

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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Regulations relating to the reduction of sodium in certain foodstuff

Report Categories:

Trade Policy Monitoring

Snack Foods

Agriculture in the News

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Report Highlights:

Regulations relating to the reduction of sodium in certain foodstuffs and related matters came into effect on June 30, 2016 in South Africa. This regulation will affect both domestic and imported foodstuffs. Post estimates that at least US\$ 16 Million worth of United States exports to South Africa will have to comply with this regulation, based on 2015 figures.

Background

On March 20, 2013, South Africa published the Government Notice R214 under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectant Act (54/1972) which detailed the final regulations relating to the reduction of sodium in certain foodstuffs and related matters. [Click this link to download the Regulations relating to the reduction of sodium in certain foodstuffs.](#) Affected parties were granted a period of 3 years to ensure that their products were compliant, and the regulation came into effect on June 30, 2016. According to the Ministry of Health, this regulation is one of the several regulatory interventions that South Africa has proposed over the past few years to address the risks and rising levels of lifestyle diseases such high blood pressure, heart diseases and stroke. Other related regulations that post has published on the GAIN database can be found on **Table 1** below.

Reduction of sodium content

Table 2 on the following page shows the list of foodstuff that will be affected by the regulation, as well as the effective dates for compliance to the respective maximum sodium levels per 100g of the respective foodstuff. The first maximum levels of compliance came into effect on June 30, 2016, and a further reduction is expected three years later on June 30, 2019. The regulation also provides details of the methodology to be applied when testing the levels of sodium content in foodstuffs.

Implications of the regulations

South African media reports have largely focused on the impact of this regulation to bread and related products. However, the regulations affect a wider range of products including some United States exports. Post estimates that at least US\$ 16 Million worth of United States exports to South Africa will have to comply with this regulation, based on 2015 figures. While South Africa faces capacity challenges in ensuring compliance with most food regulations, and that the sodium reduction regulations faced strong critics citing the lack of substitutes for salt and the high costs of compliance, post encourages United States industry and exporters to be fully aware of these maximum sodium levels that came into effect on June 30, 2016. Post has also been advised that the Ministry of Health is in the process of considering further minor amendments to the regulations and these will be notified to the WTO TBT Committee. Post will continue to provide feedback if there are any further updates to the regulations.

Table 1: Other relevant GAIN reports related to regulations aimed at addressing non-communicable diseases

Name of Report	Link
Proposed National Liquor Policy (Liquor Act 59 of 2003)	Download
Regulation amendment on container labels of alcoholic beverages	Download
Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative	Download
Amendments to regulation relating to food labelling and advertising	Download

Table 2: Reduction of total sodium (Na) content

Foodstuff category	Maximum Total	Dates on which the total
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		Sodium per 100g foodstuff	Sodium reduction becomes effective
1	Bread	400 mg Na	30 June 2016
		380 mg Na	30 June 2019
2	All breakfast cereals and porridges, whether ready to eat, instant or cook up, hot or cold	500 mg Na	30 June 2016
		400 mg Na	30 June 2019
3	All fat spreads and butter spreads	550 mg Na	30 June 2016
		450 mg Na	30 June 2019
4	Ready to eat savoury snacks, excluding salt and vinegar flavoured savoury snacks	800 mg Na	30 June 2016
		700 mg Na	30 June 2019
5	Flavoured potato crisps, excluding salt and vinegar flavoured potato crisps	650 mg Na	30 June 2016
		550 mg Na	30 June 2019
6	Flavoured, ready to eat savoury snacks, and potato crisps - salt and vinegar only	1,000 mg Na	30 June 2016
		850 mg Na	30 June 2019
7	Processed meat (classes 6, 12 or 14 of the South African National Standard SANS 885:2011) - uncured	850 mg Na	30 June 2016
		650 mg Na	30 June 2019
8	Processed meat (classes 7, 10 or 11 of the South African National Standard SANS 885:2011) - cured	950 mg Na	30 June 2016
		850 mg Na	30 June 2019
9	Raw processed meat sausages (all types) and similar products	800 mg Na	30 June 2016
		600 mg Na	30 June 2019
10	Dry soup powder (not the instant type)	5,500 mg Na	30 June 2016
		3,500 mg Na	30 June 2019
11	Dry gravy powders and dry instant savoury sauces	3,500 mg Na	30 June 2016
		1,500 mg Na	30 June 2019
12	Dry savoury powders with dry instant noodles to be mixed with a liquid	1,500 mg Na	30 June 2016
		800 mg Na	30 June 2019
13	Stock cubes, Stock powders, stock granules, stock emulsions, stock pastes or stock jellies	18,000 mg Na	30 June 2016
		13,000 mg Na	30 June 2019

Source: South African Ministry of Health: Food Control Division