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#### **Report Highlights:**

This report provides information on the food and agricultural product import requirements for Croatia. Croatia, as a member of the European Union, follows EU directives and regulations. Thus, it is recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards report for the European Union. Important points of contact for U.S. food exporters are listed in the appendices. For current updates on developments in the EU food and feed legislation, visit the USEU FAS website at www.usda-eu.org. All sections of this annual report were updated in November 2023.

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# Disclaimer

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, the information provided may not be completely accurate either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities before any goods are shipped. FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

# **Executive Summary**

This report provides information on the food and agricultural product import requirements for Croatia. It incorporates discussion of food laws, labeling requirements, packaging regulations, food additive regulations, pesticides, and other contaminants. Moreover, information is given on the regulation of trademarks, brand names, and intellectual property rights. In this report, US exporters can find a description of the import procedures and lists of relevant points of contact in Croatia. Croatia, as a member of the European Union, follows EU directives and regulations. Thus, it is recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards report for the European Union (EU-27 FAIRS).

This report looks at the regulatory changes that were adopted since last year's report notably regarding the New Law on Food Hygiene and Microbiological Criterions for Food and organic rules.

## Section I. Food Laws

This report outlines specific requirements for food and agricultural product imports into Croatia. Croatia, as a member of the European Union, follows EU directives and regulations. It is therefore recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (EU-27 FAIRS) report produced by the U.S. Mission to the European Union. For ongoing updates on developments in EU food and feed legislation, check the USEU FAS website at www.usda-eu.org. Imports from third countries must comply with national legislation when EU law does not exist. Croatia's food laws and regulations are valid both for domestic and imported products and are generally applied regularly and consistently as part of border inspections. Croatian laws and regulations can be found in the Croatian language at www.nn.hr.

Croatia's food legislation consists of the following key laws:

- -- The Food Act (Governmental Gazette NN18/23);
- -- The EU Regulation 2015/2283 on Novel Food ;

-- <u>The NEW Law on Food Hygiene and Microbiological Criterions for Food (</u>Governmental Gazette NN83/22);

-- <u>The Law on Food Additives, Aromas and Food Enzymes</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018, 36/2022);

-- <u>The Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018);

-- <u>The Law on Official Controls and Other Official Activities Carried out in Accordance with</u> <u>Regulations on Food, Animal Feed, Animal Health and Welfare, Plant Health and Plant Protection</u> <u>Products (Governmental Gazette NN52/2021);</u>

-- <u>The Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on feeding stuff for infants and young children, special nutritional uses and replacements for whole-day diet in a reduction diet (NN69/2017, NN 114/2018);</u>

-- <u>The Law on Materials and Objects in Direct Contact with Food (</u>Governmental Gazette NN25/2013, NN41/2014, NN114/2018);

-- The Law on Contaminants (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018);

-- <u>The Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 396/2005 on Maximum Residue Levels of</u> <u>Pesticide in and on Food and Feed of Plant and Animal Origin (Governmental Gazette 80/2013, NN 115/2018, NN32/20);</u>

-- The Law on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) (Governmental Gazette, 126/19);

-- <u>The Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 1829/2003 on GMO Food and Feed and</u> <u>Regulation 1830/2003 on Traceability and Labeling of Food and Feed Derived from GMOs that Amends</u> <u>EU Directive 2001/18/EC (Governmental Gazette NN18/2013, NN47/2014, NN114/2018, NN83/2022);</u>

-- <u>The Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 1946/2003 on Trans-boundary movement of genetically modified organisms</u> (Governmental Gazette NN81/2013);

-- The Wine Act (Governmental Gazette NN32/2019);

-- <u>The Law on Informing Consumers about Food</u> (Governmental Gazette NN56/2013, NN14/2014; NN56/2016, 32/2019);

-- <u>The Law on Prohibition of Unfair Trade Practices in The Food Supply Chain (Governmental Gazette NN 117/2017, NN 52/2021);</u>

-- The Act on the State Inspectorate (Governmental Gazette NN115/2018; NN117/2021; NN6720/23).

### Section II. Labeling Requirements

### A. General Requirements

As of December 13, 2014, <u>EU Regulation 1169/2011</u> establishes the horizontal food labeling requirements. The mandatory nutrition declaration requirement introduced by the Food Information to Consumers (FIC) regulation was implemented December 13, 2016. For more details, please refer to the <u>EU-27 FAIRS report</u>.

