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## **Colombia**

# **Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards**

## **Country Report**

**1999**

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### **Report Highlights:**

**This report has been revised to make it comply with the 1999 reporting instructions and updated with the latest information on import requirements available as of July 1999.**

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Annual Report  
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**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 was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. **FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS, AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

## **SECTION I. FOOD LAWS**

The Colombian Government maintains control over imports through the Instituto Colombiano de Comercio Exterior (INCOMEX). It approves or disapproves imports, according to the foreign exchange availability and needs of the Colombia industry or market. Besides the normal approval of import licenses, most agricultural commodities require prior license (*licencia previa*), which means that the importation has to be approved by another government agency (i.e., the Ministry of Agriculture), before the import license is cleared by INCOMEX.

There are three categories of imports in Colombia:

**Free (*libre*) Imports.** Free imports are products whose importation is not limited or controlled. However, free imports still require an import license approved by INCOMEX.

**Prior License (*licencia previa*) Imports.** Prior License imports are imports which require the prior approval of another government agency, before INCOMEX will issue an import license. For example, for agricultural products, the Ministry of Agriculture is the agency which must give prior approval; for drugs, it is the Ministry of Public Health. The majority of agricultural product imports require prior licenses. In addition, tariffs on agricultural and processed food products, in general, are still relatively high.

**Prohibited (*prohibida*) Imports.** Imports on the Prohibited list are not allowed entry into Colombia.

## **SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

The government of Colombia (GOC) requires country-of-origin labeling for processed foods. The GOC, however, does not classify frozen vegetables as a processed food and, therefore, no country of origin labeling is required. Also, fresh fruit and vegetables do not require country of origin labeling.

Imported processed food products that are not destined for further processing must carry a sticker indicating the producer/processor's name and address, the importer's name and address, product composition, the GOC's sanitary registration number, and the original sales labels. GOC labeling requirements for processed foods do not address the question of ingredient origin. Therefore, if the imported food item contains ingredients from more than one country, for example, U.S. and Canadian peas in the same frozen package, the label must only identify the processor's name and address. Assuming that this is a U.S.-based processing firm, the labeling sticker would not indicate that the package of frozen peas contains Canadian vegetables that were processed in the United States. If Argentine frozen corn is packaged and shipped by a U.S.-based processor, only the U.S. processor is indicated on the package. The GOC's product labeling requirements for imported processed foods do not require that the exporter identification information be affixed in a specific part of the package.

Product labeling information on imported processed products must be present at the point of retail sale. The responsibility for this labeling information rests with the importer, not the retailer. Many Colombian importers arrange for this information to be placed on the product by the exporting firm, before it enters Colombia.

For processed products shipped with Spanish labels, the following information must be shown: product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health (INVIMA) registration number, any recommended method of storage, and product expiration date, if appropriate.

Imports that are destined for further processing, such as mechanically deboned chicken, do not require country of origin labeling. The GOC also does not require country of origin labeling for imported bulk-packed or consumer-packed fresh fruits and vegetables. The GOC does not require a sticker/label indicating country of origin on individual pieces of fresh fruit. Colombian consumers, therefore, seldom are aware of the origin of imported fruit and vegetables.

### **SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS**

No specific requirements are established for packages or containers.

### **SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS**

The Ministry of Health is the Colombian government agency in charge of food additive legislation. The National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food (INVIMA) was established in 1993 to guarantee the quality and safety of drugs, food and medical supplies entering the Colombian market. INVIMA is the implementing agency for the food and drug legislation originated by the Ministry of Health.

All GOC decrees and resolutions, as well as regulations by the Ministry of Health and the related agencies on food additives, are published in the Official Gazette (Diario Oficial), in order to become effective. (Subscription to the "Diario Oficial" can be made at Carrera 10 No. 14-33, 4th floor, Bogota 1, D.C.,

Colombia. Tel: (57-1) 341-3559, 246-3601, 246-3606.)

The basic food additive legislation is Decree 2106 of 1983 from the Ministry of Health. Decree 2106 defines and classifies food additives. It also regulates the use and manufacturing of food additives, as well as their importation. Decree 2106 also regulates the transportation and marketing of food additives.

Besides the basic Decree 2106, the government of Colombia through the Ministry of Public Health has issued other decrees that list specific kinds of food additives (e.g., food dyes and anti-oxidants), along with specific requirements for their use.

Colombian regulations do not specifically state that CODEX food additives are accepted. Nevertheless, Article 5 of Decree 2106 states that the current recommendations of the Food Chemical CODEX and the CODEX Alimentarius or any other pertinent scientific publications will be taken into consideration in the formulation of regulations governing the use of food additives. Additionally, Articles 7 and 8 of Decree 2106 establish an Advisory Committee to suggest changes to Colombian legislation on food additives.

