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Colombia

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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Report Highlights:

This report includes Colombia's import requirements for import permits and export certificates for multiple food products for human and animal consumption. It also provides a list of the Colombian government agencies involved in the entry of imported food products.

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Bogota, Colombia, 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 were 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.

Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required By Government (Matrix) :

Product(s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Beef	Import Zoosanitary Permit Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Animal health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Dairy products	Import Zoosanitary Permit Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Animal health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Fish, Crustaceans and Molluscs	Fish: Import Zoosanitary Permit (only whole, uneviscerated) Crustaceans: Import	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Animal health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and National Authority of Fisheries and Aquaculture (AUNAP)

	Zoosanitary Permit (only uncooked) Molluscs: Import Zoosanitary Permit (only uncooked) Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate			
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables	Import Phytosanitary Permit Phytosanitary Export Certificate	Fulfill health requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Plant health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Grains	Import Phytosanitary Permit) Phytosanitary Export Certificate	Fulfill health requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Plant health and food safety	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Live animals	Import Zoosanitary Permit Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	Fulfill health requirements according to import permit.	Animal health	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA)
Pet Food	Import Zoosanitary Permit	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements	Animal health	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian

	Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	according to import permit and sanitary inspection.		Agriculture- ICA
Pork	Import Zoosanitary Permit Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Food safety/ Animal Health Protection	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Poultry	Import Zoosanitary Permit Export Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate	Fulfill health/sanitary requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection.	Food safety/ Animal Health Protection	Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) and Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)
Processed Food Products	Export Sanitary Certificate/ Certificate of Free Sale	The products exported are produced and marketed in the United States in general conformity with US requirements	Food safety/ Fulfill health requirements according to local sanitary authorities	Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA)

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

1. Import Zoosanitary Permit

This document is issued by the Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) to the local importer and it provides formal authorization to the local importer to import certain animal/animal-derived products into Colombia under certain animal health requirements.

2. Import Phytosanitary Permit

This document is issued by the Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) to the local importer and it provides formal authorization to the local importer to import certain plant or plant

products into Colombia under certain plant health requirements.

3. Phytosanitary Export Certificate

This document is required by the Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) to prevent the introduction of foreign pests and diseases into Colombia. Certificates are issued by the plant health authority in the country of origin.

4. Zoosanitary Export Certificate

This document is required by the Ministry of Agriculture (Institute of Colombian Agriculture- ICA) to protect animal health and ensure foreign animal diseases are not introduced into Colombia. Certificates are issued by the animal health authority in the country of origin.

5. Health Certificate/ Sanitary Certificate

This document is required by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MHSP) - National Institute for the Surveillance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA) for food safety purposes.

6. Certificate of Free Sale

This certificate is required for the registration of processed food products with INVIMA. The purpose of this certificate is to provide assurance to the Colombian authorities that the product is fit for human consumption and is freely sold in the country of origin. It is also required by INVIMA for shipments entering Colombia. Registration of the product is valid for 5, 7, or 10 years depending on the risk classification assigned to the product (Resolution 719 of 2015). The issuance of this certificate must be completed before the product is imported into the country.

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

A competent government authority from the exporting country has to issue all required certificates and the products must be first registered in Colombia. Please see the FAIRS narrative report to see registration requirements for different products. The certificate of free sale required by INVIMA for product registration and shipments entering Colombia must state that the product is of “free sale” in the country of origin and that the product is fit for human consumption. On the other hand, ICA requires specific attestations and traceability information on export certificates. These export certificates tend to also meet INVIMA’s food safety requirements.

Section IV. Government Certificate’s Legal Entry Requirements

Original export certificates listed under section one must accompany each individual export consignment at the time of entry into Colombia. It should be noted that in most cases, products exported to Colombia for human consumption must meet entry requirements set by ICA (animal and plant health) and INVIMA (human health), particularly animal-derived products. INVIMA and ICA have inspectors at all entry points in Colombia and have the discretion to detain or reject shipments based on their findings. A common reason for detained shipments has to do with certificates’ issuance dates. Food exporters interested in selling to Colombia must register their products before shipping, and must obtain an import permit prior to applying for export certificates.

Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

New Regulation on Food Registration and Import Documentation

Decree 539 establishes import requirements at ports of entry (POE) including: 1) Preliminary import approval issued by INVIMA through the Ministry of Commerce's online platform (VUCE), following the guidelines of Decree 4149 of 2004, and Decree 2078 of 2012; 2) product registration; 3) Foods that are exempt of product registration must complete the INVIMA form for food raw materials; and, 4) Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin (Certificates of Free Sale for food considered not to be "high risk" products). Furthermore, Decree 539 seeks to establish a new framework for the registration of high-risk food products of animal origin (except for meat), including dairy and fish products imported into Colombia. This new framework ("habilitation") would include the inspection of plants in the United States as a requirement for registration. FAS-Bogota has been working with the GOC on the modification of Decree 539 to consider the "recognition" of the inspection and food safety control systems in the United States for the aforementioned category of products, in order to avoid the original Colombian "plant-by-plant" approach. FAS-Bogota expects to see the GOC to notify such modification to the WTO in early 2017.

Decree 539 of 2014, in combination with Resolutions 2674 of 2013 and 719 of 2015, has also had an impact on food registration and import documentation. For instance, under this new regulation, products such as tomato sauce, mayonnaise, juices, and fortified foods have been classified as high-risk products. As a result, if imported from the United States they must be accompanied by a Certificate of Free Sale, but also by a "Sanitary Certificate" issued by a competent authority in the United States. Such competent authority is not well defined and certainly created grave problems since April 2015 and July 2016. FAS-Bogota was able to have INVIMA provide an alternative way of meeting this new requirement. For non-animal derived products (of low, medium, or high risk), INVIMA may consider, in the absence of a U.S. competent authority that could issue a sanitary certificate, a state-issued certificate of free sale and a letter from the manufacturer describing the shipment (lot numbers, expiration dates, production dates and other traceability information).

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APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

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