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Report Highlights:

Bulgaria acceded to the European Union (EU) in 2007 and follows EU directives and regulations pertaining to food safety, quality, and standards. This report outlines legislation regarding U.S. food-product exports to Bulgaria, particularly those rules which differ from EU legislation. This report should be read in conjunction with the U.S. Mission to the EU (USEU) Office of Agricultural Affairs' (OAA) 2022 EU FAIRS report. Additional updates and other relevant information can be found on the FAS Europe website.

NOTE 1: English translations of hyperlinks with an asterisk may be requested from FAS/Sofia.
 NOTE 2: The page of the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency was under construction at time of publishing of this report.

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DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria 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 because of policy changes since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information regarding 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.**

Executive Summary

Bulgaria is a small but growing market for U.S.-origin food and beverage exports. It also shares borders and international ports of entry with non-EU countries, including Turkey, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Bulgaria uses international Black Sea ports, as well as ports of entry in neighboring Greece and

Romania, to import food and agricultural products. Significant food and agricultural products are also shipped overland from western EU ports of entry, notably the Netherlands and Germany.

Bulgaria acceded to the EU in 2007 and follows all relevant EU directives, regulations, and obligations. EU directives require Member States to harmonize national laws accordingly. The following report outlines legislation applicable to U.S. food exports to Bulgaria, particularly those requirements which differ from EU regulations. Exporters should note that when EU-wide legislation is incomplete, absent, or open for interpretation, Bulgarian national laws may apply.

On May 20, 2020, the European Commission (EC) published its ‘Farm to Fork Strategy’ which forecasts regulatory changes that will impact EU food labeling legislation through 2025. New requirements are expected to be adopted by the EU, including food sustainability labeling, animal welfare labeling, additional origin labeling, marketing standards for fishery and aquaculture products, nutrient profiles, and mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labeling.

In 2020 Bulgaria completed a major update of its Food Act, designed to better harmonize Bulgarian food regulations with EU standards, and officials approved several implementing regulations of the new Act. Since March 2021, however, Bulgaria has been in a political stalemate and has held four national Parliamentary elections, as well as a Presidential election. The last Parliamentary elections were held in October 2022, and political negotiations for a ruling coalition are ongoing. Since early August 2022 Bulgaria has been run by an interim Cabinet which will likely stay in office into early 2023 when a new permanent Cabinet is established, or new elections are scheduled.

Most Parliaments elected in 2021 had short lives of a few weeks, though the Parliament elected in November 2021 was in place for 8 months. In the meantime, senior policymakers had to address several crises, such as the Russian invasion in Ukraine, an energy deficit, galloping inflation, and pandemic challenges. For this reason, legislative and regulatory affairs were almost frozen. It remains to be seen if the currently elected Parliament will have the time and ability to address any pending agriculture/food-related legislative or regulatory reforms. It is believed that issues such as energy diversification, security, and economic recovery will have a higher priority in the political agenda, and no major changes are likely to occur in food legislation.

Section I. Food Laws

The EU’s approach to food safety includes all sectors of the food and feed chain. [General Food Law Regulation 178/2002](#) establishes the basic regulatory framework, including the [precautionary principle](#), and sets out requirements and procedures related to food safety and crisis management. The regulation on harmonized food control, [Regulation 2017/625](#) became applicable in 2019. In June 2019, [Regulation 2019/1381](#) on transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain, amending the General Food Law, was published in the EU’s Official Journal. This regulation covers food additives, smoke flavoring, food contact materials, food enzymes, flavorings, and novel foods.

The regulations on general food law, food and feed control, and food and feed hygiene make up the body of the EU’s food safety laws. Revisions of existing EU food regulations or new regulations apply the principles contained in these framework regulations (see more details [here](#) and the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report).

Bulgarian Food Law

In June 2020 Bulgaria passed the [Food Act](#)*, a major regulatory update regarding the food industry and trade. The Act's main objective was to more closely harmonize with EU legislation, as well as to achieve better food traceability and consumer protection. The Act introduced regulations for online trade that were previously unregulated. It also levied new taxes on business operators, including vehicle registrations for transporting certain food categories, and enforced new production and trade requirements for baby food, food supplements, and therapeutic foods. Authorities continue to develop the Food Act's implementing regulations. Most of the new implementing regulations under the Food Act are expected to be available by early 2023.

