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## **Thailand**

**Post:** Bangkok

### **Thailand's Import Procedures for Potatoes**

**Report Categories:**

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

TH9173. This report provides Thailand's current import procedures for seed potatoes, potatoes for processing, and potatoes for consumption (table-stock potatoes).

## Background

This report provides Thailand's current import procedures for seed potatoes, potatoes for processing, and potatoes for consumption (table-stock potatoes). The following government agencies are involved in potato importation:

- Department of Foreign Trade (DFT) of the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) is responsible for administering quota allocation to eligible importers under WTO tariff-rate-quota (TRQ) commitments. Under their commitments for 2009, the current quota requirement is 43,178 mt and the Thais have allocated 43,480 mt. In 2009, quotas were allocated in three periods; January, April and September.
- Department of Agriculture (DOA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (MOAC) requires a pest risk assessment (PRA) from the country of origin under the Plant Quarantine Act, B.E. 2551. The U.S. and Thailand have just finished an import protocol that allows the importation of potatoes (TH9156).
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) under the Food Act of 1979 requires that as a food-item, importers must apply for and receive a food import permit prior to importation.
- The Customs Department of the Ministry of Finance (MOF) is responsible for collecting import duties and to ensure compliance of relevant laws and regulations.

## Import Requirements for Seed Potatoes

The importer of seed potatoes must work with DFT/MOC DOA /MOAC, and Customs Department /MOF.

DFT/MOC administers the tariff-rate-quota system for seed potatoes. The DFT sets the TRQ each year and notifies its allocation of seed potato import quota to companies and cooperatives. These companies are normally potato chip processors in Thailand which contract fresh potato production with small farmers in the northern provinces. Eligible importers receive a certain amount of import quota which is subject to an in-quota tariff rate of 27 percent. Otherwise, out-of-quota imports are subject to 125 percent tariff rate. Currently the quota is 7,178 tons. Once the quota is allocated, the importers need to register with DFT which will provide specific documentation on the import terms. The importer must then present this documentation to Customs for clearance and the application of the corresponding fees.

Under DOA/MOAC's current import protocol, U.S. seed potatoes must be produced in California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. Importers must apply for a phytosanitary import permit with the DOA prior to an import. The shipment of seed potatoes must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate (PC) that contains the following statement: *"The seed potatoes in this consignment were produced in the United States of America in accordance with the conditions governing entry of seed potatoes to Thailand."*

## Import Requirements for Potatoes for Processing

Like seed potatoes, the importer of potatoes for processing must deal with DFT/MOC, DOA /MOAC, and Customs Department /MOF.

DFT/MOC administers the tariff-rate-quota system for potatoes for processing. Each year, the DFT notifies its allocation of import quota on potato for processing to chip processing companies in Thailand. Eligible companies are allocated import quotas which are subject to an in-quota tariff rate of 27 percent. Otherwise, out-of-quota imports are subject to 125 percent tariff rate. Currently the quota is 7,178 tons. Like seed potatoes, the importer needs to contact the DFT to register and receive specific documentation regarding the terms of the importation. The importer has to present this documentation to Customs for clearance and the application of the corresponding fees.

Under DOA/MOAC's current import protocol, potatoes from all states are allowed except where potato cyst nematode is regulated and/or soil that is contaminated with the nematode. Currently, importers are limited to potato chip processors in Thailand that comply with DOA's guidelines on the safe disposal of soil, culls, and water. The importer must apply for a phytosanitary import permit with the DOA prior to an import. The product shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate (PC) that contains the following statements: *"The potatoes in this consignment were produced in the United States of America in accordance with the conditions governing entry of potatoes for processing to Thailand and inspected and found to be free of quarantine pests."* and *"The potatoes in this consignment have been washed."* or *"The potatoes in this consignment were treated with a sprout inhibitor."*

### **Import Requirements for Potatoes for Consumption (Table-Stock Potatoes)**

The importer of potatoes for consumption must work with DFT/MOC, DOA /MOAC, MOPH/FDA, and Customs Department /MOF.

Unlike seed potatoes and table-stock potatoes for processing, MOC/DFT does not apply a tariff-rate-quota system for table-stock potatoes. As a result, all imports of table-stock potatoes are considered as out-of-quota imports which are subject to 125 percent tariff rate. To import potatoes, the importer needs to contact the DFT to register and receive documentation specifying the terms of the import. The importer must then present the documents to Customs Department for clearance and for the application of the corresponding fees.

Like potatoes for processing, MOAC/DOA allows imports from all U.S. states except the production area where potato cyst nematode is regulated and/or presents in the soil. There is no specific requirement that the importer must be a chip processor. As in the previous cases, the importer must apply for a phytosanitary import permit with the DOA prior to an import. The product shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate (PC) that contains the following statements: *"The potatoes in this consignment were produced in the United States of America in accordance with the conditions governing entry of potatoes for consumption to Thailand and inspected and found to be free of quarantine pests."* and *"The potatoes in this consignment have been washed."*

In addition, table-stock potatoes are considered a food item under the current Food Act of 1979; as such importers must apply for and receive a food import permit prior to importation from the FDA/MOPH. Prior to granting a permit, the FDA will inspect the importer's storage facilities for

compliance. When a shipment is cleared, the importer must present the food import permit to FDA and Customs inspectors at the port. If all is in order, the shipment will be cleared for release. In case a substance is found that is either on the pesticide ban list or above established MRL's, the shipment must be returned or destroyed.