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**Report Name:** Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards  
Country Report

**Country:** Honduras

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**Report Highlights:**

The National Plant, Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASA) has uploaded on its website the import requirements for plant products. The Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA) solicited comments on its proposal for the new “Sanitary Control for Food and Beverages Regulation”, which will be discussed with industry in early 2020. This report contains updates to all relevant food regulations, including updated links to government sources.

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major U.S. agricultural exports to Honduras are: soybean meal, corn, wheat, rice, pork and pork products, dairy products, prepared food, wine and beer, poultry meat and products and other intermediate products.

The Honduran Government (GOH) main regulatory agency responsible for food and agricultural import and exports is the National Plant, Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASA). Recent developments in SENASA's regional office located in the second largest city of the country, is that they are able to issue import and export permits. This facilitates a more expedite import process to a large importing sector. SENASA has also uploaded in their website, the import requirements for plant products. SENASA is working towards having the importers submit the import permit application and all the supporting documents on-line. In addition, to provide importers the approved certificate electronically as well. SENASA is expecting to have the import permit process on-line in 2020.

The Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA) has improve infrastructure and implemented procedures to expedite sanitary registration of food and beverage products. ARSA has in their website the information required to request a sanitary registration number. ARSA received comments about their proposal for the new "Sanitary Control for Food and Beverages Regulation". The regulation was not updated since 2005. The proposed new regulation will be shared and discussed with industry in early 2020.

#### Section I. Food Laws:

The regulatory environment in Honduras related to the enforcement of practices and import policies for food and agricultural products are governed by the GOH's National Plant, Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASA) and the Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA).

SENASA establishes regulations, procedures, and oversees compliance regarding plant, and animal health, and food safety of agricultural products. SENASA issues import permits for plant, animal, consumer ready food products, process products with meat content, agricultural chemicals, veterinary products, and inputs used in food processing for human or animal consumption that enter Honduras.

ARSA issues sanitary licenses, product registrations, and other sanitary authorizations for food and beverages, medicines, natural products, cosmetics, medical devices and hygiene products imported into Honduras. ARSA oversees supervision, review, control, surveillance and inspection of products sold at the retail and wholesale level.

In order to expedite food and beverages product registration, ARSA eliminated the laboratory test requirement. This requirement was substituted by an affidavit signed by the legal representative of the importing company. The laboratory analysis is done during the surveillance stage, when the products are in the market.

SENASA and ARSA generally follow World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreements (CAFTA-DR) and CODEX Alimentarius regulations and guidelines.

Import policies and practices are also governed by Central America regulations established by the Council of Economic and Trade Integration Ministers (COMIECO). COMIECO as part of the Central American Secretariat of Economic Integration (SIECA) is assigned to establish economic integration policies for the region. COMIECO agrees upon unanimously on Resolutions that approve Central America Technical Regulations (RTCA in Spanish). The RTCA's have as objectives the harmonization of rules of origin of goods, tariffs, sanitary registration and others. The information in the RTCAs is in Spanish. Resolutions and RTCAs can be found at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=796>

Food and agricultural regulations and standards established in Honduras applies to all products equally to domestic and foreign suppliers.

U.S. facilities do not need to be registered with a Honduran regulatory authority prior to export. Under the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), Honduras recognizes the U.S. inspection services as equivalent. This equivalence eliminates the requirement of a certification by Honduras of the U.S. plant to export to the Honduran market.

Major food and agricultural RTCAs governing imported foodstuff are the following:

**Food. Microbiological Criteria for Food Safety**

RTCA 67.04.50:08 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 243-2009 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1498>

**Processed Food and Beverages Industry. Good Manufacturing Practices**

RTCA 67.01.33:06 can be found in the Annex 4 of Resolution 176-2006 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1981>

**Processed Food and Beverages. Fruit Nectars**

RTCA 67.04.48:08 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 226-2008 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2067.04.48:08>

#### **Pasteurized Milk:**

RTCA 67.04.66:12 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 337-2014 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2067.04.66:12>

#### **Dairy Products. Cheeses. Specifications**

RTCA 67.04.70:14 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 366-2015 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2067.04.70:14>

#### **Agricultural Inputs. Requirements for the Production and Commercialization of Certified Basic Grain and Soy Seeds.**

RTCA 65.05.53:10 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 259-2010 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1953>

#### **Flours. Fortified Wheat Flour. Specifications**

RTCA 67.01.15:07 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 201-2007 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2067.01.15:07#>

#### **Prepared Food and Beverages. Oils and Fats. Specifications**

RTCA 67.04.40:07 can be found in the Annex of Resolution 215-2007 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1968>

#### **Requirements for Import of Processed Food for Exhibition and Tasting**

RTCA 67.01.32:06 can be found in the Annex 3 of Resolution 176-2006 at:  
<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1980>

As is the case with limited resources, enforcement of existing laws and regulations for the GOH is challenging. At times, there is lack of the basic infrastructure, necessary human and economic resources to adequately enforce its regulations, particularly, in legal compliance during commercialization.