Other major legislation applicable to imported food products can be found in the [Veterinary Medical Act](#)*, including the latest amendments adopted on August 11, 2020. Imports of raw materials and foods of animal origin are regulated by this legislation. Another law which was amended in 2020 was the [Animal Husbandry Law](#)* (June 20, 2020) covering new policies in the area of genetic resources. Similar legislation was updated for the beekeeping industry ([Beekeeping Law](#), February 16, 2020, English version available upon request). Additional legislation which may have direct or indirect effect on food imports includes the [Plant Protection Law](#) (last revised July 21, 2020) and the [Feed Law](#)* (last revised July 21, 2020). In November 2021 the Ministry of Health updated the regulation about laboratory control and analysis of foods ([Naredba #12](#)* of November 10, 2021). The following sources have a complete list of applicable EU and national legislation: EU legislation [here](#)*, and national legislation [here](#)*.

In 2017 Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, followed by Bulgaria in 2018, reported that many food products sold in their countries are of lower quality than the same brands and packaging sold in "older" Member States. In 2019 the EU adopted [Directive \(EU\) 2019/2161](#) amending the rules on better enforcement of EU consumer protection rules. The new Directive included an article stating that "any marketing of a good, in one Member State, as being identical to a good marketed in other Member States, while that good has significantly different composition or characteristics, unless justified by legitimate and objective factors" shall be regarded as misleading. In Bulgaria, a political decision was taken to move this topic from the Ministry of Agriculture's portfolio to the Ministry of Economy. The Ministry of Economy drafted the respective [bill](#) as an amendment to the [Consumer Protection Law](#)* to transpose the EU directive. The law was amended in March 2022 ([Official Gazette #20](#)*, March 9, 2022).

Relevant Competent Authorities

The Ministry of Agriculture (MinAg) controls imports of food products for human consumption, animal feed/ingredients, and live animals not intended for direct human consumption through the Bulgarian Food Safety Administration (BFSA). Food safety is the responsibility of BFSA, which coordinates the food and feed chain control. BFSA remains the competent regulatory authority on all food imports, exports, and manufacturing, with the exception of bottled water (mineral, spring, and table water). The [BFSA website](#) lists all relevant regulations, documents, certificates, tariffs, registers, and any other information, including links to the EU regulations.

Since 2016 the [Risk Assessment Center](#) has operated as an independent agency under the direct supervision of MinAg. It is responsible for risk assessment and management and works directly with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

Section II. Labeling Requirements

In 2014 the EC's general rules on labeling, displaying, and advertising of food products became applicable by Food Information to Consumers (FIC) [Regulation \(EC\) 1169/2011](#). Details can be found [here](#) and in [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report. The standard U.S. label fails to comply with EU labeling requirements, and U.S. exporters are strongly advised to consult with their importers regarding information on additional Bulgarian requirements.

In March 2021 Bulgarian authorities approved a new implementing [regulation](#) related to labeling under the Food Act which fully harmonized Bulgarian regulations with the EU (Official Gazette #25 of March 26, 2021). The products should bear original labeling (not necessarily in Bulgarian) allowing proper identity and food safety checks prior to Customs clearing. The products must be properly labeled in Bulgarian (by a sticker or by translation of the original label) when placed for retail sale.

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation to:

- General Labeling Requirements
- Nutritional Labeling
- Product-Specific Labeling
- Genetically engineered (GE) products labeling [Regulation \(EC\) 1829/2003](#).

In 2020 the EC published a roadmap outlining its intention to advance a legislative proposal to revise Regulation (EU) 1169/2011. This revision will include harmonized mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling, setting of 'nutrient profiles' restricting the promotion (via nutrition and health claims) of foods that are high in fats, sugars and/or salt, extension of mandatory origin or provenance indications to certain products, and a revision of the EU rules on date marking ('use by' and 'best before'). A legislative proposal is expected in the fourth quarter of 2022.

General Labeling Requirements

As per Article 9 of FIC regulation 1169/2011 and Chapter I, Section IV of the Food Act, mandatory labeling information includes:

- Product name
- List of ingredients and quantity of certain ingredients or category of ingredients
- Allergens listed in Annex II
- Nutrition declaration
- Alcoholic content when over 1.2 percent in volume
- Net weight in packaged products
- Expiration date
- Storage and use conditions
- Use instructions when essential to make a proper use the product
- Company identification: name and address of the manufacturer or packer or seller established within the EU. If that operator is not established in the EU, the name and address of the importer
- Batch information
- Country of origin or place of provenance in accordance with the provisions of Article 26

Ingredients List

For information on ingredient lists, minimum durability and quantitative ingredients declaration (QUID), see the [2022 EU FAIRS report](#). The EC has published [guidelines](#) on the QUID requirement which explains when QUID is mandatory and which products are exempt from QUID.

