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Report Highlights:

Belgium is a Member State of the European Union (EU) and applies the certification requirements described in the European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Certification Report. Products not yet harmonized are subject to Belgian national rules.

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DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Brussels, European Union (EU), 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.**

Executive Summary

Import requirements for food and feed, animals, and plants are harmonized between the Member States of the European Union (EU). The EU's regulations applicable to imports include specific model certificates with pre-defined attestations on animal, plant, or public health or on the quality specifications of a product. Belgium is a Member State of the European Union (EU) and applies all EU certification requirements. Therefore, we recommend that this report on the certification requirements for exports to Belgium is read in conjunction with the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Certification Report](#). The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) is the Belgian authority in charge of defining the requirements in the limited cases where requirements have not been set at EU level. The FASFC is also responsible for import controls products shipped to Belgium. This report provides some useful links for the trade from the FASFC website.

Section I: Export Certificates required by Government

Belgium is a Member State of the European Union (EU) and adheres to all food import and certification requirements that are harmonized throughout the EU. We therefore recommend that this report on the certification requirements for exports to Belgium is read in conjunction with the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Certification Report](#), which references all existing certificates that are valid for export to all 27 countries of the European Union.

The EU has created model certificates for the vast majority of products imported into the EU, reflecting general and product specific import requirements spelled out in EU animal health and food legislation.

This report focuses on the limited products for which the United States and Belgium negotiated a bilateral export certificate in the absence of an EU certificate. It also addresses the occasional authorizations for shipments for non-harmonized products and the certification requirements for food samples. It furthermore lists some of the border issues that U.S. exporters have faced when shipping product to Belgium.

Belgian Import Controls on U.S. Certificates

The Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain (FASFC) (in Dutch: Federaal Agentschap voor de Veiligheid van de Voedselketen (FAVV); in French: Agence Fédérale pour la Sécurité de la Chaîne alimentaire (AFSCA)) is the Belgian authority in charge of import controls both for EU harmonized and non-harmonized products shipped to Belgium

[http://www.afsca.be/overhetfavv/structuurfavv/dgcontrole/;](http://www.afsca.be/overhetfavv/structuurfavv/dgcontrole/)

<http://www.afsca.be/apropos/structureafsca/dgcontrole/default.asp>

These controls take place in facilities that have been designated to perform controls, in line with the requirements of the [EU Official Controls Regulation \(OCR\)](#). The link to the up to date list of FASFC Border Control Post (BCPs) and to the list of the Control Posts (CPs) at the premises of Belgian operators designated by the FASFC for the official controls on certain products is available from <http://www.afsca.be/invoerderdelanden/levendedieren/default.asp#b> (Click on “Tabel”).

U.S. exporters are recommended to closely work with their importer in Belgium who will find some of the needed specific information in the FASFC’s International Affairs Circulars:

<http://www.afsca.be/exportderdelanden/omzendbrieven/default.asp#A973640;>

<http://www.afsca.be/exportationpaystiers/circulaires/>

The FASFC’s Circulars on Protection of Plant Products, Animal Feed and Animal By-Products also have useful information related to the imports of those products:

<http://www.afsca.be/plantaardigeproductie/omzendbrieven/>

<http://www.afsca.be/productionvegetale/circulaires/>

Bilateral Export Certificates

Turtles: Veterinary Health Certificate for Export of Commercial Turtles from the United States of America to Belgium. Exporters of turtles should contact APHIS to obtain this certificate. Contact vs.live.animal.import.export@usda.gov in USDA, APHIS, VS National Import Export Services.

Lanolin: Belgium requires facilities to be registered by APHIS for the export of lanolin (wool grease). For information regarding how to become registered, facilities should contact the VS Field Office covering the area from where the product will be exported or is produced. For further information see: https://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/products/downloads/be_lanolin_grease.pdf.

Occasional Shipments of Non-Harmonized Products

The Belgian authorities may accept occasional shipments of products for which no harmonized specific EU legislation exists. In those cases, the Belgian authorities will require on an ad hoc basis guarantees about animal and public health issues related to the specific product. An import authorization from the FASFC will list the import requirements. The importer in Belgium has to request the authorization by means of standardized documents ([Import Authorization Request for Animals](#); [Import Authorization Request for Products of Animal Origin](#)). The U.S. exporter will likely have to work with the appropriate regulatory agency in the United States to demonstrate that the import conditions set by FASFC are satisfied, before the FASFC will grant the import authorization to the requesting operator in Belgium. FAS can help facilitate this process.

