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Venezuela

Agricultural Situation

New Law of Access to Goods affects imports

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Report Highlights:

Post reports how the new "Law for the Defense of the People in the Access to Goods" is already affecting the entrance of products to the country, specifically as it applies to new requirements for product labeling.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Background

On 31 July, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) issued 26 new decrees, some of which have a direct impact on agricultural production and trade. Among those decrees is the "Law for the Defense of the People in the Access to Goods" which includes some significant changes on the labeling requirements.

Former labeling requirements

The Ministry of Health (Ministerio de Salud, or MINSALUD), oversees processed food labeling in Venezuela. Labeling is mandatory for domestically produced and imported food products. The General Food Norm provides labeling requirements. MINSALUD's authorities may require the elimination or modification of any paragraph or phrase concerning a particular product, as well as recommending the addition of any paragraph or phrase they deem necessary. The old language guidelines are presented below:

All labels must be presented in Spanish. A Spanish translation of the original/foreign label must be authorized by MINSALUD. The approved label may be affixed (stickers are acceptable) to the foreign language label. The approved label must be applied to the product prior to export because it has to enter the country in its final presentation.

New Law of Access to Goods restrains entrance of merchandise to the country

The product seizures by the BRV in the last days are not the only expression of the use of the Law for the Defense of the People in the Access to Goods; according to representatives of some multinational companies. Already there have been shipments of merchandise that did not clear customs because the product label did not include the information in Spanish, the official language of Venezuela, as established in chapter four of the new law. The law now states that:

the information on the label can not be on stickers anymore, but must be stamped, sealed or printed with indelible ink.

Comment

With this change, exporters may have to change how labels are prepared for the Venezuelan market to comply with the new regulations. Exporters are urged to keep close contact with their brokers or importers to make sure that they comply with the new regulations.