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**Report Name:** Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards  
Export Certificate Report

**Country:** Nicaragua

**Post:** Managua

**Report Category:** FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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**Report Highlights:**

This report lists Nicaraguan requirements for export certification and import permits for agrochemicals, veterinary products, feedstuffs, and food products for human consumption. There were no significant changes to required export certificates since the 2021 Report. This report supplements the FAS/Managua 2022 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Report.

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs Managua for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this report, 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 PRODUCTS IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY’S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) and the Ministry of Health (MINSa) require registration of imported products prior to issuing import permits. IPSA is responsible for the inspection of agricultural products at ports and borders and the registration of animal feeds, agrochemicals and seeds, while MINSa regulates processed food registration. Every importer must request an import permit from IPSA or MINSa prior to the importation of any shipment. Importers request the import permits for processed foods to both MINSa and IPSA, except for bulk commodities and fresh produce which are only granted by IPSA due to phytosanitary risks. Importers must provide a copy of the commercial invoice, certificate of origin, and a health or phytosanitary certificate along with the import permits issued by the Government of Nicaragua.

**Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required by Government (Matrix):**

The following certificates are requested when the products (except for plants and animals) have been registered with IPSA or MINSA. Plants and Animals require an import permit, sanitary or phytosanitary certificate, a copy of the certificate of origin, and the commercial invoice.

<b>Product(s)</b>	<b>Title of Certificate</b>	<b>Attestation Required on Certificate</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Requesting Ministry</b>
Agrochemicals, Veterinary Products	Sanitary / Phytosanitary Import Permit  Certificate of Origin  Certificate of Qualitative / Quantitative Analysis  Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificates must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify the U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated requirements	IPSA
Feedstuffs	Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import permits  Certificate of Origin  Health Certificate  Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify the U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated requirements	IPSA
Plant Products and Sub-Products	Phytosanitary Import permit  Certificate of Origin  Phytosanitary Certificate  Certificate of Chemical Treatment (when applicable)	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify that the U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated phytosanitary requirements	IPSA

<b>Product(s)</b>	<b>Title of Certificate</b>	<b>Attestation Required on Certificate</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Requesting Ministry</b>
	Copy of the Commercial Invoice			
Animal Products and Sub-Products	Sanitary Import permit Sanitary Certificate Certificate of Origin Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify that the U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated sanitary requirements	IPSA
Processed Food	Sanitary Import Permit Certificate of origin Sanitary or Phytosanitary certificate Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificates must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify the U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated food safety requirements	IPSA and MINSA. The certificate of origin, sanitary or phytosanitary certificate and the commercial invoice are required by IPSA at the port or border of entry.

## **Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificates**

### **Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Permit**

The sanitary and phytosanitary import permit is the official document that authorizes the import of any product into Nicaragua. For processed foods, importers must request the import permit to both IPSA and MINSA, except for bulk commodities and fresh produce, which are under the sole jurisdiction of IPSA. In addition, IPSA regulates animal feeds, agrochemicals, and seed registration as well as imports. Depending on the type of product, IPSA or MINSA will review the application to ensure the product is eligible to enter the Nicaraguan market and that it complies with all of the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements established by Nicaragua. An import permit is valid for one shipment. If the import permit is not used within thirty days, the importer may request a renewal from the Government of Nicaragua. All other certificates, including the certificate of origin, phytosanitary certificate, sanitary certificate, commercial invoice, etc., do not have an expiration date.

## **Certificate of Origin**

The certificate of origin is submitted to customs to certify the country of origin of the goods. The minimum information a certificate of origin should contain is: name of issuer and contact information, customs tariff code and description of the merchandise, origin and date of the certificate. IPSA requests certificates of origin issued by chambers of commerce in the exporting country. In addition, when the General Customs Authority (DGA) has doubts of the product's origin, DGA may send the importer a questionnaire requiring additional information on the imported product. If the importer does not fill out the questionnaire, his or her company may be subject to penalties and fees. In the attached files, you can find a copy of the questionnaire of origin used by DGA.

## **Phytosanitary Certificate**

A phytosanitary certificate is used to attest that consignments meet phytosanitary import requirements. A phytosanitary certificate for export or re-export can be issued only by a public official who is technically qualified and duly authorized by a National Plant Protection Organization. In the United States, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) maintains the export program for the U.S. exports and foreign-origin plants and plant products. Please refer to PPQ's [export page](#).

