

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Egypt Relaxes Shelf-Life Requirements for Frozen Fish and Beef Liver

Country: Egypt

Post: Cairo

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Agriculture in the Economy, Policy and Program Announcements, Agriculture in the News, FAIRS Subject Report, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, SP1 - Expand International Marketing Opportunities, SP2 - Prevent or Resolve Barriers to Trade that Hinder U.S. Food and Agricultural Exports, Fishery Products, Livestock and Products, Climate Change/Global Warming/Food Security

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Report Highlights:

On April 11, 2020, Egypt's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) issued Decree No. 209/2020. The decree extends the shelf-life validity period for imported frozen fish from six- to nine-months and of frozen beef liver from seven- to 10-months. The decree was published in Egypt's official gazette (Al-Wakaye Al-Mesreya) on April 11, 2020, and entered effect on the same day of its publication and is valid until December 31, 2020 (see APPENDIX I – Unofficial English Translation).

GENERAL INFORMATION:

On April 11, 2020, Egypt's [Ministry of Trade and Industry](#) (MTI) issued Decree No. 209/2020. The decree extends the shelf-life validity period for imported frozen fish from six- to nine-months and of frozen beef liver from seven- to 10-months. The decree was published in Egypt's official gazette (*Al-Wakaye Al-Mesreya*) on April 11, 2020, and entered effect on the same day of its publication and is valid until December 31, 2020 (see APPENDIX I – Unofficial English Translation).

COVID-19 Impact on Product Shelf-Life

Measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in Egypt, which include an 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. daily curfew, prohibition of large gatherings, and the mandatory closure of restaurants, sandwich shops, and street food vendors, has resulted in consumer demand especially for beef liver to plummet. Local industry faced with growing frozen beef liver stockpiles called on the Egyptian government to relax product shelf life requirements and consider using best-if-used dates since this is a quality issue.

Until promulgation of this decree, Egypt unlike most countries, had maintained a shelf-life requirement of seven-months for frozen beef liver. That requirement, not in line with international norms, did not provide enough time to market the product in Egypt especially since of late most market outlets had closed due to the COVID-19 situation. Shelf-life does not convey product safety but rather the final day that the product will be at its optimum freshness, flavor, and texture.

Transit times from the U.S. east coast ports to Egypt are roughly 30-days. Port-clearance times in Egypt average 30-days, which further reduces the time needed to market the product.

Determining Product Shelf-Life

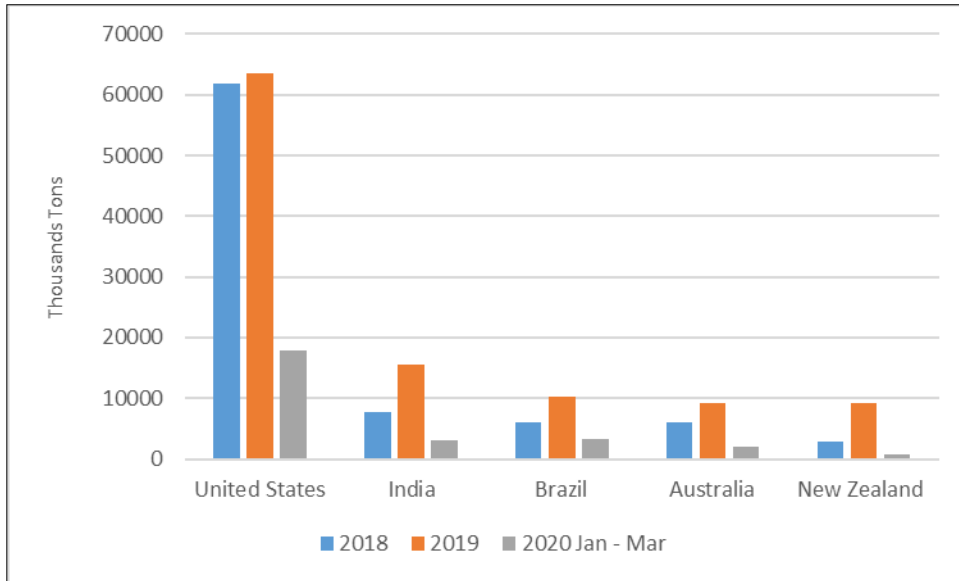
In Egypt, the shelf-life of all imported foods is determined by the [Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality](#) (EOS), an agency of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The agency determines shelf-life period for Egypt regardless of the imported product's shelf-life duration in the country-of-origin.

Relevance of MTI Decree No. 209/2020

Decree No. 209/2020 is in effect until December 31, 2020. This decree is applicable exclusively to imported frozen fish and frozen beef liver, but does not include the other frozen variety meats (kidneys and hearts) nor beef cuts. The decision is applicable to products now being shipped, as well as retroactively to product that has already arrived and is stored in Egypt. Shelf-life for the other variety meats remains set at seven-months, while for beef cuts the shelf-life remains set at one-year.

In calendar year 2019 (January-December) Egypt imported over 130,000 metric tons (MT) of beef offal (see figure 1). The United States supplying some 64,000 MT of beef offal, of which roughly 54,000 MT were beef livers, is Egypt's major supplier of beef offal.

FIGURE 1: Egypt, Major Beef Offal Suppliers, 2018/19 (Metric Tons)



Source: Trade Data Monitor, USDA-FAS BICO, and FAS Cairo office research.

APPENDIX I – Unofficial English Translation

BEGIN TEXT...

Al-Wakaye Al-Mesreya (Egyptian Official Gazette) – April 11, 2020
Minister of Trade and Industry, Decree No. 209/2020

Reviewing Law No. 2/1957, for Standardization, and Premised on:

- Law No, 21/1958, for Regulating, Fomenting and Modifying Industry
- Presidential Resolution No. 392/1979, for Regulating the Egyptian general organization for standardization and quality of production
- Presidential Resolution No. 83/2005, for amending the title of the Egyptian General Organization for Standardization and Quality of Production to become the Egyptian General Organization for Standards and Quality
- Presidential Resolution No. 420/2005, for the Organization of the Ministry
- Presidential Resolution No. 269/2018, for Government formation and it's Amending
- Ministerial Decree No. 179/1996, for Commitment of Production to Egyptian Standards
- Ministerial Decree No. 515/2005, for Commitment of Production to Egyptian Standards and Complementary Decisions
- Ministerial Decree No. 385/2006
- Ministerial Decree No. 434/2008
- Minister of Supply letter No. 7,594 of March 30, 2020
- Director of the Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality letter of April 5, 2020

Resolve:

Article (1):

Pertaining to the validity date (shelf-life) of frozen fish and frozen (beef) liver, imported as per Egyptian Standard No. 2,613-2/2008, its duration, and enforced through Decrees Nos. 285/2006 and 434//2008, it is determined that duration for frozen fish to be nine-months and for frozen liver to be 10-months.

Article (2):

This decree is valid until December 31, 2020.

Article (3):

This decree to be published in the official gazette, entering into force on the date of its publication.

Issued on April 11, 2020

Minster of Trade and Industry, Neveen Gamea

...END TEXT

Attachments:

No Attachments.