Decree 2106 applies to food additives manufactured in and imported into Colombia, as well as those processed, transported, packed or bottled in Colombia. Food additives sold or consumed in the Colombian territory are subject to this Decree.

Food additives are all substances or a mix of substances--with or without nutritional value--added intentionally in a minimum quantity to food products with the purpose to avoid their alterations or to preserve them; to grant or intensify their aroma, color or flavor; to modify or preserve their general physical presentation; or to perform any role necessary for the good technology in food production. Casual contaminants, such as pesticides and fertilizers, are not considered to be food additives nor are vitamins or minerals added to enhance food nutritional value, nor any alien substance that has come in contact with food by accident.

The Ministry of Health elaborates and updates continuously the list of food additives that can be used in the national territory, as well as their levels of use and tolerance and to which foods they can be added. These regulations will take into account technological developments, as well as current publications of the Food Chemical CODEX and the CODEX Alimentarius or any other pertinent scientific source.

If someone is interested in using a food additive not included in the official list of authorized additives he must request its inclusion by applying to the Director of Environment Protection (Dirección de Saneamiento Ambiental) of the Ministry of Health. The applicant must specify:

- Purpose in using the additive,
- Justification for its use,
- Food list in whose preparation the additive will be used and food composition (food ingredients),
- Additive physical-chemical properties, and
- Technical bibliography to prove additive effectiveness and harmlessness.

The Advisory Committee will study the application and submit a recommendation to the Ministry of Health,

which will take the final decision on inclusion or exclusion of the requested food additive.

Decree 2106 also lists the maximum level of a mixture of food additives that can be used in a given food product. Exceptions to this norm will be specifically established by the Ministry of Health.

Food additives are forbidden when they:

- interfere with the food's nutritional value,
- serve to disguise food's process failures or wrong handling,
- disguise alterations, changes, contamination or falsification of the food's raw material or the finished product,
- lead to consumer error, confusion or fraud, and
- do not meet the specifications of this decree.

Additives added to a food must be listed on the label, according to the role they are supposed to perform. Additionally, labeling regulations from the Ministry of Health must be followed.

## **SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS**

Colombia applies applicable CODEX regulations and maximum residue levels.

## **SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **a. Product Health Registration**

All processed retail food items, including products imported in bulk for repackaging for retail use without further processing, must be registered and approved by the National Institute for the Surveyance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA), which is part of the Ministry of Health (decree 3075/97). Food products that are sold to restaurants, other institutions, or to processors do not need to be registered with INVIMA. Products that have not undergone transformation, such as fresh or frozen produce and meat, also do not need INVIMA registration. A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two cases:

(a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 55,000 pesos or about \$30).

(b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.

Besides, INVIMA registration is valid only for the specifications (e.g., presentation and size) mentioned in the registration. If another presentation of the same product is to be imported, the the registering company needs to inform in writing of the new product.

INVIMA registration of processed foods requires: (1) a written document from the manufacturer stating that it manufactures the product; and (2) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not strictly required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings, is submitted. All documents submitted to INVIMA must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. All documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

INVIMA charges a registration fee of US\$750 per product. After the submission of all required documentation, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

#### **b. Importer Registration and Import Licensing**

Every Colombian importer must be registered with INCOMEX, Foreign Trade Institute, which is part of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. U.S. exporters seeking to sell to a Colombian firm should ascertain that the Colombian importer has obtained the legal authority to import agricultural products by completing the INCOMEX registration process. Once registered, the importing company enjoys the legal right to import any agricultural product that it wishes.

Each import shipment must have an import license (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17) issued by Incomex. Import license approval takes about two working days.

#### **c. Sanitary Permit**

Non-transformed products that are fresh or frozen (meat and produce) do not need an INVIMA registration, but they do need a sanitary permit from the Ministry of Agriculture's Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA). ICA is responsible for the issuance of import health permits for animal products, vegetables, fruits, and grains. This permit details the phytosanitary import requirements for these products. The Colombian importer must first obtain the import permit from ICA, before requesting an import license from INCOMEX. The ICA import permit is supplied by the importer to the exporter for submission to the USDA. USDA will then issue a phytosanitary certificate referencing the requirements in ICA's import permit.

For ICA approval, the product must: (1) come from a USDA inspected facility; (2) be free of disease; (3) be inspected by the USDA prior to its shipment and be accompanied by a USDA health certificate; and (4) be inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia.