Please note that dates must be given in the following order: day/month/year (if required). In the last two years, several U.S. shipments to Bulgaria were rejected entry due to non-compliant date order.

Additives and Flavorings

For information on additives and flavorings please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Allergen Labeling

Allergens must be highlighted in the list of ingredients. Please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report, as well as the EC's [Notice relating to the provision of information on substances or products causing allergies or intolerances](#), FoodDrink Europe: [Guidelines on precautionary allergen labelling](#), and [Allergen Labeling – Food Safety Authority Ireland](#).

Origin Labeling (Country of Origin Labeling/COOL)

Please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report, FAS/USEU's [website](#), and FoodDrink Europe's (EU Food and Drink Industry Confederation) [Guidance on Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/775](#) (May 2020).

The Bulgarian [Food Act](#) introduced two new labels for local foods (see [GAIN](#)). The first is “Produced in Bulgaria,” and it means farm products produced in the country, namely crops, livestock products, and wild-caught fish and game. The second term is “Product from Bulgaria,” relating to products whose main ingredient is produced in Bulgaria and all stages of the production process take place in the country.

Language Requirements

Article 15 of FIC Regulation 1169/2011 stipulates that the mandatory information be provided in “a language easily understood by the consumers of the Member States where the food is marketed.” Bulgarian is the official language in Bulgaria. The Government of Bulgaria (GOB) permits multi-language labeling and stickers, although one of the languages must be Bulgarian. Specific rules on stickers to provide mandatory labeling information are not included in FIC regulation 1169/2011. U.S. manufacturers or exporters are encouraged to contact their importer to learn the applicable labeling requirements.

Nutritional Declaration

Between 2020 and 2022 Mondelez International, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and Unilever in Bulgaria began voluntary labeling of their products using the Evolved Nutrition Label (NutriInform) to test consumer perception. It is unknown if other companies will join this industry initiative. Bulgaria does not officially support any of the currently used schemes in the EU. In 2022 FoodDrinks Bulgaria organized several discussions with industry and regulators on available front-of-pack nutritional declaration options. Most food industry groups had a neutral opinion about the EU schemes and stated

that such labeling should be voluntary and not mandatory. The conclusion was that “there are no unhealthy foods, there are unhealthy diets.”

For additional information on EU nutritional declaration regulations see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Health /Nutritional Claims Labeling

Nutritional Claims

The Annex to [Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation 1924/2006](#) lists the authorized EU nutrition claims and conditions of use. Nutritional claims that are not included in the annex are not allowed.

Health Claims

EU rules on the use of health claims are set out in [Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation 1924/2006](#), [Regulation 432/2012](#), [Commission Implementing Decision 2013/63](#), and [Regulation 353/2008](#). Bulgaria follows these regulations. For more information visit the FAS/EU website on [Nutrition and Health Claims](#) and the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Alcoholic Beverages

In June 2019, the European spirits sector signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) and committed to *voluntarily* include caloric information on labels and online ingredient and nutritional information. The Bulgarian distilled spirits industry joined the voluntary EU-industry MOU in 2022. On September 5, 2019, the European beer industry also signed an [MOU](#) and committed to *voluntarily* inform consumers on ingredient and nutrition information. Please, see details on the Brewers of Europe’s [website](#). Under the MOU, Bulgarian brewers follow voluntary nutritional labeling for beer. For more information on alcoholic beverages please see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report and GAIN Report: [European Commission Publishes Roadmap on Revision of Labeling Rules for Alcoholic Beverages](#).

Other Specific Labeling Requirements

FIC Regulation 1169/2011 sets out horizontal rules applicable to all products. Sectoral or “vertical” legislation exists for various products. For labeling rules on minimum durability, warnings on labels, quantitative ingredients declaration and for minimum front sizes on labels see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Genetically Engineered (GE) Foods: The Bulgarian [Food Act](#) (Chapter III, Section IV) transposed all EU requirements for GE food labeling (see [GAIN](#)) and introduced stricter labeling rules regarding the font size and label size for such foods.

Bulgaria has a centralized system for testing and controlling the unauthorized presence of GE products in the feed and food. The Food Act bans GE ingredients and GE products in baby foods regardless of their safety evaluation.

Additional information on GE foods can be found [here](#) and in the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Organic Foods: A new [EU Regulation \(Regulation \(EU\) 2018/848\)](#) on organic production and labeling was adopted in May 2018 and entered into force on January 1, 2022. For more information see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report, as well as EC [website](#).