## **Section II. Labeling Requirements:**

### **General Requirements**

The RTCA that governs general labeling is: 67.01.07:10 General Labeling for Pre-packed Foods can be found at: <https://www.sieca.int/?s=RTCA+67.01.07:10>.

An outline of the information provided in the RTCA which must appear on an imported food product label follows:

- Name of the product
- Production date
- Expiration date
- Lot number
- List of ingredients

- Net content
- Sanitary Registration Number (SRN).
- Name and address of the manufacturer or distributor of the product
- Country of origin of the product
- If applicable “Refrigerate after opening”, “Artificial”

The standard U.S. nutritional fact panel is acceptable. The SRN is provided by ARSA. Stick-on labels can be affixed prior to retail sale.

All food products which have been treated with radiation (ionizing energy) must have specified on the label the nature of the treatment.

SENASA requests and enforces that the products display the production and expiration date, as well as the lot number on the shipping carton(s) upon arrival at the port. The dates must be provided in the Day/Month/Year format. The compliance that the products have stamped those dates is closely inspected at the ports of entry.

Stick-on labels are allowed to comply fully with labeling requirements on product information, but not to indicate the manufacturing or expiration date. The label must be translated into Spanish with the same information that is given in the foreign language label.

SENASA grants exceptions of unlabeled containers of food to be processed, labeled, or repacked at the importer’s establishment.

### **Other Specific Labeling requirements:**

#### **RTCA 67.01.60: 10 Nutritional Labeling of Pre-Packed Foods for Human Consumption of Population over Three Years Old** can be found at:

<https://www.sieca.int/index.php/download/resolucion-no-281-2012-aprueba-modificaciones-al-rtca-67-01-6010-etiquetado-nutricional-de-productos-alimenticios-preenvasados/>

The following products are excluded from specifying the expiration date:

- Alcoholic beverages containing 10 percent or more of alcohol by volume
- Bakery products, which due to their nature, are generally consumed within 24 hours of the time they were produced (it is, however, common practice for bakeries to put an expiration date on products)
- Vinegar, chewing gum, and fresh fruits and vegetables

**Liquor labeling:** Resolution 332-2013

<https://www.sieca.int/?s=RTCA%2067.01.05:11>

### **Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:**

The GOH does not require any special packaging or limitations on container size. Shipments of food inputs waiting to be processed or repacked, do not require labeling. If they are sold as individual units at the retail sector label is required. Containers can be of plastic, metal, glass, cardboard or any other materials which comply with requirements to maintain the quality and safety of the product.

The amount of product in pre-packed foods is regulated by the following regulation:

**RTCA 01.01.11:06 Amount of product in pre-packed foods**, can be found in the Annex of Resolution 291-2012 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2001.01.11:06>

#### **Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:**

Honduras's regulatory authorities recognize the guidelines stated in CODEX, FDA and the following regulation:

**RTCA 67.04.54:10 Processed Food and Beverages: Food Additives**, can be found in the Annex of Resolution 283-2012 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=651>

When a product contains preservatives, coloring, emulsifiers and other type of food additives the label must specify the generic name or international code, purpose, and concentration of each.

ARSA accepts as safe the following seven colorings in foods:

Yellow #5	Yellow #6	Red #2	Red #3
Blue #1	Blue #2	Red #40	

U.S. exporters can obtain further information (in Spanish) on permitted or prohibited food additives at the following ARSA's e-mail: [alimentos@arsa.gob.hn](mailto:alimentos@arsa.gob.hn).

#### **Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:**

Pesticides and veterinary drugs are regulated by SENASA's Plant and Animal Health Sub-Directorates. Ministerial Decree No.642-98 establishes the requirements for registration, importation, manufacturing, formulation, re-packaging, re-bottling, transportation, storage, sale, use and management.

