

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** Korea's New Import Health Requirements for Pet Food

**Country:** Korea - Republic of

**Post:** Seoul

**Report Category:** Livestock and Products, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, MISC-Commodity, Export Accomplishments - Market Access

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**Report Highlights:**

On January 14, 2025, Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) published new import health requirements (IHRs) for pet food, which are effective immediately. With the new IHRs, there is now a pathway to approve U.S. pet food products containing ruminant ingredients, which had been banned since 2003. Pet food products that have been exported to Korea within the last year may continue to use their existing health certificates until December 31, 2025. New-to-market products or those that have not been imported into Korea within the last year, should comply with the new IHRs.

## **Korea Publishes Import Health Requirements for Pet Food**

Korea's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) published the final import health requirements (IHRs) for pet food on January 14, 2025. The new requirements are effective immediately, but there is a grace period until the end of the calendar year 2025 for products that have been imported into Korea during the year prior to publication.

The publication stipulates requirements for animal ingredients, production conditions, manufacturing facilities and quarantine inspection by the exporting country for pet food imported into the Republic of Korea, in accordance with the Act on the Prevention of Contagious Animal Diseases. The IHRs apply to pet food intended for dogs, cats, ferrets, and hamsters. (Note: As these companion animals are omnivores, their pet food typically contains animal ingredients.)

Pet food manufacturing facilities must undergo inspection by the exporting country's government to assure compliance with Korea's requirements. The competent authority of the exporting country will work with the Korean government veterinary quarantine authority to notify inspection results and obtain approval of pet food manufacturing facilities through on-site inspections or other methods. For the United States, the competent authority is the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Korea's competent authority is the Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency (APQA) of MAFRA.

The full Korean text of the IHRs is available through the [National Legislation Information Center](#) and the [MAFRA Announcement from January 14](#). A side-by-side English translation provided by MAFRA is attached to this report. This is an unofficial translation. The original Korean text takes precedence over the English translation.

### **Implementation Timeline**

Although the notice went into effect January 14, 2025, MAFRA outlined interim measures to minimize trade disruption.

Pet food that has been imported into Korea within the past year from the date of enforcement (January 14, 2025) may be imported using the existing health certificate format until December 31, 2025, even if APQA has not yet approved the health certificate format as described in the IHRs.

Manufacturing facilities that have exported pet food to Korea within the past year from the date of enforcement and have no quarantine violations may be approved through a document review. Korea's APQA may conduct on-site inspections if necessary. The quarantine authorities of the

exporting country shall provide information requested by the Korean government to verify the export performance of the manufacturing facility.

### **Pathway for Pet Food Containing Ruminant Ingredients**

With these IHRs, Korea has created a process to allow importation of U.S. pet food containing ruminant ingredients, which had been banned since 2003 following the first U.S. bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) case. Pet food products containing ruminant ingredients will be considered a new-to-market product under the new IHRs. As these products do not have an existing health certificate and have not been exported to Korea in the last year, they must follow the new process outlined in the IHRs, including having the manufacturing facility approved by MAFRA. Even if the same facility already exports non-ruminant product to Korea, MAFRA needs to approve the facility for the new product.

The United States originally requested resumption of market access for pet food containing ruminant ingredients in 2006. Although U.S. beef access had resumed, ruminant ingredients remained prohibited in U.S. pet food exports to Korea. In 2018, the United States submitted an expanded market access request for pet food containing U.S.-origin ruminant ingredients, as well as any ruminant ingredients imported from BSE-negligible risk countries. Since 2018, APQA has been drafting the new IHRs to reflect Korea's updated assessment of the potential risk for BSE in imported pet food.

### **Support for U.S. Exporters**

New-to-market products, including those with ruminant ingredients, or those that have not been imported into Korea within the last year, must comply with the new IHRs. Interested companies may begin the process to have their products and facilities registered by contacting the USDA Korea offices at [AgSeoul@usda.gov](mailto:AgSeoul@usda.gov).

For more information on Korea's pet food market and practical considerations for exporters, please refer to the [2024 South Korea Pet Food Report](#).

### **Attachments:**

[Import Health Requirements for Pet Food \(MAFRA translation 02.07.25\).pdf](#)