

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Bermuda

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

FAIRS Country Report

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Report Highlights:

Sections Updated: I, II, V, VI, IX and Appendices I & II.

Overall Bermuda is very receptive to U.S. products. Bermuda accepts USDA and FDA food standards and regulations on all food products imported from the United States. A few products, mainly meat, have specific import requirements, but they can be easily met by U.S. suppliers. On the other hand, milk imports are generally prohibited, and imports of select produce items may be temporarily restricted as well. Product clearance is usually quick and straightforward.

Section I. Food Laws:

NOTE: This report was prepared by the Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office of the USDA/ Foreign Agricultural Service in Miami, Florida for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was 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 PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.

The main law governing food products is the Public Health Act 1949 and its implementing regulations (Public Health Food Regulations 1950). Traditionally, most all foods complying with the requirements of the country of origin can be imported into Bermuda. There are several regulatory agencies involved with the importation of food products. The main regulatory agency is the Ministry of Health's own Department of Health. The Department's Environmental Health Office ensures food safety in food production, importation, storage and preparation. Through the Department's Central Government Laboratory it also provides water and food analysis. The Department of Environmental Protection, a dependency of the Ministry of the Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy, is also engaged with regulating the importation of live animals, milk, animal products, plants, plant products, and pesticides. To some extent, the Department of Consumer Affairs, a dependency of the Ministry of Culture and Social Rehabilitation, may also be involved with food product imports when involving food quality issues.

As in most islands, enforcement of most food requirements and regulations is done at the port of entry. However, products are also monitored at the retail and wholesale level, primarily by the Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Protection. The Department of Conservation Services, through the Government Marketing Center, also monitors produce at both the retail and wholesale level. The Department of Consumer Affairs may also be involved in enforcement of product recalls.

Section II. Labeling Requirements:

Bermuda has no food labeling legislation. To date, local producers have been operating under a voluntary agreement of understanding with the Government, where they provide some basic information on the labels, such as:

- Name of product
- Name of Manufacturer or Distributor
- Address and contact number of Manufacturer or Distributor
- List of all ingredients in descending order of quantity
- Additives- Natural or Artificial
- Net quantity of the food (by weight if solid, by volume if liquid)

U.S. labels continue to be fully acceptable.

The Public Health Act does have some important provisions related to imported foods, which state that no person may import into Bermuda any food that:

- a) has been manufactured or prepared under unsanitary conditions; or
- b) has been adulterated; or
- c) is not permitted to be sold, or whose sale is restricted in the country from which it is exported.

As a general rule of thumb, the Government of Bermuda also requires that labels be applied to all foods prior to being exported to Bermuda.

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations:

1. Packing and container regulations exist for water, milk and cream only. For artificially sweetened aerated water, the Public Health (Food) Regulations 1950 state: “A person shall not sell, or have for the purposes of sale or other disposal in the way of trade or business, artificially sweetened aerated water in any can, bottle, or other container unless that can, bottle or other container is of a kind or size approved by the Chief Medical Officer.”

2. The following is a schedule of type and specification of manufactured milk:

Filled Milk (Red Container)

Low Fat Filled Milk (Pink Container)

Recombined Skim or Skimmed Milk (Green Container)

Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:

Bermuda has regulations pertaining to food additives, but they are quite outdated. Government regulators generally rely on internationally accepted Codex standards and on the requirements from the country of origin of the product in question.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

The Pesticide Safety Act was passed in 2009. The Department of Health and the Department of Environmental Protection work jointly to regulate the importation, sale, use and storage of pesticides. All pesticides must be registered with the Department of Environmental Protection prior to entry.

Registration applications should be submitted with the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and a copy of the pesticide label. Until now, Bermuda authorities have followed the lead of Codex standards in terms of prohibited products and maximum residue limits (MRL's). For more information contact the Department of Environmental Protection. See Appendix I for contact information.

Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

Milk: The Importation of Milk (Prohibition) Act 1997 prohibits the importation of any of the following dairy products into Bermuda:

- Raw milk
- Pasteurized milk
- Ultra-pasteurized milk
- Ultra heat treated milk
- Manufactured milk

The few, if any, permitted milk products fall within the purview of the Public Health Act's Public Health (Milk and Dairyfarm) Regulations of 1952, which reads: "Notwithstanding anything contained in these regulations, no milk shall be imported into Bermuda or if imported sold or offered for sale for human consumption unless it is milk of a type which has been approved in writing by the Chief Medical Officer. No such approval shall be granted unless the Chief Medical Officer is satisfied:

- a) as to the source and quality of the milk;
- b) as to the methods of heat treatment of the milk and the packing operations in respect thereof;
- c) as to the chemical and bacteriological standard of the milk;
- d) as to the manner and conditions under which the milk is transported to Bermuda and the distribution thereof within Bermuda;
- e) as to the capacity, type and material of the container in which the milk is packed and that the capacity of any such container does not exceed the capacity specified in writing by the Chief Medical Officer."

More information can be found in the Importation of Milk (Prohibition) Act 1997 and in the Public Health Act's Public Health (Milk and Dairy Farm) Regulations of 1952, which are available via Bermuda Laws Online. See Appendix I for more information.

Produce: The Government of Bermuda may prohibit the importation of select products for plant quarantine purposes. Products on a quarantine embargo include:

- fresh, unfrozen citrus originating in Florida;
- fresh, unfrozen papaya;
- fresh, unfrozen sweet potato/North American yam;
- fresh, unfrozen corn on the cob;
- carrots (fresh, unfrozen, whole or shredded larger than 2 mm in diameter);
- fresh, unfrozen produce originating in the Caribbean; and
- fresh, unfrozen mangoes (unless they are certified to have been hot water treated at a USDA approved facility and bear an official stamp).

More information on the subject can be found in the Plant Protection and Animal Husbandry Guidelines for Vessels Entering Bermuda's Waters (2012). These guidelines are available from the Department of Environmental Protection. See Appendix I for contact information.

In addition, the Government of Bermuda may also prohibit the importation of specified fresh fruits, vegetables and flowers into Bermuda during unspecified periods throughout the year when local supply is abundant. Importers are generally well aware of embargoed products as they receive periodic notices from the Bermuda Government. For a complete and current listing of embargoed products, U.S. exporters must refer to the most recent Embargo notice issued by the Government Marketing Centre. See Appendix I for contact information.

Meat: All meat imported into Bermuda, except as described below, must be accompanied by an 'Official Certificate' provided by the Official Meat Inspection Authority of the exporting country.

Persons arriving in Bermuda by ship or aircraft are permitted to import as a part of their accompanied passenger baggage up to 20lbs of meat for their own consumption without an "Official Certificate."

The following meats and meat products may be imported in any quantities without an "Official

Certificate":

- meat cooked or otherwise prepared (i.e. smoked hams, bacon);
- meat in airtight containers (i.e. canned meats);
- rendered animal fats;
- pies, sausages, or other prepared or manufactured articles of food containing any meat or cooked or dried meat; and

The following meat items are prohibited:

- a) scrap meat, trimmings or other pieces with or without bone, of such shape or condition as to afford insufficient means of identification with a definite part of a carcass;
- b) meat comprising the wall of the thorax or abdomen from which any part of the pleura or, except in the case of a pig, the peritoneum has been detached, other than a necessarily removed in preparing the meat; and
- c) meat from which a lymphatic gland, except a gland necessarily removed in preparing the meat, has been removed; and
- d) the head of an animal without submaxillary glands.

More information can be found in the Public Health (Imported Meat) Regulations 1956 which is available via Bermuda Laws Online. See Appendix I for more information.

Fish: Imported fish must be clearly identified by species and by the country of origin or export. It must also be certified as to its quality by the health authority of the country of origin or export. The Government of Bermuda prohibits the possession of any of the following "protected fish" lighter in weight or smaller in size than the size or weight specified below.