SENASA uses a list of pesticides approved for use in Honduras and applies the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for imported food products set forth by CODEX. If the tolerance levels are not covered by CODEX, SENASA applies the MRLs from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The importer and the pesticide must be registered with SENASA's Plant Health Sub-Directorate. SENASA follows international regulations for its registration process. An application for pesticide registration must be submitted with documents such as: Certificate of a Registered Pesticide Product issued by EPA or USDA and Certificate of Qualitative and Quantitative Composition issued by the producer or manufacturing company of the product.

In addition, other documents required are toxicological and ecotoxicological studies. After the product and the importer are registered with SENASA, the importer requests a permit from SENASA to import

the product. Among the data required for the import permit are: Pro-form invoice, location and name of the manufacturer, lot number of the product and amount to import.

U.S. exporters can obtain information on approved pesticides and allowed MRLs at SENASA's Plant Health Sub-Director's Office. Aflatoxin levels for corn in Honduras can be obtained at SENASA's Food Safety Sub-Directorate. Honduras defers to CODEX standards for aflatoxin levels on food products. Please contact SENASA, listed in Appendix I.

**RTCA 65.05.62.11 Botanical Pesticides for Agricultural Use. Requirements for Registration:** can be found in the Annex of Resolution 346-2014 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Portal/Pagina.aspx?PaginaId=1041&q=RTCA%2065.05.62.11>

Annex No.3 Commercial Registration of Botanical Pesticides:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=2029>

**RTCA 65.05.61:11 Microbiological Pesticides for Agricultural Use. Requirements for Registration** can be found in the Annex of Resolution 297-2012 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=3099>

Technical requirements for the commercial registration of microbiological pesticides for agricultural use:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=2033>

**RTCA 65.03.44:07 Pesticides. Pesticides for Domestic and Professional Use. Registration Requirements. Procedure to Recognize Registration** can be found in the Annex of Resolution 258-2010 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=1954>

**RTCA 65.03.57:10 Pesticides. Pesticides for Domestic and Professional Use. Labeling Requirements** can be found in the Annex of Resolution 273-2011 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=672>

#### **Veterinary drugs:**

Veterinary drugs are controlled by SENASA's Animal Health Sub-Directorate and the following regulations:

**RTCA 65.05.51:08 Veterinary Medicines and Related Products. Requirements for Sanitary Registration and Control** can be found in Annexes of Resolutions 257-2010, 326-2013 and 362-2015 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=696>

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=3480>

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=5185>

#### **Section VI. Other Requirements, Regulations, and Registration measures:**

Honduras does not require any inspection procedures or testing of products prior to shipment. The official certificates and documents that must accompany shipments can be found on the following

GAIN Reports for Honduras: Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) – Export Certificate Report Number HO1906, and Exporter Guide Report Number HO1907.

### **Product Registration:**

The procedures to register products produced or processed in Central America have been officially codified within Honduras with the following regulation:

**RTCA 67.01.31.07 Processed Food. Procedure to Grant Sanitary Registration and Sanitary Inscription** can be found in the Annex of Resolution 325-2013 at:

<http://www.sieca.int/Documentos/DocumentosMostrar.aspx?SegmentoId=2&DocumentoId=3479>

The RTCA above provides the regulation for issuing a Sanitary Registration Number (SRN) for processed foods to be sold at the retail and wholesale level. Processed products must have the SRN requested by the importer and issued by ARSA. Currently, the RTCA is being reviewed by the Central America countries.

As part of the registration process, ARSA reviews the product's technical and legal aspects. ARSA has established new procedures to expedite the assignment of a product registration number as follows:

- The legal representative of the company who imports or distributes it registers the product. It is not necessary to have a Lawyer. Industries that manufacture the product are also able to register the product.
- The requirement to submit a sample of the product for laboratory analysis has been eliminated. ARSA will check the food safety of the product at the market.
- The requirements for the issuance of a sanitary registration are published in their website at: <http://www.arsa.gob.hn/autorizaciones.html>
- The importer's representative should regularly check ARSA's website to review if their sanitary registration number for foods has been already processed.
- Importers could make requests of information at:  
Product registration: [consultas@arsa.gob.hn](mailto:consultas@arsa.gob.hn).  
Food and beverage product registration: [alimentos@arsa.gob.hn](mailto:alimentos@arsa.gob.hn)  
Complaints: [denuncias@arsa.gob.hn](mailto:denuncias@arsa.gob.hn)

Documents that must be submitted with the request of sanitary registration to ARSA for the registration process:

- Applicant's information
- Manufacturer's information
- Product Information
- Copy of Sanitary License or Operating Permit
- Certificate of Free Sale (CFS) or \*

\*As of October 1, 2018, FDA issues the following two new certificates to U.S. manufacturers and exporters who choose to use them.