Organic Wine: For information on the EU’s organic wine legislation, including labeling requirements, see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Meat: For information on the EU’s meat legislation, including labeling requirements, see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Fish and Seafood: [Regulation 1379/2013](#) sets out labeling rules for fishery and aquaculture products listed in Annex I to the regulation. On May 20, 2020, the EC announced that it would propose a revision of the EU marketing standards for agricultural, fishery, and aquaculture products. Detailed information on shipping seafood and fishery products to the EU is provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce [here](#), and information on EU regulations can be found in the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Trans Fats and Gluten-free Labeling: In April 2019 [Regulation 2019/649](#) amending Annex III to [Regulation 1925/2006](#) on trans fats was published and entered into force in May 2019. The regulation sets a maximum limit of at 2 grams per 100 grams of fat in food intended for consumers. Commission [Implementing Regulation 828/2014](#), applicable since July 20, 2016, sets out conditions for using “gluten-free” and “very low gluten” statements on food labels.

Wine: For detailed information on the EU’s wine legislation, including labeling requirements, see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report and the EC’s [website](#).

U.S.-EU Wine Agreement: For information on the U.S.-EU Wine Agreement see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Spirit Drinks: For information on EU spirit drinks regulations see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Beer: There is no beer-specific EU-harmonized legislation. All alcoholic beverages must comply with allergen labeling requirements. Bulgaria’s beer industry lists ingredients on a voluntary basis.

Special Use Foods: For information on special use foods, including frozen foodstuffs, fruit juice, and honey, see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Plant-based Meat and Dairy Alternatives

Bulgarian consumers are sensitive regarding correct labeling information on dairy products, while the dairy industry is split on this issue. Several manufacturers produce less expensive dairy products, mainly cheese, which contain more plant oils/proteins and less milk and have a good market niche. Due to pressure from industry and consumer protection advocates to regulate the market by clear differentiation of the two types of products, Bulgaria approved a [regulation*](#) related to dairy products in November 2021. Such dairy products, including cheese, butter, and milk, cannot be labeled, advertised, or presented in any way with dairy names. These products should be sold in retail only packaged, on separate displays or shelves, and under a general category called “imitating products.” Imitating products exclude plant-based dairy alternatives that contain up to 10 percent milk.

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations

Size and Content

The Bulgarian Food Act transposes two EU Directives related to the weight and volume of certain prepackaged products ([Council Directive 76/211/EEC](#)) which establishes nominal quantities for pre-packed products. [Directive 2007/45/EC](#) abolished mandatory pack sizes at both EU and national levels. Mandatory quantities for wines and spirits are included in the Annex to Directive 2007/45/EC. See [here](#) and [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report for specific information.

Packaging Waste Management

[Council Directive 94/62/EC](#) provides for measures aimed at limiting the production of packaging waste and promoting recycling, re-use, and other forms of waste recovery. A well-known and widely used recycling program is the German “green dot” system. More information can be found on the Packaging Recovery Organization Europe website which provides easy access to all Green Dot systems in Europe (www.pro-e.org). See [here](#) and [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report for specific information.

Reducing Packaging-Related Waste

In 2018, the EC approved a regulation to ban the use of select plastic products which could also affect food packaging. [Directive \(EU\) 2019/904](#) targets reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, such as single-use plastics, and went into effect on July 3, 2021. Other provisions in the Directive, such as the extended producer responsibility, will take effect by the end of 2024.

Bulgaria was late in transposition of this directive, and the respective [regulation](#)* was approved in November 2021. Business operators have a detailed time schedule for meeting the mandates of the regulation in stages starting from 2022 until 2030.

On March 11, 2020, the EU published its [Circular Economy Action Plan](#) which aims to support a circular economy. The EC plans to propose a new legislation on packaging, packaging waste, bioplastics, and food contact materials, please see [here](#).

Materials in Contact with Foodstuffs

A summary of EU and Bulgarian legislation, as well as guidance documents and Bulgarian contact information with regard to the submission of applications for authorization can be found [here](#). Chapter II, Section II of the Bulgarian [Food Act](#) transposes current EU legislation about packaging and materials in contact with foodstuffs. For additional information on materials in contact with foodstuffs see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section IV. Food Additive Regulations

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation regarding food additives (see [USEU website section on additives](#)). The EU’s “Package on Food Improvement Agents” includes four regulations: [Regulation 1331/2008](#) establishing a common authorization procedure for food additives, food enzymes, and food flavorings, [Regulation 1332/2008 on food enzymes](#), [Regulation 1333/2008 on food additives](#) and [Regulation 1334/2008 on flavorings](#). Please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report for more details.