#### **d. Pre-shipment Certification**

The Colombian Government requires an inspection and certification of certain imported food products at the port of export. Products subject to this requirement include fresh/chilled/frozen meats (red or poultry), powdered milk, whey, fresh onions and garlic, eggs, peas, beans and lentils, corn, rice, lard, tallow, oilseed oils, sugar, jam, fruit juices, sauces, beer, and wine. This inspection procedure ensures proper tariff classification, product description, quantity, and price data collection. Inspection companies can charge up to one percent of the fob value of the shipment for their services.

All inspection companies must be licensed by the Colombian Government. Currently, there are four inspection companies approved by the GOC. Many Colombian importers argue that this inspection is costly, time consuming, and represents a non-tariff trade barrier. The Colombian Government, however, maintains that it is a necessary element in its efforts to prevent illegal imports and under-invoicing.

#### **e. Import Duties**

Most processed foods are assessed a 20 percent ad-valorem import duty. However, high-value food product imports, such as powdered milk, fresh/chilled and frozen pork, and chicken parts, are subject to the Andean Community's price band and reference price systems, which can markedly increase Colombian import duty treatment. The U.S. Government views the reference price and price band systems employed by Colombia to be inconsistent with Colombia's World Trade Organization obligations. The price band system distorts trade and does not operate in a transparent manner. This regime often makes it difficult, if not impossible, to know in advance what duty will be assessed on a product shipped to Colombia. Furthermore, it often appears that the reference price used to calculate the import duty does not accurately match the imported product, but rather a different class of product. This often causes an inflated surcharge to be assessed. For example, floor and ceiling prices for imports of chicken parts are based on prices for whole chickens, which tends to unfairly assess a higher import duty than would appear appropriate.

Colombian processed food imports from Chile and other country members of the Andean Community (Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela) enter duty-free. This, combined with lower transport charges, provides a significant cost incentive for local importers to turn to regional suppliers rather than purchase from the United States. This is particularly true for fresh and processed fruit, wine, and at times for meat.

For those U.S. products subject to the price band system, import duties are calculated based upon the cif adjusted floor, ceiling, and reference price levels determined by the Andean Board of Directors. Under this system, import duties are levied on calculated reference prices and not on actual invoice prices. The Andean Community establishes annual ceiling and floor prices every April. Reference prices are adjusted by the Andean Community every two weeks. If, the applicable reference price falls within the floor and ceiling price band, the import duty is calculated by applying the common external tariff rate for the Andean Community to the reference price. When the reference price falls below the floor price, a variable levy, or surcharge, is applied, which is based on the difference between the floor price and the reference price. This surcharge is levied in addition to the applied duty. Conversely, when the reference price exceeds the



ceiling price, a reduction is made to the applied duty, based on the difference between the reference and the ceiling prices.

The following illustrates how Colombia's import duties are calculated for those U.S. food products subject to the price band system. In the example below, we have calculated Colombia's import duty treatment that would be assessed against imports of powdered milk arriving at Colombian ports July 15 through 31, 1999.

Price Band Ceiling Price	\$2,434 per ton
Price Band Floor Price	\$2,194 per ton
Reference Price	\$1,890 per ton
Applied Duty Rate	20 percent
Duty Calculation--\$1,890 X 20 percent	= \$378.00
Duty Surcharge--\$2,194 - \$1,890	= \$304.00
Duty on surcharge--\$304 X 20 percent	= \$ 60.80
Total Import Duty	= \$742.80

The \$761.60 per ton total duty assessment is equal to 39 percent of the reference price (\$1,890 per ton).

## SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS

No other specific standards are noted.

## SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS

### 1. Patents and Trademarks

The agency in charge of patents and trademarks is the Superintendency of Industry and Commerce. Two Andean Community decisions on the protection of patents and trademarks and of plant varieties have been in effect in Colombia since 1994. They provide a 20-year term of protection for patents. Provisions of the decisions covering protection of trade secrets and new plant varieties are generally consistent with world-class standards for protecting intellectual property rights.

Trademark protection requires registration and use of a trademark in Colombia. In a recent decree, Colombia announced that registration of a trademark must be accompanied with its use in order to prevent parallel imports. Trademark registrations have a ten-year duration and may be renewed for successive ten-year periods. Priority rights are granted to the first application for a trademark in an Andean Community country. Colombia is a member of the Inter-American Convention for Trademark and Commercial Protection.

The Andean Community decision on patent and trademark protection also provides for protection of

industrial secrets.