- Certificate to a Foreign Government and
- Certificate of Exportability (for export-only food products)

For additional information contact:

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/ImportsExports/Exporting/ExportCertificates/default.htm>

- Submit an endorsement (Apostille or an “*Autentica*” – notarized document) of the signatures that appear on the CFS.
- Original label of the imported product. If the label is not in Spanish, the label must be translated into Spanish with the same information that is given in the foreign language label. The labels are reviewed by ARSA, following the technical and legal requirements of the RTCA 67.01.07:10.
- The importer will need to pay about US\$10.00 per product for the sanitary registration number. The tariff is under review and it is expected to be a new one next year.

**Sanitary Inscription:** The Sanitary Inscription is the authorization granted to an importer or distributor of a previously registered product. The sanitary registration number assigned will be the same registration number of the distributor who initially registered it. The sanitary registration number is valid for five years.

### **Central America Mutual Recognition**

CACU members agreed that for the products produced or processed in a CACU country, when a product obtains a SRN, it does not need to be registered in another. Products produced in the United States are not eligible for the registration exemption. It is important to note that the origin of the product is considered to be a CACU country if the product is processed in a CACU country, even if the raw material is not from a CACU member country.

In order to receive this CACU’s benefit, the only procedure that a CACU country has to carry out is to request a “Registration Acknowledgment” which is the same throughout Central America excluding Costa Rica. The acknowledgment lasts the length of time that the product is registered, which is five years.

### **Section VII. Other Specific Standards:**

#### **Vitamin enrichment:**

When a product contains enriched nutritious substances such as vitamins, mineral salts, and proteins the label should read: “Enriched Food Product” or “Enriched Artificial Food Product,” whichever the case may be. The label should also specify the name and the content per serving or consumption unit.

#### **Special Use Foods:**

Products that are widely used by the population, and that require added ingredients to increase their nutritional value, are properly labeled as fortified such as:

- Sugar for human consumption must be fortified with vitamin A.
- Salt must be fortified with iodine.
- Wheat flour with iron, folic acid, vitamins B1 and B2, and niacin.

## **Section VIII. Trademarks, Brand Names and Intellectual Property Rights:**

The GOH has taken actions to improve Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In 1993, Honduras passed a comprehensive IPR law. The GOH has since complied with the requirements of this legislation by creating an IPR Office within the Economic Development Secretariat.

As a signatory to the Uruguay Round agreements and member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Honduras has accepted the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) standard. In addition, Honduras has signed CAFTA-DR, which contains a chapter on IPR. To be protected under Honduran Law, trademarks must be registered with the Economic Development Secretariat. Trademark registrations are valid for 10 years starting from the registration date. “Notorious marks” are protected under the PanAmerican Convention (1917) of which Honduras is a member. Illegal registration of a notorious mark, however, must be contested in court by the original holder.

## **Section IX. Import Procedures:**

The steps and Ministries involved in the product/custom clearance process follow:

1. SENASA requires that prior to issuing an import permit, the importer that handles and stores food products of animal origin must first be registered with SENASA’s Food Safety Sub-Directorate (known as SGIA).
2. The importers of food products of animal origin should submit the import permit request to SENASA with copy of the Zoosanitary Certificate, Certificate of Origin and Pro-form Commercial Invoice.
3. Importers of plant products do not need to register their facilities with SENASA’s SGIA. The import permit request must be submitted only with the Pro-form Commercial Invoice. However, when the product arrives to the port of entry in Honduras the original Phytosanitary Certificate, Certificate of Origin and invoice are required for the inspection.
4. The above mentioned documents and the import request must be clear, with consistent information about the importer and exporter, amounts, product description, origin and point of shipping. SENASA requires that the certificates be filled out completely with the name, date and signature of the official issuing the certificate.
5. The importer can obtain the permit application form at the SENASA office. The import permit process in SENASA takes from 24 to 48 hours if all documents are in order. The permit is applied to one shipment; which could include up to ten products and is valid for 30 days. For further information please refer to [www.senasa.gob.hn](http://www.senasa.gob.hn)

Further information can be found at the Honduras GAIN Report: Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) – Export Certificate Number H01906.