Additives (Including Colors and Sweeteners)

Bulgaria generally adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on additives. For information on additives see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Re-Evaluation Program

Bulgaria generally adheres to EU-harmonized legislation. For information on the re-evaluation program see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Flavorings

Bulgaria generally adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on flavorings. For information on flavorings see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Enzymes

Bulgaria generally adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on enzymes. For information on enzymes see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants

Tolerance for pesticide residues were harmonized in the EU in 2008. Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on pesticides and contaminants.

Pesticides

[European Parliament and Council Regulation 1107/2009](#) established the rules for approvals of plant protection products (PPPs). PPPs (also referred to as 'pesticides') must contain at least one approved active substance. Only PPPs containing approved active substances as per the list established in [Commission implementing Regulation 540/2011](#) may be authorized for use in the EU. Before any PPP can be placed on the market or used, it must be authorized by Bulgarian authorities. According to Annex I of Regulation 1107/2009, the EU is divided in three different zones. Bulgaria is included in the Zone C (South) along with Spain, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, and Portugal. [Directive 2009/128](#) on the sustainable use of pesticides is also part of the so-called Pesticides Package. For more information see [here](#). Once Bulgaria approves a PPP, it can become mutually recognized and authorized within the EU.

Maximum Residue Levels (MRL)

Bulgaria generally adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on MRL. The Bulgarian National Pesticides Plan 2018-2022 can be found [here](#) and [here](#). In 2019, Bulgaria approved [amended legislation*](#) (Decree 310, Official Gazette#12 of 2019) regarding MRLs in feed (lead, mercury, melamine, and decoquinatate MRL) transposing [Directive 2002/32/EC](#) and [Regulation EC 2017/2229](#).

The EU early alert system provides information on ongoing and upcoming reviews for active substances and MRLs that are of interest to U.S. stakeholders. For more information, please see [here](#) and the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Import Tolerance

Information on import tolerances is available in "[Pesticide Use and Food Safety](#)" guide published by the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA). All MRLs, including import tolerances, apply EU wide since September 2008. The application form for an import tolerance can be found [here](#).

Ongoing Review

Currently, Bulgarian authorities are still discussing pesticide reduction targets (as per the EC's F2F and Biodiversity Strategies) with the agricultural stakeholders. The farming community is generally not well informed about what to expect or how this will affect their daily work. Application of pesticides is believed to be lower than in Western Europe, and the industry view is that the reduction targets should be adjusted for each country depending on its starting level.

On Official Controls of MRLs, please see [here](#) and the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Contaminants

Bulgaria applies EU-harmonized legislation regarding food contaminants. Please see USEU website [section on contaminants](#) and EU- wide harmonized maximum levels for contaminants are set in the Annex of [Commission Regulation 1881/2006](#). The currently applicable consolidated Annex of [Commission Regulation 1881/2006](#) will be updated in the near future to reflect the new maximum levels applicable from Jan 1, 2023, onwards for hydrocyanic acid (published in [Commission Regulation 2022/1364](#)), delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol ([Commission Regulation EU 2022/1393](#)), and the new maximum levels for Ochratoxin A in pistachios (published in [Commission Regulation \(EU\) 2020/1370](#)). Please, see [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report for more details.

Official Controls

For information on official controls please review the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Aflatoxin in Tree Nuts

In April 2015, the EU approved the pre-export checks (PEC) program for U.S. almonds. U.S. almonds were included in the Annex to [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2015/949](#) which lists all EU approved pre-export check programs. The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service began issuing PEC almond certificates on August 1, 2015.

Following the publication of [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1269](#) on July 14, 2017, the EU no longer recognized the U.S. peanut pre-export program. While there are no restrictions on U.S. peanut exports, shipments no longer benefit from the reduced testing level for aflatoxin upon entry. On July 25, 2019, U.S. peanuts were also included in the list of products/origins subject to increased import controls. The mandatory testing level for U.S. peanuts is laid out in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#). Bulgaria must test 20 percent of all incoming peanut shipments.

On April 1, 2015, the U.S. list of products/origins subject to increased import controls under [Commission Regulation \(EC\) No 669/2009](#) included U.S. pistachios. On July 25, 2019, U.S. peanuts were also included on this EU list. The mandatory testing levels for U.S. pistachios and peanuts are laid out in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#). Bulgaria, as well as other Member States, now tests 10 percent of all incoming shipments for both products.

