

Voluntary Report - public distribution

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## Philippines

### Trade Policy Monitoring

### The Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines 2004

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**Report Highlights:**

On May 12, 2004, Republic Act 9296 entitled "An Act Strengthening the Meat Inspection System in the Country, Ordaining for this Purpose a Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines and For Other Purposes" was signed into law. The GRP states that RA 9296 was crafted to harmonize Philippine meat inspection laws with international standards to enable the domestic meat processing industry to participate in global trade. The new law makes it unlawful for shipping lines and agents to ship meat and meat products to the Philippines without an accompanying Philippine Veterinary Quarantine Clearance certificate. Local meat traders and meat processors oppose this new law as being unduly trade restrictive.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Manila [RP1]  
[RP]

On May 12, 2004, the President of the Philippines signed into law, Republic Act 9296 (RA 9296) entitled "An Act Strengthening the Meat Inspection System in the Country, Ordaining for this Purpose a Meat Inspection Code of the Philippines and For Other Purposes."

Under RA 9296, the National Meat Inspection Commission shall be renamed as the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS). The new law seeks to strengthen the existing meat inspection system under the NMIS which serves as the sole national controlling authority on all matters pertaining to meat, meat product inspection and meat hygiene.

The GRP states that this law was crafted to ensure food security and to provide safety and quality standards for meat and meat products. Moreover, the GRP hopes that the passage of RA 9296 will eventually enable the domestic meat processing industry to participate in global trade and supply foreign markets through the establishment of modern meat processing facilities and the harmonization of Philippine regulations with international standards and procedures.

The Philippine Meat Inspection Code requires qualified meat importers to first secure a Veterinary Quarantine Clearance (VQC) certificate prior to the shipment of meat and meat products from the country of origin. Section 54 of the Philippine Meat Inspection Code now makes it unlawful for any shipping line or airline to ship meat and meat products from a foreign country to the Philippines without an accompanying VQC issued by the DA and an International Veterinary Certificate (IVC) issued by the national controlling authority of the exporting country.

Domestic meat processors and food importers have opposed the passage of RA 9296, claiming that it violates Article 2 of the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures Agreement and is unduly trade restrictive. Similarly, Administrative Order 39 (AO 39) requires meat importers to obtain VQCs prior to the export of goods to the Philippines. The DA is currently holding public consultations on proposed amendments to AO 39 "Revised Rules, Regulations and Standards Governing the Importation of Meat and Meat Products into the Philippines" which strengthens meat import rules and further reinforces RA 9296. Embassy Agricultural Affairs Office provided USDA and US industry comments on the draft revision of AO 39 on May 25, 2004.

The DA has been tasked to convene a technical working committee and consult with the private sector to formulate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of this law within 90 days after the law takes effect. The National Meat Inspection Code will take effect 30 days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in two newspapers of general circulation. RA 9296 was published in the Manila Time and Philippine Tribune on May 19. The Code thus takes effect on June 18 and the IRRs must be promulgated by August 17 of this year.