.jo

Jordan Customs Department

P.O.Box 90, Amman, Jordan

Tel: (962-6) 462-3186/8; 462-4394/6

Fax: (962-6) 464-7791

E-mail: Customs@Customs.gov.jo

Web-site: <http://www.customs.gov.jo>

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APPENDIX II: OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS

For further help, please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, American Embassy, POBox 354, Amman, Jordan, Phone: (962-6) 5906056, Fax: (962-6) 5920146, [E-mail: Hala.khoury@USDA.GOV](mailto:Hala.khoury@USDA.GOV)