## **Other Documents Required:**

**Shipping Documents.** The documents that should accompany a shipment which are required at the port of entry are the original of the Bill of Lading, Commercial Invoice, Phyto or Zoosanitary Certificate and Packing list.

**Photocopy of Import License.** Importers of dairy products with the Harmonized Code from 04.01 to 04.06 and 1901.10.1 and 1901.90.20 must have an import license issued by the Secretariat of Economic Development (SDE). Importers will need to provide copy of their dairy importer registration and copy of the import permit from SENASA when submitting the request of the import license to the SDE.

The harmonized codes are for milk, cream, butter, yogurt, cheeses, baby formula and powdered milk. SDE has five working days to issue the import license. The license will have 60-day validity and can be extended at the request of the importer.

## **Import Process at Port of Entry:**

SENASA delegated the responsibility of all quarantine inspections and treatments of agricultural imports to the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA). OIRSA's Plant and Animal Protection Service (SEPA) inspectors are located at the borders, ports, and airports. They follow SENASA's instructions to enforce the import requirements of raw animal and plant products, processed and consumer ready foods, as well as inputs used in food processing at the time of entry. DARA officials review that the invoice complies with the GOH's revenue tariff.

SEPA and inspectors from DARA are involved in clearing imports of food and agricultural products. They evaluate documents and conduct an inspection for the compliance of requirements indicated on the import permit and import documents such as:

- Original import permit approved by SENASA
- Original Phyto or Zoosanitary Certificate
- Certificate of Origin
- Commercial Invoice
- Additional Declarations requested are included in the Phyto or Zoosanitary Certificates, if the country of origin of the product is the one authorized on the import permit; and if it is the same origin in the label of the product entering the country.
- Expiration date, lot number and production date appear in Spanish on the shipping carton(s). The dates must be provided in the Day/Month/Year format (DD/MM/YYYY).
- Documents submitted for the import process are clear, filled out completely, with the name, date and signature of the official issuing the certificates. The information and names of the importer, exporter, shipment's content, amounts, product description, origin, point of shipping, are consistent across all documents.
- A Suppliers or Manufacturers Export Declaration as proof of compliance is not accepted.
- Prior to granting customs clearance, the SEPA inspector conducts an inspection of the product. The entry of animal products and by-products depends on the food safety conditions of the product itself. It also depends on the exporting country's current animal health and pest's status.

- Product sampling is done randomly. It is taken from animal products origin, seeds that the import permit requires it, and when bacteria or fungi are found. Samples are submitted to laboratory analysis to check the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the product. If the laboratory analysis indicates that the product does not meet acceptable standards, the product may be confiscated and later destroyed or reexported depending on its condition and characteristics as determined by the authorities.
- In cases that a quarantine pest is found, a treatment will be applied prior allowing the product to enter the country. SENASA indicates that the exception is with pests that due to their biology could enter in a diapause stage, such as the Trogoderma Granadium and Trogoderma Glabrun. In this situation, the treatment is not applied and the product is returned to the country of origin.
- SENASA modified its Quarantine Procedures Manual through Resolution No. 250-14 in March 2014. The Manual indicates that when a non-quarantine pest is found alive or dead, the quarantine treatment will not be applied. The modification saves importers time and money that would have been used on the treatment.
- In the case of the arrival of shipments that did not go through SENASA's import permit process, they are detained at the port of entry. The entrance is authorized until all the requirements of the import permit are completed and complied with.
- The customs clearance is usually granted within a short period of time; however, depending on the work load at the port and whether or not all of SENASA's requirements are complete, the time period can range from a few hours to five days.
- The specialized container and cargo terminals in Puerto Cortes, took over the operations of loading and unloading cargo. The "Operadora Portuaria Centroamerica (OPC) loads and unloads containers. The "Terminal Especializada de Honduras" (T.E.H) manages the bulk cargo.

## **Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:**

### **Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock (SAG):**

#### **National Plant, Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASA)**

Name: Dr. Juan Ramón Velásquez

Title: General Director

Servicio Nacional de Sanidad e Inocuidad Agroalimentaria (SENASA)

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**Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:**

**National Plant, Animal Health and Food Safety Service (SENASA)**

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**Attachments:**

No Attachments