#### B. Other Specific Labeling Requirements

Croatia has <u>the Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018) and <u>the Law on Informing Consumers about Food</u> (Governmental Gazette NN56/2013, NN14/2014; NN56/2016, NN32/2019). These laws incorporate EU rules with no major deviations from these rules that would impact US exports. For details on health and nutrition claims see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report.

For food containing or derived from genetically modified substances, see <u>the Law on Genetically</u> <u>Modified Organisms (GMOs)</u> (Governmental Gazette, 126/19) and <u>the Law on the Transposition of the</u> <u>EU Regulation 1829/2003 on GMO Food and Feed and Regulation 1830-/2003 on Traceability and</u> <u>Labeling of Food and Feed Derived from GMOs that Amends EU Directive 2001/18/EC (Governmental</u> Gazette NN18/2013, NN47/2014, NN114/2018; NN83/2022). Food and feed containing genetically engineered ingredients must have special, additional information on the label that informs consumers of all its characteristics. In Croatia, a product must be labeled as GMO if it contains more than 0.9% of an approved event.

Further details about labeling food and certain specific food products (e.g. beef, wine, fruit juice, etc.) can be obtained from the FAS office at the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb (for contact information, please see Appendix II).

Additional information can also be found at the <u>Ministry of Health - Food</u>. Croatian authorities do not grant exceptions to the labeling regulations.

# Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations

When it comes to the container content and indicated quantity, the maximum tolerable error between the actual content and the quantity indicated on the label, and methods to check this are fixed in <u>Council</u> <u>Directive 76/211/EEC</u>, as amended and transposed to Croatian <u>Regulation on Measuring Requirements</u> for Prepackaged Products (NN82/2016).

<u>The Regulation on Measuring Requirements for Bottles as Measuring Containers</u> (NN82/2016) prescribes package nominal fillings and the marking of quantities. This regulation complies with <u>EU</u> <u>Council Directive 75/107/EEC from 12/19/1974</u>.

<u>EU Directive 2007/45/EC</u> abolished older regulations on mandatory pack sizes at both the EU and national levels, only wine and spirits have defined package sizes. Mandatory nominal quantities for wines and spirits are in the Annex to Directive 2007/45/EC. This regulation was adopted by Croatia in its <u>Regulation on Nominal Quantities of Prepackaged Products</u> (NN82/2016, NN33/2017).

Detailed information is available on the European Commission's website Legal Metrology.

Packaging materials and packaging material waste are covered by <u>the Regulation on Packaging</u> <u>Materials and Packaging Material Waste</u> (NN88/2015, NN78/2016, NN116/2017; NN14/2020; 144/2020).

Limitations on the type of packaging materials that can be used are described in-<u>the Law on Materials</u> <u>and Objects in Direct Contact with Food</u> (Governmental Gazette NN25/2013, NN41/2014, NN114/2018). This regulation puts into national legislation the EU regulations on the topic.

## Section IV. Food Additive Regulations

Additives are regulated by <u>the Law on Food Additives</u>, <u>Aromas</u>, <u>and Food Enzymes</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018, NN36/2022). Croatia applies EU regulations and does not have specific, national requirements for additives. For details on EU regulations see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report.

Croatia does not recognize the CODEX food additive list. All companies that seek to place food on the market in Croatia must comply with the EU list of food additives as published in <u>EU Regulation</u> <u>1333/2008</u>, <u>EU Regulation 1332/2008</u> on food enzymes, and <u>EU Regulation 1334/2008</u> on flavorings.

New additives, flavorings, and enzymes can be added to the list according to <u>EU Regulation 1331/2008</u>, which prescribes a single common procedure for the entire EU. This ensures consistency in the procedures used to approve additives, flavorings, and enzymes with an emphasis on the safety evaluations by European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) on which the approval procedure is based. For details on EU procedure see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report.

On January 14, 2022, the European Commission and Croatia adopted <u>Commission Regulation (EU)</u> <u>2022/63</u>, which bans the use of Titanium dioxide (TiO2 also known as E171) as a food additive in food products.

### Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants

According to the Law on Transposition of the EU Regulation 1107/2009 on Placing of Plant Protection <u>Products on the Market</u> (Governmental Gazette NN80/2013, NN 32/2019, NN32/2020), all pesticides must be registered. For details, see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report.