## 2. Copyrights

Andean Community Decision 351/94 and Colombia Law 44/93 regulate protection of copyrights in this country. Law 44/93 extends computer software protection to 50 years, but does not classify it as a literary work. Colombia belongs to both the Berne and the Universal Copyright Conventions. This decision provides a generally Berne-consistent system.

Law 44/93 significantly increased penalties for cuopyright infringement, specifically empowering the Attorney General's office to combat piracy. However, U.S. industry estimates that piracy represents over 75 percent of the video cassette market, 66 percent of the sound recording market, and 67 percent of the business software market.

## SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC COMMODITY GROUPS

### a. High Value, Consumer-ready Food Products for Retail Sale

HS code: 16.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants the Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveyance of Food and Medicines. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products; and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority.

Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. Product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Registration cost depends on the item, but it is about US\$700. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two

cases:

- (a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 55,000 pesos or about \$30).
  - (b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
- 3. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
  - 4. The importer presents INCOMEX completed form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  - 5. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). ICA issues a health permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  - 6. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form, INVIMA clearance and ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  - 7. Selected products are subject to inspection prior to shipment for product and price validation. This inspection is carried out by private companies contracted by the GOC.
  - 8. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.

Note: High value food products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.

#### **b. Processed food items for institutional use**

HS: 16.

- 1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
- 2. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
- 3. The importer submits the completed import license form to INCOMEX. This import license approval takes about 2 days.

Note: a. Processed food products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.  
b. No registration at ICA or INVIMA is required for processed food products for institutional use.

#### **c. Beef and Pork, Not-transformed (Fresh, Chilled or Frozen)**

HS: 02.01-/02-/03

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import any and all agricultural products.
2. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
3. The importer presents to ICA his completed import license form and is issued a health permit (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). This process normally takes about 48 hours.
4. The importer presents the completed import license form and the ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes 48 hours.
5. Selected products are subject to inspection prior to shipment for product and price validation. This inspection is carried out by private companies contracted by the GOC.
6. The imported meat product is inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product comes from U.S. inspected production facilities is free of disease, has been inspected by USDA prior to its shipment, and is accompanied by a USDA health certificate.
7. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.
8. All meats are assessed a 20 percent import duty. Poultry meat and pork are also subject to a variable surcharge under the price band system. Currently, total import taxes stand at 94 percent for poultry meat, while pork enters duty-free.

Note: a. Beef and pork are assessed a 20 percent import duty.  
b. No registration with INVIMA is required for non-transformed beef or pork.

**d. Beef and Pork, Transformed (fresh, chilled or frozen)**

HS: 02.10-

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveyance of Food and Medicines. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for

human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority.

Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. Product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Cost depends on the item, but it is about US\$700. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two cases:

- (a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 55,000 pesos or about \$30).
  - (b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
3. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
  4. The importer presents INCOMEX completed form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  5. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). ICA issues a health permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  6. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form, INVIMA clearance and ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  7. Selected products are subject to inspection prior to shipment for product and price validation. This inspection is carried out by private companies contracted by the GOC.
  8. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.

Note: a. Transformed beef and pork are assessed a 20 percent import duty.

**e. Import Requirements for Poultry Meat (whole birds), not transformed**

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

9. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import any and all agricultural products.
10. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 24,000 pesos or about \$13).
11. The importer presents to ICA his completed import license form and is issued a health permit (cost 16,000 pesos or about \$9). This process normally takes about 48 hours.
12. The importer presents the completed import license form and the ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes 48 hours.
13. Selected products are subject to inspection prior to shipment for product and price validation. This inspection is carried out by private companies contracted by the GOC.
14. The imported meat product is inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product comes from U.S. inspected production facilities, is free of disease, has been inspected by USDA prior to its shipment, and is accompanied by a USDA health certificate.
15. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.
16. All meats are assessed a 20 percent import duty. Poultry meat and pork are also subject to a variable surcharge under the price band system. Currently, total import taxes stand at 94 percent for poultry meat while pork enters duty-free.
17. Note: Registration of product with the Ministry of Health (INVIMA) is not required for non-transformed food products.

**f. Poultry Parts (fresh, chilled or frozen)**

HS: 02.07-13./14./26./27.35./36. and 16.02-31.00.10/32.00.10/39.00.10

1. The Ministry of Agriculture must approve chicken (or other poultry) part imports. Whenever this Ministry determines that domestic supplies are sufficient to meet local demand and/or that imports of this product would economically damage local poultry industry, imports are not approved. Except for selected ports (San Andres, Portete, Uraba), the Ministry of Agriculture has not approved fresh chicken part imports since 1994.

