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Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

Traceability In Practice

2004

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Report Highlights:

Traceability will become mandatory throughout the EU as of January 1, 2005. EU importers will have to comply with this new requirement. As a result they are pushing exporters to adopt certain traceability systems that are commonly used within the EU.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Brussels USEU [BE2]
[E3]

Product specific traceability requirements have been included in EU legislation over the last few years for several foods including fish, beef and GM products. However, on January 1 2005, general traceability will become mandatory throughout the EU food system.

Regulation EC/178/200 (full text available from http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/l_031/l_03120020201en00010024.pdf) defines traceability as the ability to trace and follow food, feed, and ingredients through all stages of production, processing and distribution.

The Regulation contains general provisions for traceability which cover all food and feed and all food and feed business operators. Importers are similarly affected as they will be required to identify from whom the product was exported in the country of origin.

From the EU's legal point of view the requirement for traceability is limited to ensuring that businesses are at least able to identify the immediate supplier of the product in question and the immediate subsequent recipient, with the exemption of retailers to final consumers (one step back-one step forward)

As such, the use of product coding systems such as the EAN 128 (European Article Numbering) is not regulated by EU law. However, bar code systems are commonly used in the EU for traceability purposes.

We understand that EU importers are increasingly putting pressure on exporters to apply an identical or compatible system to the system used for internal EU purposes.

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