The maximum content of certain pesticide or pesticide residues in foodstuffs is governed by <u>the Law on</u> <u>Transposition of the EU Regulation 396/2005 on Maximum Residue Limits (MRL) of Pesticides in or</u> <u>on Food and Feed of Plant and Animal Origin</u> (Governmental Gazette NN80/2013, NN 115/2018, NN32/2020). Other contaminants in food are regulated by <u>the Law on Contaminants</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN 114/2018), which incorporates all EU regulations dealing with contaminants. For details on these topics see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report.

Croatia's list of residues of pesticides on and in food is in full compliance with the EU lists. This regulation is enforced by municipal and customs sanitary and veterinary inspection officials. The pesticide residue list is positive, i.e., stating what is permitted versus what is not permitted. Thus, any residue that is not found on the list, regardless of quantity, is deemed an adulterant. For a list of authorized active substances or pesticide-MRL combinations, see the European Commission's online database at <u>Pesticides list</u>.

# Section VI. Other Requirements, Regulations, and Registration Measures

### A. Facility Registration

The EU approves establishments to ship products of animal origin based on submissions from U.S. government agencies. Only products processed in approved establishments may enter the EU. Detailed information on certification of products is available at <u>Certification - EU Import Rules</u>. The third country lists according to sector and country are published on the European Commission's website, <u>Third Country Establishments - List per Country</u>.

### **B.** Product Registration

U.S. exporters should be aware that certain products and ingredients may fall within the scope of the Novel Foods Regulation and need pre-market authorization. For details see the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u> report. The introduction of foodstuffs with particular nutritional uses needs to be notified to the Ministry of Health see Appendix I.

### C. Other

Product samples shipped via express mail and food for fairs are treated like any other food import-they must comply with all the food regulations applicable in the EU and/or Croatia (for details consult  $\underline{EU-27}$  <u>FAIRS</u>). The invoice must also state that it is a sample and free of charge - then it is treated as a sample for customs purposes in terms of levying duties.

An overview of legally required certificates in the EU and references to the U.S. regulatory agencies that issue certificates can be found on the FAS Brussels website at <u>Certification - EU Import Rules.</u>

U.S. exports of "composite products" are continuing to be restricted due to burdensome certification requirements introduced in a 2012 European Commission Regulation (for details consult  $\underline{\text{EU-27}}$  FAIRS).

Croatia regularly tests products at the border and in the market. The testing is performed per Croatia's annual inspection plans for the State Inspectorate's Sanitary Inspection and the State Inspectorate's Veterinary Inspection, which are determined based on available fiscal resources. Infringements of EU food and feed legislation are reported through the Rapid Alert System on Food and Feeds (RASFF). The rapid alert system is a network of Member State authorities managed by the European Commission. The database with RASFF notifications is accessible via the RASFF portal. Information published on this website provides several notification details such as the reason for the non-compliance and the origin of the product but does not include company information. Repeated non-compliance may lead to suspension of imports or special import conditions for products from the third country concerned, applicable to the entire EU territory.

All shipments that contain food go through the State Inspectorate's Sanitary Inspection. Random tests are conducted for GMO content and compliance with microbiological and contaminant health standards.

## Section VII. Other Specific Standards

### A. Fortification of Foods

Fortification of foods with vitamins and minerals is permitted. In this case, the labeling must be carried out per <u>the Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients</u> (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013, NN114/2018).

#### B. Agricultural Biotechnology and Novel Foods

Food products produced from substances derived from agricultural biotechnology are regulated by <u>the</u> <u>Food Act</u> (Governmental Gazette NN 18/2023) that governs the responsible bodies and their tasks, responsibilities of stakeholders in the food and feed handling, official controls, and legal measures. <u>The</u> <u>Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 1829/2003 on GMO Food and Feed and Regulation</u> <u>1830/2003 on Traceability and Labeling of Food and Feed Derived from GMOs that Amends EU</u> <u>Directive 2001/18/EC</u> (Governmental Gazette NN18/2013, NN47/2014, NN114/2018; NN83/2022) establish the responsible bodies and their tasks relating to the handling of biotechnology food and feed and its labeling as well as the penalties for breaching the provisions of the law. <u>The Law on Genetically</u> <u>Modified Organisms (GMOs)</u> (Governmental Gazette, 126/19) regulates all products derived from modern biotechnology. Novel foods are regulated by <u>the EU Regulation 2015/2283</u> on Novel Food, which covers all aspects of novel food, that is, all food which was not consumed in the EU to a significant degree before May 15, 1997 (for details consult <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u>).

