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**Report Highlights:**

This report provides information and guidance on the export certification requirements for U.S. products entering Costa Rica. This report supplements the 2025 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Report prepared by the San José Office of Agricultural Affairs.

This report was prepared by the San José Office of Agricultural Affairs for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been 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 PRODUCTS IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY’S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Government of Costa Rica requires different export certificates for food and agricultural products entering the country from the United States. Plant products and live animals require Export Certificates issued by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) of USDA issues export certificates for poultry, meat, and other products of animal origin, including pasteurized eggs and egg products. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) issues export certificates for dairy, table eggs, and further processed egg products. The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) will issue export certificates for seafood and aquaculture products. State Departments of Agriculture will generally issue Certificates of Free Sale for Ministry of Health registration of processed food products (except for processed meat products). The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will also issue the "Certificate to a Foreign Government," which is available for conventional foods, food additives, food contact substances, and infant formula. FDA also issues a "Certificate of Free Sale" for dietary supplements, medical foods, and foods for special dietary use. Costa Rica requires a CAFTA-DR certificate of origin for products to be granted preferential tariff treatment.

Costa Rica's export certification requirements are simple in the type and number of documents required as described in this report. However, dairy, seafood, and ovine products must register individual export production facilities with Costa Rica's Animal Health Service (SENASA), a process that typically takes from 1 to 5 months depending on the product. The Ministry of Health (MINSa) requires processed food products to be registered as well.

SENASA and the National Phytosanitary Service (SFE) are the two government agencies responsible for the agricultural import document review process at ports of entry. The two agencies establish the specific requirements for imports of products of animal- and plant-origin and physically inspect imported products for pests and chemical residues, according to Costa Rica's sanitary and phytosanitary regulations.

## **Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required by Government (Matrix)**

Most of the certificates required as a condition for entry into Costa Rica are issued by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Costa Rica recognizes all federally inspected U.S. beef, pork, and poultry processing plants as eligible to export to Costa Rica. Products from these facilities require an FSIS Form 9060-5 (Export Certificate of Wholesomeness). The Costa Rican Ministry of Health (MINSa) accepts Form 9060-5 for processed meat products in lieu of a Certificate of Free Sale for product registration. When using Form 9060-5 to register a product with MINSa, the exporter would still have to apostille the Form 9060-5, just as she/he would for a Certificate of Free Sale.

Costa Rica requires an AMS export certificate for registered dairy products, a NOAA export certificate for seafood, and an FSIS 9060-5 for ovine products. Exporters of these three product categories must adhere to the individual facility and product registration process described in the FAIRS Country Report.

SENASA maintains an updated list of processing plants approved to export to Costa Rica. The list can be seen at the following link by checking the document “[Establecimientos habilitados para exportar a Costa Rica](#)”.

**Table 1: Export Certificate Matrix**

Product(s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
For all products	<a href="#">Certificate of Origin (sample)</a> The sample certificate is provided by Costa Rica’s Ministry of Foreign Trade	The certificate must indicate that the product originates from the United States	The certificate of origin is used by Customs Authorities to grant tariff benefits under the CAFTA-DR	Customs Department (Ministry of Finance)
Dairy Products	<a href="#">AMS Grading and Sanitary Certification</a>	Costa Rica accepts the generic AMS Export Certificate for dairy products	Food safety and animal health	Ministry of Agriculture
Live Animals	<a href="#">APHIS VS Certificate</a>	Specific attestations related to health/disease status	Animal health	Ministry of Agriculture
Meat and meat products	<a href="#">FSIS 9060-5 Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness</a>	Product specific attestations related to animal health and processing procedures	Animal health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture
Egg Products	<a href="#">FSIS Form 9060-5EP</a>	Product compliance w/ processing/testing/origin requirements	Animal health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture

Product(s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Processed Meats	<a href="#">FSIS 9060-5 Meat and Poultry Export Certificate of Wholesomeness</a>	Product specific attestations related to animal health and processing procedures;  Form FSIS 9060-5 is accepted by Costa Rica as equivalent to the Free Sale Certificate for food registration at MINSA	Animal health and food safety;  MINSA requires the Free Sale Certificate for initial product registration purposes	Ministry of Agriculture  Ministry of Health
Fresh, refrigerated, or frozen seafood and aquaculture products	<a href="#">NOAA Export Certificate</a>	Products are fit for human consumption	Food safety	Ministry of Agriculture
Pet Food	<a href="#">APHIS IRegs</a>	Products are sold freely as pet food in the U.S.	Animal food safety	Ministry of Agriculture
Grains	<a href="#">Phytosanitary Certificate</a>	Disease-free of specific quarantine pests	Plant Health	Ministry of Agriculture
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	<a href="#">Phytosanitary Certificate</a>	Disease-free of specific quarantine pests	Plant Health	Ministry of Agriculture
Plants and Plant Products	<a href="#">Phytosanitary Certificate</a>	Disease-free of specific quarantine pests	Plant Health	Ministry of Agriculture
Processed Food Products	<a href="#">Certificate of Free Sale (CFS)</a>	The CFS indicates product is suitable for human consumption and is for sale in country of origin	MINSA requires the Free Sale Certificate for initial product registration purposes	Ministry of Health

## Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificates

### Sanitary or Phytosanitary Certificate

These are export certificates issued by APHIS certifying that the products are free of pests and diseases of concern to Costa Rica. The sanitary certificate indicates that animals or their products were raised according to certain protocols to certify they are free from specific diseases. APHIS sanitary

certification for animals ([APHIS VS Certificate](#)) and [animal products](#) exported to Costa Rica can be obtained through the linked APHIS pages. In addition, meat and meat products must be accompanied by the FSIS 9060-5 [Certificate of Wholesomeness](#) that provides specific attestations previously agreed upon with Costa Rica.

The phytosanitary certificate confirms that the shipment of plants or plant products was inspected and is free from quarantine pests of interest for Costa Rica. The APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Program [PPQ](#) issues phytosanitary certificates for U.S. plant and plant product exports.

### **Certificate of Free Sale**

This [certificate](#) is issued either by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or by a [State Authority](#), and must indicate that the product is suitable for human consumption, if applicable.

This certificate is required for registration of processed food products with Costa Rica's Ministry of Health. The purpose of the certificate is to provide assurance to the local authorities that the product is appropriate for human consumption and is freely sold in the country of origin. It is required by the Ministry of Health only for registration purposes. Registration of the product is valid for 5 years. This process must be completed before the product is imported into the country.

FDA issues two types of [Food Export Certificates](#): a) Certificate to a Foreign Government and b) Certificate of Exportability. The Certificate to a Foreign Government certifies that the products were manufactured in a processing facility under the FDA inspection and are marketed in and legally exported from the United States. The Certificate of Exportability states that a product (or products) meet(s) the requirements of section 801(e)(1) of the FD&C Act and may be legally exported. Additionally, the FDA issues a Certificate of Free Sale for dietary supplements, medical foods, and foods for special dietary use.

### **Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificates**

Costa Rica's Ministry of Agriculture sets specific sanitary and phytosanitary requirements and attestations. Specific phytosanitary attestations and requirements for products of plant-origin are available [online](#) under "Consulta de requisitos fitosanitarios para la importación" (content is only available in Spanish). Exporters can also see product specific requirements and attestations by visiting APHIS' [Phytosanitary Export Database](#). The specific attestations and requirements for animal-origin products are available online at the following [SENASA](#) website.

Products imported for the first time may require development of specific import requirements, including a risk analysis, which could take considerable time.

Please note that, as indicated in the Costa Rican regulations, the requirements are subject to periodic revision and amendment. Costa Rican authorities provide Costa Rican importers with the most current attestation requirements when the importers submit an import permit request. Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements may also change because of specific disease outbreaks or changes in the sanitary status in the country of origin.

For meat products the Ministry of Agriculture has agreed with USDA on country-specific requirements. Those requirements and attestations can be found in the [FSIS Export Library](#). For import and registration requirements for other products (e.g., agrochemicals, animal feeds, food products, etc.) please refer to the 2024 FAIRS Country Report.

#### **Section IV. Government Certificate's Legal Entry Requirements**

When a plant-origin product arrives, it must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the U.S. competent authority attesting the product complies with the requirements established in the import permit. Three documents – the Customs Clearance Authorization form (FAD by its Spanish acronym), the import permit, and the sanitary or phytosanitary export certificate – in addition to any other customs documents are submitted to Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG) officials at the port of entry. The import permit is valid for 30 days and can be applied only to the individual shipment for which it was requested. Please refer to the Export Certificate Matrix in Section I for the specific type of export certificate required by product. The MAG official will proceed to inspect the product at the port (including taking samples for testing, if necessary) and authorize entry into the country once all requirements have been verified.

Costa Rica does not accept suppliers' or manufacturers' export declarations or State government certificates as proof of compliance with import requirements. Certification must be issued by an official federal entity (e.g., FDA, AMS, FSIS, APHIS, NOAA, etc.).

#### **Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements**

Costa Rica only requires the certificates described above for the importation of plant, animal and processed food products.

The Costa Rican government does not require attestation of radioactivity for imports.

#### **Appendix I. Electronic Copy or Outline of Each Export Certificate**

The Customs Clearance Authorization Form (FAD) requires the following information:

- Name, address, and telephone number of the importer
- Importer's identification number
- Invoice number (optional)
- Name and address of supplier in country of origin
- Estimated arrival date of the product
- Expiration date of the certificate (it is valid for 30 days after it is issued)
- Name and address of the consignee (the name of the importer is valid as well)
- Bill of lading

- Shipping port and port of arrival
- Type of product and type of packaging

**Attachments:**

No Attachments