## **Sanitary Certificate**

IPSA requires sanitary and health certificates for animals and animal sub-products. APHIS's Veterinary Services (VS) provides health certificates for live animals, including hatching eggs. APHIS sanitary certification of animal products for Nicaragua can be confirmed on the VS [Nicaragua page](#).

USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) provides sanitary certificates for poultry, beef and pork meat and products. FSIS lists eligible / ineligible products on its [Nicaragua page](#) in the FSIS Export Library.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issues health certificates for fisheries products. A copy of the latest NOAA health certificate for fisheries products is attached to this report.

## **Commercial Invoice**

A commercial invoice is a bill for the goods from the seller to the buyer. These invoices are often used by governments to determine the true value of goods when assessing customs duties. Governments that use the commercial invoice to control imports will often specify its form, content, and number of copies, language to be used, and other characteristics.

## **Certificate of Free Sale**

MINSA requests a certificate of free sale for product registration. The certificate of free sale must state that goods such as food items, cosmetics, biologics, or medical devices are legally sold or distributed in the open market, freely without restriction, and approved by the regulatory authorities in the country of origin. U.S. Exporters typically request certificates of free sale from U.S. chambers of commerce, State governments, and/or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Note: On October 1, 2018, FDA stopped issuing the certificate of free sale for most of its food products, including conventional foods, food additives, and substances that are in contact with infant food. FDA will instead be issuing the “Certificate to a Foreign Government” or the “Certificate of Exportability” for most food products under its jurisdiction. However, FDA will continue issuing the certificate of free sale only for dietary supplements, medical foods, and foods for special dietary use. A copy of FDA’s new certificates are attached at the end of this report.

### **Certificate of Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

IPSA requires a certificate of quantitative and qualitative analysis for agrochemicals and veterinary products. The certificate provides information about active components of the product and is issued by the manufacturer. Please refer to the 2022 FAIRS Country Report for more information.

### **Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificates**

A competent government authority from the exporting country must issue all required certificates and the products (agrochemicals, animal feeds, food products, etc.) must be registered in Nicaragua prior to export. Please refer to the 2022 FAIRS Country Report for registration requirements for different products. The certificate of free sale required by MINSA for product registration must state that the product is freely sold in the country of origin and that the product is suitable for human consumption. IPSA may require specific attestations when animal or plant health outbreaks develop in the exporting country. In such cases, IPSA will provide importers with a detailed outline of the attestation for the export/(phyto)sanitary certificates.

### **Section IV. Government Certificate’s Legal Entry Requirements**

IPSA or MINSA must issue an import permit prior to each importation. The importer requests the import permit with supporting information, including of a copy of a (phyto)sanitary certificate, certificate of origin, and a commercial invoice. Consistent information such as amount, description, origin, and point of shipping must be stated in the request form. MINSA requires that processed food products be registered in Nicaragua prior to importation. Product samples for non commercial use are allowed one entry without registration, but they must be accompanied by a certificate of free sale.

Sanitary and phytosanitary technical officers review the supporting documents and inspect a product at the time of entry. An import permit is valid for one shipment. If the import permit is not used within thirty days, the importer may request a renewal from Government of Nicaragua authorities. IPSA and MINSA will accept only certificates issued by the competent government authorities of the exporting country. When shipments do not meet Government of Nicaragua import requirements, products are normally detained at the port of entry for sampling. Samples are subject to laboratory analysis to determine their physical and chemical characteristics. A product may be subject to destruction or re-export, depending on its condition as determined by government authorities.



## **Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements**

Currently, there are no additional import requirements that apply or are associated with plant, animal or processed food products being certified in conformance with Nicaragua's laws.

## **Appendix I. Electronic Copy or Outline of Each Export Certificate**

Please refer to attached documents.

**Attachments:** [NTON 11 005-08 - Nicaragua Phytosanitary Requirements \(Spanish only\).doc](#)

[IPSA \(Phyto\)Sanitary Import Permit.pdf](#)

[CAFTA-DR Certificate of Origin \(Example\).pdf](#)

[Certificate of Origin Issued by a Chamber of Commerce \(Example\).pdf](#)

[Commercial Invoice \(Example\).pdf](#)

[FDA Certificate of Exportability.pdf](#)

[NOAA Health Certificate for Fishery Products.pdf](#)