### C. Special Use Foods

Dietetic or special use foods fall under <u>the Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 609/2013 of</u> the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on feeding stuff for infants and young children, special nutritional uses and replacements for whole-day diet in a reduction diet (Governmental Gazette NN69/2017, NN 114/2018).

### D. Food Sanitation

Food sanitation is covered by <u>the Law on Food Hygiene and Microbiological Criterions for Food</u> (Governmental Gazette NN83/2022). This law incorporates Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles and transposes the appropriate EU legislation. Some of the requirements of this law are the following: HACCP refers to food safety practices in production facilities.

### E. Animal Quarantine

To import live animals, animals must pass through quarantine which can range from 5 to 30 days, depending on the type of animal, health status, and accompanying certification. For example, quarantine for cattle imported for slaughter is 5 days on the importer's farm and for breeding 30 days on the importer's farm. The competent authority is the Veterinary Inspection of the State Inspectorate, for contact information please see Appendix I.

### F. Organic Products

A new Regulation for organic production and labelling organic products was adopted in 2018 and became law January 1, 2022, <u>Regulation (EU) 2018/848</u>.

The US-EU Organic Equivalence Arrangement took effect on June 1, 2012. However, the EU adopted a new regulation for organic production in 2018. The equivalence arrangement will expire December 31, 2026. To avoid trade disruptions, all non-EU countries must negotiate a new equivalence agreement with the EU to facilitate exports of organic products. For details on this topic refer to the <u>EU-27 FAIRS</u>.

#### G. Food Samples

Product samples and mail-order shipments are treated like any other import.

#### H. Other

The FIC regulation 1169/2011 requires the European Commission to set out rules for the voluntary labeling of foods as "suitable for vegetarians and vegans." To date, the Commission has not adopted an EU-harmonized definition of the terms "vegetarian" and "vegan."

In July 2017, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled that plant-based products cannot be labeled with dairy names such as "cheese," "butter" or "milk". A list of exceptions for non-dairy products that may be labeled with reserved dairy names was established by <u>Commission Decision 2010/791</u>.

<u>The Wine Act</u> (Governmental Gazette NN32/2019) regulates wine and transposes the relevant EU regulations of the Common Market Order (CMO) of wine.

Beer is regulated by <u>the Regulation on Beer (NN142/2011, NN141/2013)</u>, and strong alcohol is regulated by <u>the Regulation on Production</u>, <u>Labeling</u>, <u>Protected Designations</u>, <u>Trade and Inspection of Strong Alcohols Drinks (NN76/2022)</u>.

These regulations transpose EU rules, so for details refer to the EU-27 FAIRS.

### Section VIII. Trademarks, Brand Names, and Intellectual Property Rights

Trademarks are legally protected in Croatia. A trademark is valid for 10 years, and after ten years the validity must be renewed. The number of renewals is indefinite.

Companies interested in registering trademarks or brand names must apply at the State Intellectual Property Office where information and forms are available. Information on the registration process in Croatia can be found on the State Intellectual Property Office's web page: <u>Trademarks</u>.

### Section IX. Import Procedures

Incoming goods must go through customs storage at transport terminals or airports. After goods arrive at the customs storage, the importer or freight forwarder should begin procedures for checking and clearing goods, which includes special documents that should be sent to the Inspection Departments and the Customs Office. The procedure begins at the State Inspectorate's Sanitary Inspection, which checks all products (except animal products, which are checked by the State Inspectorate's Veterinary Inspection). More specifically, from time to time, samples are taken for food safety, quality, and biotech testing. The importer must pay for product inspections. If products are flagged for further quality and/or health standard review their sale will be prohibited until the analytical results are returned and they are deemed to be safe. Customs clearance and removal from storage are carried out under the supervision of a customs officer who compares the documents with the commodities after they have been checked by the sanitary or veterinary inspector for quality, ingredients, and health standards. Complete information on EU import rules for food products may be found at <u>EU Import Rules</u>.

The original version of the certificate must accompany consignments at the point of entry into the EU. Each shipment should be accompanied by an original certificate; that is, certificates cannot apply to multiple shipments. Certificates must normally be drawn up in the language of the country of dispatch (English for the United States) and the Member State (MS) in which the border inspection takes place and the final destination. Member States may agree to accept certificates in another official EU language other than their own. For the Croatian market and border crossings, certificates must be in the official language of the Republic of Croatia, which is Croatian, as well as the MS where the border inspection occurs, if the product is not exported directly to the Republic of Croatia. All certificates can be found in Croatian on the EU Official Journal website (Eur-Lex) under the relevant regulation.