The GOC, however, does approve imports of processed or prepared poultry parts. Duty treatment for these products is subject to the application of the Andean Community price band and reference

price systems.

In 1998, the GOC ruled (resolution 281) that poultry meat import approval is subject to domestic absorption policies. Importers must purchase a certain amount of locally produced poultry meat before they their import license is approved. Importers must buy 94 kilos of chicken meat or 2.6 kilos of turkey meat for each kilo of the same product to be imported; duck, geese or Cornish hen meat is not subject to the absorption requirement.

Note: Poultry parts (fresh, chilled, or frozen) are assessed a 20 percent import duty.

**g. Mechanically Deboned Chicken or Pork**

HS: 16.39-

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with the National Institute for the Surveyance of Food and Medicines (INVIMA). INVIMA registration requires: (1) a written document from the manufacturer certifying that it manufactures the product, and (2) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not required, product approval is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings are detailed.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. All documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label may be submitted. A registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. The analysis need not be done prior to registration approval. INVIMA registration charges depend on the item, but it is about \$700. After all required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two cases:

- (a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 55,000 pesos or about \$30).
- (b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
3. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).



4. The importer presents INCOMEX completed form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
5. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). ICA issues a health permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form, INVIMA clearance and ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.

Note: Processed meats are assessed a 20 percent import duty.

#### **h. Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

HS: 07./08.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import any and all agricultural products.
2. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
3. The importer presents to ICA his completed import license form and is issued a health permit (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). This process normally takes about 48 hours.
4. The importer presents the completed import license form and the ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes 48 hours.
5. Selected products are subject to inspection prior to shipment for product and price validation. This inspection is carried out by private companies contracted by the GOC.
6. The imported produce is inspected by an ICA official upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product comes from a USDA inspected production facility, is free of disease, has been inspected by the USDA prior to its shipment and is accompanied by a USDA health certificate.

Note: a. Fresh produce products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.  
b. No labeling requirements are specified by the GOC for fresh produce imports.

#### **i. Processed Fruit and Vegetables**

HS: 20.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with INCOMEX. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveyance of Food and Medicines. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated

if a description of the manufacturing process and list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee includes an analysis of the product. Product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Cost depends on the item, but it is about \$700. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two cases:

- (a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 55,000 pesos or about \$30).
  - (b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
- 3. The importer purchases an import license form at INCOMEX (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$17).
  - 4. The importer presents INCOMEX completed form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  - 5. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 20,000 pesos or about \$11). ICA issues a health permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  - 6. The importer presents the completed INCOMEX form, INVIMA clearance and ICA health permit to INCOMEX. INCOMEX will now issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.

Note: Processed produce products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.

## APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS

Luz Stella Kuratomi, Directora  
INCOMEX  
Calle 28 No. 13A-15  
AA 240193  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 281-2200  
Fax: (57-1) 281-8560

Francisco A. Cañón, Director General  
INVIMA  
Carrera 15 No. 58A-59  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 211-5951, 211-8003  
Fax: (57-1) 249-5348

Mauricio Parra, Jefe  
División de Sanidad Animal  
ICA  
Calle 37 No. 8-43, P4  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 232-4692  
Fax: (57-1) 285-3050

Ramiro Gómez, Jefe  
División de Sanidad Vegetal  
ICA  
Calle 37 No. 8-43, P4  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 232-4692  
Fax: (57-1) 285-3050

**APPENDIX II. OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS****Pre-shipment Inspection Companies Approved by the Colombian Government**

S.G.S. Colombia S.A.  
Oscar López, Coordinator  
Carrera 21 No. 85-33  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 610-9299, 610-6539, 610-8654  
Fax: (57-1) 610-8784, 610-8925, 610-8639

Bureau Veritas Bogotá S.A.  
Martha Salazar de Jiménez, Gerente General  
Calle 95 No. 13-09, piso 3  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 635-7575  
Fax: (57-1) 625-7441, 625-7451

Inchcape Testing Services International, Ltd.  
Santiago Tobón, General Manager  
Transv. 14 No. 126-10, of. 501  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 615-5610, 615-5619, 615-5629  
Fax: (57-1) 615-5552, 615-5592

Intertek Testing Service, ITS  
Transv. 14 No. 126-10, oficina 501  
Bogotá  
Tel: (57-1) 615-6488, 615-5592  
Fax: (57-1) 615-5552

Cotecna Inspection Bogotá S.A.  
Peter Schnyder, Gerente General  
Diana Elizabeth Peña  
Ejecutiva de Cuenta  
Calle 114 No. 9-01, Torre A  
A.A. 250294  
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