For additional information on aflatoxin testing and certification, please see: [PEC Program Manual; Pistachio Export Aflatoxin Reporting \(PEAR\) Program](#) and [here](#).

Residues in Animals and Animal Products

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on residues in animals and animal products. For information on residues in animals and animal products please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section VI. Other Requirements, Regulations and Registration Measures

An overview of all U.S. authorities that issue the legally required certificates for export to the EU is available on [USDA EU website](#). The websites of each of those authorities provide detailed and up-to-date information on the specific product certificates under their legal authority. Additional certification and documentation requirements can be found [here](#).

For additional information please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Composite Products

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on composite products. For information on composite products please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Inspections

The BFSA is responsible for national-level inspections and enforcement of food and feed regulations. Products can be checked upon entry or at all further stages of marketing. There are no known pre-shipment testing requirements to be met or inspections to be conducted prior to shipment. Violations of EU food and feed legislation are reported through the [RASFF portal](#). Products of animal origin must be presented at EU border inspection posts (BIP) and submitted to an import control following prior notification of the shipment. [Commission Decision 2009/821/EC](#) establishes a list of EU BIPs approved to carry out veterinary checks on animals and animal products from third countries. A full list of Bulgarian BIPs can be found [here](#). For facility and product registrations, see the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards

Novel Foods

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on novel foods. For information on novel foods please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Traditional Food from non-EU countries

For information on traditional food from non-EU countries please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Dietetic Foods

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on dietetic foods. For information on dietetic foods please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Food Supplements

The Bulgarian [Food Act](#) (Chapter III, Section III) transposes EU legislation and contains special provisions regarding food supplements marketing. This includes a new set of requirements for e-commerce sales of food supplements, which have not been regulated to date. The BFSA requires registration and approval of each food supplement before its release to the market. A detailed implementing regulation about food supplements was approved on December 8, 2021.

Seafood

Detailed information on shipping seafood and fishery products to the EU is provided on the U.S. Department of Commerce's [website](#) and the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Information on mandatory EU labeling requirements as well as reports on the feasibility of an EU eco-label can be found in the EC's Fisheries [website](#).

Irradiated Foodstuffs

Chapter III, Section V of the Bulgarian [Food Act](#) regulates irradiated foodstuffs and transposes the EU legislation. To date, Bulgaria has no authorizations of food and food ingredients which may be treated with ionizing radiation (see [link](#)). For additional information on irradiated foodstuffs please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Pet Food

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on pet food. For information on pet food please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Vegetarian and Vegan Foods, and Plant-Based Meat and/or Dairy Alternatives

For information on vegetarian and vegan foods, and plant-based meat and/or dairy alternatives please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section VIII. Trademarks, Brand Names, and Intellectual Property Rights

Trademarks

In the EU, trademarks can be registered at the national, regional or EU level. Rules on the protection of trademarks in the EU are set in EU [Directive 2015/2436](#). [Commission Implementing Regulation 2018/626](#) sets out detailed rules on application procedures. [Commission Delegated Regulation 2018/625](#) sets out procedural rules on opposition and revocation of EU trademarks. Trademarks registered at the national level are protected in the respective state. Applications for registering under the Community Trademark Register must be submitted to the Patent Office of Bulgaria (see contact information below under Annex I).

A Community Trademark gives the owner protection in all Member States with one single registration. Additional information on EU trademark criteria can be found on the EC's [website](#) and in the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Designation of Origin and Protected Geographic Indications

Bulgaria's lists of protected food names is available [here](#). Bulgaria has six registered TSG products (meat products), one registered PDO product (honey), and two registered PGI products (rose oil and a meat product). The country submitted one more application for TSG status for a meat product. In 2021 and 2022 Bulgaria also applied for PDO status for a type of tea, cheese and yogurt.

In July 2018 Bulgaria amended the [Law on Trademarks and Geographic Indications](#) (Official Gazette 61/2018). The amendment aimed to complete harmonization of the local legislation with the EU [European Parliament and Council Regulation 1151/2012](#). Before this change, Bulgaria maintained a national protection on certain geographic indications and designations of origin of food products (for example, yogurt) which was not in compliance with the regulation 1151/2012 since such protection is possible only at the EU level.