# Section IX: Trade Facilitation

Customs clearance for food products, if all documents are in order and no tests are pending, can be done in one day.

Croatia is a member of TRACES, the European Commission's multilingual online platform for sanitary and phytosanitary certification required for the importation of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin, and plants into the European Union, and the intra-EU trade and EU exports of animals and certain animal products, <u>TRACES</u>. Croatia is also live exchanging with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto Solutions.

## Appendix I. Government Regulatory Key Agency Contacts

Control over the products governed by the laws covering meat, animals (including animal breeding), and plants (including wine) are regulated by:

Croatian State Inspectorate (all inspection services, e.g. veterinary, sanitary, phytosanitary) Šubićeva 29, 10 000 Zagreb Croatia Tel: +385 1 23 75 100 e-mail: <u>pisarnica.dirh@dirh.hr</u> <u>https://dirh.gov.hr/</u>

Government of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Agriculture Grada Vukovara 78 10000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 6106 111 Fax. +385 1 6109 201 Email: <u>pisarnica01-MP@mps.hr</u> https://poljoprivreda.gov.hr/

Government of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Agriculture Planinska ulica 2a, 10000 Zagreb Veterinary and Food Safety Directorate Tel. +385 1 6443 828 Fax. +385 1 6443 200 Email: uprava.veterinarstva@mps.hr

Government of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Health Ksaver 200a 10 000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 4607 555 Fax. +385 1 4677 076 https://zdravstvo.gov.hr/

Control of metrological requirements for packages and bottles is regulated by:

State Office for Metrology Department for Metrology Capraška 6 10 000 Zagreb Tel: +385 1 563 52 93 Fax: +385 1 563 52 02 Email: pisarnica@dzm.hr http://www.dzm.hr/

General trade legislation is overseen by:

Government of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Grada Vukovara 78 10000 Zagreb Tel: +385 1 6106 111 http://www.mingo.hr/en

Waste disposal is regulated by:

Government of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development Radnička 80 10 000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 3717 111 Fax. +385 1 3717 149 http://www.mingo.hr/en

Intellectual property rights are regulated by:

State Intellectual Property Office of the Republic of Croatia Ulica grada Vukovara 78 HR - 10000 Zagreb CROATIA Receiving office Tel: +385 1 61 06 418 Fax: +385 1 61 09 660 Service for Customer Support and Professional Services (Information Centre for intellectual property -INCENTIV) Tel: +385 1 61 09 825 Email: info@dziv.hr http://www.dziv.hr/en/

### Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts

Useful contacts for general advice on food trade in Croatia:

Croatian Chamber of Economy (Commerce) Agriculture, Food Industry, and Forestry Department Rooseveltov trg 2 10000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 4826 066 Email: poljoprivreda@hgk.hr https://www.hgk.hr/s-poljoprivredu-prehrambenu-industriju-i-sumarstvo

Croatian Customs Alexandera von Humbolta 4a 10 000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 6211 300, +385 0800 1222 Fax. +385 1 6211 011, +385 1 6211 012 Email: ured-ravnatelja@carina.hr, javnost@carina https://carina.gov.hr/en

Selected food laboratories in Croatia:

Croatian Public Health Institute Department for Food Safety Rockefellerova 7 10 000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 4863 212 Email: info@hzjz.hr https://www.hzjz.hr/en/contact-us/

Public Health Institute "Dr. Andrija Štampar" Mirogojska cesta 16 10 000 Zagreb Tel.+ 385 1 46 96 111 Email:info@stampar.hr http://www.stampar.hr/en Croatian Veterinary Institute Savska cesta 143 10 000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 612 36 66 http://www.veinst.hr/en/

Quick information on establishing a Croatian company can be found at:

Hitro HR Email info@hitro.hr. http://www.hitro.hr/

For questions regarding other issues not covered in this report, please contact:

American Embassy Foreign Agricultural Service Thomas Jefferson St. 2 10000 Zagreb Tel. +385 1 665 8951

Information for reports on Croatia and other countries can be found at: <u>GAIN Reports</u>

Attachments:

No Attachments