Food Samples Shipped to Belgium

Under EU legislation, food samples sent to Belgium with the intention to be consumed are considered foods for human consumption and are subject to the same listing and certification requirements as regular commercial shipments. As mentioned above, these requirements are largely harmonized throughout the EU and are described in the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#). In other cases (e.g. for the testing of equipment, diagnostics materials etc.), such goods come under the animal by-products regulation ([Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 142/2011 of 25 February 2011 implementing Regulation \(EC\) No 1069/2009](#)). Only registered users in Belgium can receive such goods after they have obtained an import permit from the FASFC. The importer in Belgium has to request the authorization by means of a standardized document ([Import Authorization Request for Commercial Samples](#)).

http://www.favv-afscab.be/plantaardigeproductie/omzendbrieven/ documents/2019-04-05_aanvraagformulierinvoermachtigingdemonstratiemateriaalNLv0.1.pdf or

http://www.afsca.be/productionvegetale/circulaires/ documents/2019-04-05_aanvraagformulierFR.pdf). The FASFC will check whether the products originate from a country that is authorized to ship to the EU. The FASFC will also check whether the applicant for the permit is included in the [list of registered users](#).

Common Certification Issues

Certification issues are often at the basis for the detention of shipments in Belgian Border Control Posts and are no different than the problems reported by other FAS posts in EU countries:

- the certificate was issued after the date of departure;
- there were typographical errors;
- EU plant approval number mentioned on the certificate did not match the approval number on the product label or on the list of EU approved establishments. Please note that the approval number has to be identical on the certificate, label and the EU list; Belgian Border Control Posts will not accept small inconsistencies such as the addition of a letter to FSIS establishments which is commonly accepted in the United States.
- the shipper used the wrong/old certificate model;
- or a certificate was absent; or was not provided for every animal origin ingredient in the final product;
- the copy of the certificate is not the original;
- incorrect strike outs of standard text in certificates were implemented or initials were missing by strike outs; and,
- the stamp was unclear, or the stamp is not original.

Section II: Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

Please read the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#).

Section III: Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificate(s)

Please read the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#).

Section IV: Government Certificate Legal Entry Requirements

Please read the [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#)

Section V: Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements to ensure market entry

On December 14, 2019, certain changes in the EU's plant health and animal health legislation, as well as in the EU's import control legislation, were imposed. As a result of these changes, certain certificates changed and certain plant products which did not previously require a certificate now need to be accompanied by a certificate (as of December 14, 2019). For more information on these changes, see the website of the European Commission at: https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/new_eu_rules_en

Composite Products - Products Subject/Not Subject to Veterinary Certification

The certification requirements for products containing animal as well as plant products is complex and subject to interpretation by the local veterinarians at the Border Inspection Posts. The European Commission developed and published a “Product Decision Tree” and guidance document in 2015 to clarify the scope of the legislation. Veterinary inspectors in Belgian Control Posts have been asking for composite product certificates with attestations on multiple animal origin ingredients, which could not be signed by U.S. authorities as a result of the structure of regulatory environment in the United States.

A new risk based system is scheduled to go into effect on April 21, 2021 which establishes three categories of composite products: (1) non shelf stable composite products, (2) shelf stable composite products that contain meat products and (3) shelf stable composite products that do not contain meat products. Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/625 lays out the different entry requirements for each of these three categories. All processed products of animal origin must be sourced from EU approved establishments. The EU will continue to require composite product certificates for all non-shelf stable products and for shelf stable composite products with a meat ingredient. Shelf stable products will have to be accompanied by a private attestation that will be checked at the border. At the time of writing this report, the new composite product model certificate and the model attestation have not been published in the Official Journal yet. Under the new system, there will also be a list of low-risk products that will not be subject to border controls. This list also has yet to be published. Further details will become clarified over the coming months. A separate GAIN report will address the details of the new system once all the relevant provisions are published.

For more information see: [European Union Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#).

Appendix I: Electronic Copy, scanned copy, or Outline of Each Export Certificate

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Attachments:

No Attachments