Registration of Geographic Indications for Spirit Beverages

Regulation (EU) [2019/787](#) updates the definitions of various spirits beverage categories. It also clarifies and changes the rules on the protection of GIs, including registration. On July 29, 2021, the EC published Delegated Regulation (EU) [2021/1235](#) and Implementing Regulation (EU) [2021/1236](#) concerning GIs applications for registration of spirits beverages. As of November 2022, Bulgaria has 54 wines registered under PDO scheme and 12 spirit drinks under GI.

Section IX. Import Procedures

Union Customs Code (UCC)

The EU is a customs union, and all Member States uniformly apply import duties on goods from outside the EU based on the tariff classification of goods and the customs value. Once goods are cleared, they can move freely throughout the EU. The UCC, along with the implementing provisions, became applicable on May 1, 2016. In the case of Bulgaria, the Customs Agency under the Ministry of Finance is the responsible entity. Contact information for the Customs Agency can be found in Appendix I.

In 2017, the EC launched the “[Customs Decisions System](#)”, a new pan-EU electronic system to facilitate permission to import goods into the EU. Importers in Bulgaria can use the same portal and exchange applications between all the relevant customs authorities.

Customs Clearance

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on customs clearance. For information on EU customs clearance please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Import Duties

Bulgaria adheres to EU-harmonized legislation on import duties. For information on EU import duties please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Import Documentation and Process

Agricultural products are examined when they enter Bulgaria by the Bulgarian BIP. The TRACES NT system was applied in December 2019 with the new EU import rule and official control regulations. All BIPs can execute both veterinary and phytosanitary control and inspect all products for human consumption. The EC’s [Trade Helpdesk](#) offers a complete overview of documents needed for customs clearance.

In Bulgaria there is no official requirement for import documentation to be translated into Bulgarian. The most used language by border inspectors is English. Translation in Bulgarian, though, can speed up the safety and customs clearing process. Product samples for trade shows and/or not for commercial distribution are subject to the same import regulations as all other food products.

U.S. exporters interested in introducing a product into the Bulgarian market should obtain local representation and/or a local importer/distributor to gain knowledge of the market, up-to-date information, and guidance on trade laws and business practices, sales contacts, and market development expertise. Please contact FAS/Sofia for comprehensive information about local market entry and specific regulations and practices.

Other Certification and Testing Requirements

For information on other certification and testing requirements please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Section X. Trade Facilitation

Advance Rulings

For information on advance rulings and the pre-clearance program please refer to the [2022 EU FAIRS](#) report.

Electronic Certificates

The Official Controls Regulation ([Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the acceptance of electronic certificates using the EU's Integrated Management System for Official Controls (IMSOC). For plant products, Bulgaria can receive U.S. electronic phytosanitary certificates sent via the Hub, created by the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC). For other commodities, currently no connection exists between IMSOC and the respective U.S. systems the U.S. Government Agencies uses to issue electronic certificates. In the absence of such a connection, paper certificates will satisfy the EU requirement for an original certificate with an ink signature.

Import Control Fees

The [Official Controls Regulation](#) provides the legal basis for the financing of import controls. Mandatory fees are charged to operators for certain official controls, including on import controls of animals, products of animal origin, germinal products, animal byproducts, composite products, hay and straw, plants, and plant products. Operators also have to pay for the border controls performed on food and feed of non-animal origin listed in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1793](#). Specific fee information can be found [here](#).

Average Release Time for Products – Common Delays

Bulgaria's ports are organized efficiently to perform customs formalities as well as the necessary animal and plant health inspections. Incomplete or incorrect certification generally leads to delays.

Duplicative Inspections

Inspections on imported foods are concentrated at the EU external borders. Once goods have passed inspection and customs duties are paid, they can move freely throughout the EU. However, official controls remain at any stage of distribution in the EU. Due to its geographic location, Bulgaria is an external EU border with eight BIPs at the border with Turkey, Serbia, and North Macedonia. Bulgaria is often used as a door for commercial overland traffic from the Turkey and the Middle East, and for international ocean freight from the Black Sea ports of Varna and Bourgas.

