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Italy

ATO ACTIVITIES reports

Italian Import License Procedures for US Exporters 1999

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Report Highlights:

This document is prepared to assist US exporters obtain information on Italian Import Licensing procedures to facilitate the entry of new to market products.

Basically, only Italian companies, or those US companies with branch offices already established in Italy, can obtain Italian import licenses because the Italian Tax Identification number is required for license issuance. It is easiest to work directly with importers/distributors to let them proceed through the confusing bureaucracy and regulations to obtain an import license. If someone attempts to do this on their own to save money they should expect to pay two or three times more for the privilege of climbing a very steep learning curve.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No

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Italian Import License Procedures for US Food and Agricultural Products

The procedure for exporting US products to Italy has been standardized to a certain degree along the lines of the European Union requirements. Import licensing rules and regulations are difficult to understand. Italian authorities can be extremely severe when irregularities arise due to misinterpretation or non-compliance with regulations. Italian import licenses are given only to Italian companies. Thus, US exporters are unable to request an Italian import license.

To avoid any complications and confusion with the Italian import and licensing regulations, US exporters should work closely with their Italian importers/distributors to ensure no unexpected problem arises. Many food and food products enter Italy without a license. However, exceptions still exist. The European Union requirements may be superceded in many cases with Italian regulations. Untangling the rules and regulations is so complex that legal costs and time spent on them may be substantial.

Italy is a diversified, large market composed primarily of small to medium-sized importers and distributors. Personal relationships are extremely valued and influential in developing business in Italy. It is nearly impossible to arrive in Rome or Milan on a two or three day trip, sign agreements with reliable importers and distributors and actually begin to conduct business. (Please see Report IT9708: Ensure Payments for Your Exports.)

American exporters minimize costly mistakes by developing their business efficiently using local Italian sales agents or distributors who already have established relationships with authorities and other contacts, have a thorough understanding of the marketplace dynamics and import procedures.

For general information regarding identifying Italian importers and distributors, contact: the **Agricultural Trade Office in Milan (fax: 3902-659-9641; e-mail:ATOMilan@fas.usda.gov)**, or the Italian Foreign Commerce offices in the United States. (A list of their US addresses is found at the end of this report.)

Import License Procedures:

Requests for import licenses should contain the information on the following list and be submitted by your local Italian importer (who must provide his tax identification number) to the Ministero del Commercio con L'Estero at the addresses provided at the end of this report.

Required information for Italian Import Licenses:

Product

Quantity

Origin

Tariff code, and

Other information that could be required.

Import License requests must be type-written and adhere rigorously to providing information requested on the form. If the form is not used, the same information should be prepared on simple white paper (40 gram weight

or greater, standard European A4 size).

Import permits for the importation of goods into Italy oblige that during the period of validity of the license, the exact quantities of product indicated on the license be imported. Import permits are issued approximately 10-15 working days after submitting the request, but this can vary depending on the kind of product .

Import licenses are divided into special groups. Each group has its own set of rules regulating the import of products. Following are the major **six import license groups**:

A: Products which require authorization

C: Products which require import certificates (P.B 135)

S: Products which are under surveillance by the EC.

V: Products which are under vigilance by the EC.

CITES: norms relative to endangered species of flora and fauna under Convention of Washington

FITOS: phytosanitary norms concerning vegetables and vegetable products

EU Regulations Governing Import License Procedures:

CE 1035/72 Garlic

CE 404/93 Bananas

CE 136/66 Fats

CE 234/8 live plants and flowers

CE 804/68 milk and dairy

CE 805/68 beef

CE 2358/71 seeds

CE 1035/72 fruits

CE 2759/75 pork

CE 2771/75 eggs

CE 2777/75 chicken

CE 2783/75 egg and milk albumin

CE 1418/76 rice

CE 1785/81 sugar, sirop of insulin

CE 426/86 transformed products of fruit base

CE 822/87 wine

CE 3013/89 goats and sheep

CE 1766/92 cereals

CE 1222/94 other products not included in one of their charts-these are products transformed from different things: powdered milk, 82% weight butter, and a few other things.

CE Reg 1766/92, 95 Products Transformed from Cereals & Rice

Specific Requirements by Product/Category

Milk and Dairy

CE Reg 504/68

CE Reg 1466/95

CE Reg 1600/95

Deposits required are 10 ECU for each 10kg net weight of product.

