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Morocco

Livestock and Products

Halal requirement in Morocco

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Report Highlights:

The US-Morocco free trade agreement will provide opportunities for U.S. meat exporters. However, to successfully penetrate this market imported meat should be Halal.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Rabat [MO1]
[MO]

Overview

Morocco population is estimated at about 30 million that are virtually all Muslims (over 99%). Virtually all the meat processed in Morocco is assumed to be Halal and therefore, there is no "Halal" labeling requirement. Imported processed meat generally has the label Halal to arrest consumer fear and presumption that the products imported from non-Muslim countries are not Halal. There is a small quantity of kosher meat sold in Morocco for the Moroccan Jewish population.

Historically, imports of meat have been limited because of the prohibitive duties. The most significant imports were for the military (enter Morocco duty free) and the military specification book requires explicitly that the imported beef be Halal. The military usually purchases beef as half carcasses.

Other imported meats include hamburger, chicken nuggets and chicken parts. Most meat imports are from France, Australia, Argentina, and Brazil and importers require Halal certificates when they import meat and poultry into Morocco.

With the exception of some turkey meat imported from Tunisia, there are no significant imports of meat from neighboring Muslim countries.

Meat under Morocco-USA FTA

Under the recently signed Free Trade Agreement between Morocco and the United States, the United States secured significant Tariff Rate Quotas for red meat (initial quotas include: high quality meat 4,000 MT, standard meat 2,000 MT, chicken leg quarters and wings 4,000 MT, whole chicken and turkey 1,250 MT and chicken leg quarters 125 MT. The quotas are scheduled to grow from 2 to 4 percent each year thereafter.).

Although it is not specified explicitly in the FTA, the Halal requirement should be assumed and U.S. suppliers should take a proactive position advising customers that the meat is Halal because consumer expectations will be that meat from a non-Muslim country will not be Halal. Major U.S. based fast food restaurants in Morocco explicitly state in their advertising that the meat is Halal.

Morocco's Legal requirement

There is a legal requirement for imported beef be accompanied by a Halal Certificate. (Ministry of Agriculture Decision 1240-03, June 19 2003, Official Bulletin 5132 of August 7, 2003). The requirement stipulates "Slaughter must follow the Muslims ritual (Halal) and be carried out without sedating the animal beforehand by any means."

Impact of Marketing Non-Halal Meat

Not meeting the Halal requirement could result in serious complications for suppliers. Non-Halal meat will not commingled or stored in the same facilities with Halal meat. When exporting meat to Morocco, exporters should take into consideration that the western origin of the meat could raise concerns among many consumers that the meat is not Halal. One should consider explicitly conveying to consumers and end-users that the meat, although it is U.S. origin, has been prepared using methods that are compatible with the Islamic requirement. Failing to do so is likely to result in the consumer being reluctant to buy and

even or rejecting the imported meat even if it is price competitive. Meat that is not Halal would be Haram i.e. prohibited by the religion.

Prestige Country

The U.S. could use the fact that U.S. Halal meat is accepted by other Muslim countries (or predominantly Muslim) as an additional reason to have Morocco accept the U.S. Halal meat. Moroccans generally recognize that there is a significant Muslim community in the United States but the Moroccan government is likely to look to the U.S. government to ensure the legitimacy of Halal certificates.