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Key Agency Contacts:

Ministry of Agriculture

Blvd. Hristo Botev 55 Sofia 1040

Tel.: (+359) 2-985-11858

Fax: (+359) 2-981-7955

Website: <http://www.mzh.government.bg>

Ministry of Health

Sqr. Sveta Nedelya 5, Sofia 1000

Tel.: (+359) 2-981-0111

E-mail: press@mh.government.bg

Direction Public Health

Tel.: (+359) 2-9301-252

<http://www.mh.government.bg/bg/kontakti/>

Website: <http://mh.government.bg>

Bulgarian Food Safety Agency

Bul. Pencho Slaveikov 15A, Sofia 1606

Tel.: (+359) 2-915-98-20

E-mail: bfsa@bfsa.gov

Fax: (+359) 2-954-9593

Website: <http://www.bfsa.bg>

Customs Agency, Ministry of Finance

Str. Rakovski 47, Sofia 1202

Tel.: (+359) 2-9594-210

E-mail: pr@customs.bg

Fax: (+359) 2-9859-4528

Website: <http://customs.bg>

National Drug Agency

8 Damyan Gruev Str., Sofia 1303

Tel.: (+359) 2-8903-555

E-mail: bda@bda.bg

Fax: (+359) 2-8903-434;

Website: <http://en.bda.bg>

National Center of Public Health and Analyses

Acad. Ivan Evst. Geshov 15 blvd Sofia 1431

Tel.: (+359) 2-8056-444

E-mail: ncpha@ncpha.government.bg

Fax: (+359) 2-9541-211

Website: <http://ncpha.government.bg>

Bulgarian Institute for Standardization

1797 Sofia, Lachezar Stanchev" Str. Nr 13

"Izgreve" Complex

Tel.: (+359) 2-8174-504

Website: <https://bds-bg.org/bg/>

Fax: (+359) 2-8174-535

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Executive Agency Bulgarian Accreditation Services

52 A "Dr. G. M. Dimitrov" Blvd. 1797 Sofia, Bulgaria

Tel/Fax: (+359) 2-8735-303

E-mail: ea_bas@abv.bg; office@nab-bas.bg Website: <http://www.nab-bas.bg/bg/>

Republic of Bulgarian Patent Office

Sofia 1040, 52 b

Dr. G.M. Dimitrov Blvd.

Tel. (359-2) 9701 + extension number

Fax: *(359-2) 870 83 25

E-mail: bpo@bpo.bg; <http://www.bpo.bg>

Major Bulgarian Trade Associations

American Chamber of Commerce in Bulgaria

Business Park Sofia, bld. 2, fl. 6. Sofia 1766 Bulgaria

Tel.: (+359) 2-9742

Fax: (+359) 2-9742-741

E-mail: amcham@amcham.bg

Website: <http://amcham.bg>

Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

1058 Sofia, 9 Iskar Street

Tel.: (+359) 2-811-740

Fax: (+359) 2-987-3209

E-mail: bcci@bcci.bg

Website: <http://www.bcci.bg>

Bulgarian Industrial Association

1000 Sofia, 16-20 Alabin Street

Tel.: (+359) 2-932-0911

Fax: (+359) 2-987-2604

E-mail: office@bia-bg.com

Website: <https://www.bia-bg.com/> **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Bulgarian Association of Food and Beverage Industries

1606 Sofia, 29 Vladaiska Street

Tel.: (+359) 2-952-0989

Fax: (+359) 2-952-0989

E-mail: bafdi@mb.bia-bg.com

Website: <http://www.bia-bg.com/member/26>

Food and Drink Bulgaria

1113 Sofia, 23 A Bl 56 Lulyakova Gradina Street

Tel: (+359) 889 202 265

E-mail: iana.ivanova@fooddrink.bg

Website: <https://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/member/food-drink-bulgaria/>

Spirits Bulgaria

1618 Sofia, 40 Bratia Bukston Street, floor 5

Tel: (+359) 2 9566090

E-mail: office@spirits.bg

Website: <http://www.spirits.bg/>

Bulgarian Association for Modern Trade

Sofia 1756, Iztok area, 5“Lachezar Stanchev“ Street

Sofarma Business Towers, Tower B, fl. 4, office 1

Tel.: (+359) 8-957-7746 and (+359) 2-4433-444.

E-mail: office@moderntrade.bg

Website: <http://www.moderntrade.bg/>

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:

Delegation of the European Union to the United States

2300 M Street, NW

Washington, DC 20037

Tel.: (+1) 202-862-9500

Fax: (+1) 202-429-1766

United States Mission to the European Union

Office of Agricultural Affairs

27 Boulevard du Regent

1000 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: (+32) 2-508-2760

Fax: (+32) 2-511-0918

E-mail: AgUSEUBrussels@fas.usda.gov

Website: <http://www.usda-eu.org>

European Commission Mission to Bulgaria

24, Rakovsky St., 1000 Sofia

Tel.: (+359) 2-933-5252

Fax: (+359) 2-933-5233

E-mail: COMM-REP-SOF@ec.europa.eu

Attachments:

No Attachments