License validity is until the end of the third consecutive month after date of issuance.

There are many contingent tariffs for various GATT agreements with diverse countries of origin, different certificate requirements, certain preferential tariff agreements, and various organizations that issue certificates, but the listings for these have been omitted from the Italian Import/Export rule book. It is recommended to have the local Italian importer look into all of this depending on the particularities of exporter's case.

Meat:

Beef

CE 1445/95

Beef requires import permits and the guarantees vary depending on which codes the beef is classified under.

Also, tariffs would vary. The importer should be able to determine specifics relative to the exporter's particular case.

CE 805/68 (except items with codes: 1602 5031-1602 9069)

CE 3719/88: Exporters are required to obtain permits which generally are valid for 90 days and pay deposits as follows:

5 ECU per head for live animals

12 ECU for each 100 kg net weight of other products

Sheep and Goats:

CE Reg 1439/95

Guarantee is estimated at: 1 ECU/head for live animals

7 ECU/100kg for other products

License validity is three months. There are many specific requirements that vary depending on the exporter's particular case and the local Italian importer should be able to define these.

Pork:

CE Reg 1432/94

Presentation of request for import permits for pork must be made in person or by a legal delegate, demonstrating to the satisfaction of the authorities, that they have been in business for at least one year with other countries.

Guarantee is estimated at: 30 ECU/100 kg of product

It is recommended to consult with the importer to define import requirements.

Wheat, grains, cereals and rice

CE Reg 1766/92

CE Reg 1418/76

For most cereals, the import permits are valid until the end of the fourth consecutive month after date of issuance. For rice, however, they are valid until the end of the second month after the date of issuance. Rice flour and starch have four months validity.

Products Transformed from Cereal & Rice

CE Reg 1766/92, 95

Fruits and Vegetables

CE Reg 1035/72 Garlic: Import permit issued after payment of guarantee of 1.5 ECU/100net kg. Validity of import license 40 days.

CE Reg 404/93 **Bananas**: Import permit request must be accompanied by proof of being an importer and guarantee (CE Reg. 2220/85) of 18,11 ECU/t. Import permits have a three month validity. Bananas are strictly regulated and importers must be established as having supplied bananas before to the Common Market.

There are different tariff structures for different types of banana importers.

Category A--665,000 t for those who have commercialized bananas in third countries (third members of GATT) before 1992.

Category B--300,000 t for those who have previously commercialized bananas from the traditional ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries)

Category C--35,000 t for those who have commercialized bananas since 1992 from traditional ACP countries.

CE 1035/72 Fruits--

CE 1556/96 **Fruits and Vegetables** Payment of a guarantee of 1,5 ECU/100kg net is required to obtain an import license for fruits and vegetables. Permits are valid for 30 days. On the request for the import permit, codes NC and other product numbers must be included.

Products Transformed from Fruits and Vegetables

CE Reg 426/86 There are guarantees necessary in order to get import licenses for almost all products transformed from fruits and vegetables. However, if the quantity is inferior or equal to 1,000kg, the guarantee can be waived. Also, if the quantity is inferior or equal to 500 kg, an import license is not needed., but there would be a guarantee requested of 1 ECU per 100 kg.

Nuts and Dried Fruits

As already mentioned, Italy has become a large nut importer though US exports are very price sensitive in this area. Good prospects also exist for dried fruits such as prunes and other healthy snack food sorts.

Wine

CE Reg 822/87

Request for import permit must include some additional information such as color of wine and other particulars which affect tariffs. The validity of permits goes until the end of the fourth consecutive month after the date of issuance of the permit.

Other Documentation Required at Customs When the Product Arrives in Italy:**Customs Clearance:**

Duties and taxes are applied to the value of the imported goods upon customs clearance and are based upon the stated invoice value of the merchandise.

Basic export documents needed but not requiring consular legalization, include:

- commercial invoice
- bill of lading or air waybill
- certificate of origin
- health certificate, sanitary documentation, etc.

Samples

Italian regulations with regards to samples are that samples of negligible value for promoting sales are given duty free status. Their value is compared to the net invoice value of saleable sized products to make the determination as to whether samples are of negligible value.

Any samples not intended for sale should be shipped with an invoice stating:

“ Samples/for advertising or other purposes: No Commercial Value ” then give a nominal value for customs purposes only. (A nominal value is like a fraction of the cost value.)

Value Added Tax (sales tax):

Like other EU countries, Italy also imposes a value added tax on most food and agricultural items. Finished consumer packaged goods items for example would probably have a 19% value added tax applied, whereas semi-finished products might have a 4% value added tax.

CONTACTS:

The Italian Embassy
Commercial Section
1691 Fuller Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Tel: (202) 328 5558
Fax: (202) 328 5593
Internet: WWW.italyemb.org/chapidx.htm

Dipartiminto della Dogana
(Department of Customs)
Via Carucci 71
00143 Roma
Tel: (39) 06 50241
Fax: (39) 06 5095 7346

Istituto per il Commercio Estero
(Italian Trade Commission)
Food/Agriculture Product Division
Via Liszt, 21
00144 Rome
Tel: (39) 06 599 29506
Fax: (39) 06 596 47364
Contact: Paolo Angelini, Vice Director

Ministero delle Politiche Agricole
(Ministry of Agriculture)
Via XX Settembre, 20
00137 Rome
Tel: (39) 06 488 4293
Fax: (39) 06 481 9580
Contact: Pasquale Mainolfi, Director, Agr.Production

Minister della Sanita'
(Minister of Health)
Piazzale Marconi, 25
Palazzo Italia
00144 Rome
Tel: (39) 06 592 6780, 06 599 43964
Fax: (39) 06 599 43217
Contact: Romano Marabelli, Director General
Nutrition, Food and Public Health Department

Contacts for Italian Importers to obtain import licenses:

Ministero del Commercio con l'Estero,
Viale America 341, 00144 Roma
Tel (39) 06-59931
fax (39) 06-59932153

Internet addresses: www.commerce.it (import regulations and information in Italian)
www.ice.it, or E-mail: ice@ice.it

Contacts:

Dottore Aldo Alfano for vegetable oils	(39) 06 5993 2291
Clara Boni for fats and oils	(39) 06 5993 2452
Dottore Condemi for bananas, grain, wheat and rice	(39) 06 5993 2220
Doctoressa Brunetti, fruits, vegetables, nuts, wine	(39) 06 5993 2219
Doctoressa Pronto, for meats	(39) 06 5993 2212
Doctoressa Campanello, milk and dairy	(39) 06 5993 2204
Doctoressa Anabali	(39) 06 5593 2291

The Ministero del Commercio con l'Estero provides the following additional services:

- research for local qualified Italian agents, importers and distributors
- identification of business opportunities and research for commercial partners or for potential financing for interesting business prospects
- assistance for industrial and commercial collaboration
- assistance for countertrade operations
- market studies
- certain types of technical assistance
- assistance in multilateral cooperation with international organizations
- acquisition of technical know how
- schedule of trade shows
- assistance with direct mail operations, obtaining mailing lists, etc.

They charge for some of these services and information regarding fees can be found on their website.

It is strongly recommended to use an Italian importer to assist with all administration and communication on the Italian side. The Ministero del Commercio con L'Estero is not available for general procedural inquiries and will most likely refer exporters to the website which is in Italian (WWW.ice.it) Or, they will refer exporters to the US offices of the Italian Trade Commission.

Italian Trade Commission offices in the United States:

East/Northeast

499 Park Avenue
6th Floor
New York, NY 10022
Tel: (212) 980 1500
Fax: (212) 758 1050
email: NewYork@italtrade.com

Trade Commissioner and Executive Director USA:
Massimo Mambeti

States: New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Washington, Rhode Island, Bahamas, Bermuda, Puerto Rico, USVI

West

1801 Avenue of the Stars
Suite 700
Los Angeles, California 90067
Tel: (213) 879 0950
Fax: (310) 203 8335
email: italcomm@itc-ice-la.com

Trade Commissioner: Pasquale Bona

States: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Hawaii, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Utah, Nevada, Montana, American Samoa, Guam, Palau, The North Marianas

Midwest

401 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 3030
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Tel: (312) 670 4960
Fax: (312) 670 5147
email: ital1@italtrade-chicago.com

Trade Commissioner: Giuseppe Federico

States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, N. Dakota, S. Dakota, Ohio, Wyoming

South

233 Peachtree Street NE
Suite 2301
Atlanta, Georgia
Tel: (404) 525 0660
Fax: (404) 525 5112
email: itc@italtrade-atlanta.com

Trade Commissioner: Antonio Avallore

States: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, W. Virginia, Jamaica

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