- black rockfish 95cm (37ins) fork length
- monkey rockfish 50cm (20 ins) fork length
- red hind 35cm (14 ins) fork length
- hog fish 45cm (18 ins) fork length
- yellowtail snapper 30cm (12 ins) fork length
- lane snapper 25cm (10 ins) fork length
- yellow fin tuna 3.2kg (7lbs)
- wahoo 3.2kg (7lbs)
- bigeye tuna 3.2kg (7lbs)
- bluefin tuna 115cm (45 ins) fork length or 30kg (66lbs);
- swordfish 125cm (49 ins) lower jaw to fork length or 25kg (55lbs)
- blue marlin 114 kg (250 lbs)
- white marlin 23 kg (50 lbs)."

In addition, a license is required to import live fish and fish intended for the wholesale market. Importation of certain protected marine organisms is prohibited. More information can be found in the Fisheries Act of 1972, Fisheries Regulations of 2010 and Fisheries Orders which are available via Bermuda Laws Online. See Appendix I for more information.

Lobster: Seasonal protection and minimum size limits are also applied to the importation of any Caribbean spiny lobster (Bermuda/Florida/Bahamian lobster). The closed season is April 1st through

August 31st of each year. The minimum size permissible is a carapace length of 3 5/8 inches (92mm) as measured from the end of the carapace to the ridge at the base of the horns. In the case of frozen lobster tails, the minimum weight is 12 ounces (340 grams).

More information can be found in the Fisheries Regulations of 2010 which are available via Bermuda Laws Online. See Appendix I for more information.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards:

Standard weights and measures are required for imported food.

Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:

Trademark Registration is governed by the Trade Marks Act of 1974, the Trade and Service Marks Regulations of 1993, and the Trade Marks (Modification and Amendment) Act of 1991. Trademark registration is carried out by the Intellectual Property Office of the Registry General, which is part of the Ministry of Business Development and Tourism. Registration of trademarks for imported foods and beverages is voluntary, but recommended. Registration of a trademark can be completed by anyone through a local agent/law firm. Initial registrations are granted for a 7 year period and are renewable indefinitely for 14 year periods. U.S. suppliers interested in conducting searches of registered trademarks and/or registering their own trademarks may contact the Registry General for further information (See Appendix I).

Section IX. Import Procedures:

U.S. suppliers should be aware that the vast majority of cargo shipped to Bermuda is transported in 20 ft. rather than 40 ft. containers. This is due mainly to road limitations which make trucking 40 ft. containers throughout the island very difficult. Under special circumstances, the import of 40 ft. containers is allowed, but permission must be obtained in advance by the importer in order for special logistical arrangements to be made.

Customs clearance is done by the importer or nominated agent. The process is electronic to a large extent, and thus cargo clearance is handled expeditiously in most cases. After arrival at the port, a customs officer will inspect the shipment and documentation (i.e. customs declaration, commercial invoice, packing list, certificate of origin, etc.), prior to the shipment being released to the importer. All plants and plant parts (including floral material) must have prior approval from the Department of Environmental Protection, in the form of an import permit, to enter Bermuda. All plants, plant parts (including floral material) and plant products must be inspected by the Department of Environmental Protection prior to release to the importer. Duty is paid directly to H.M. Customs with checks payable to the Accountant General. Bermuda's complete tariff schedule is available on-line (see Appendix I for more information).

Cargo arriving on ship in Hamilton will be inspected on weekdays during normal working hours. Any shipments arriving outside this time frame will be held until the following week. Under special circumstances, and with prior approval, cargo may be inspected on Sundays. Flight arrivals are guaranteed to be inspected on arrival. Customs will work until the last expected shipment arrives. However, additional fees may apply when such clearance is outside normal working hours, even on weekdays.

General guidelines for completing the Bermuda Customs Declaration (BCD) form may be found in Public Notice 17. Specific guidelines relating to imports, proformas, deposits, adjustments, exports and temporary imports may be found in Public Notice 17 Supplementals 1-6. H.M. Customs Bermuda has a detailed review and appeals process, which is outlined in Public Notice 15 of 2007. A copy of all notices can also be obtained at the H.M. Customs Bermuda website (see Appendix I for more information).

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

FOR FOOD SAFETY ISSUES FOR MOST IMPORTED FOOD PRODUCTS INCLUDING MEAT PRODUCTS:

Mr. George Simons
a/Chief Environmental Health Officer
Department of Health
Ministry of Health
P.O. Box HM 1195
Hamilton HM EX
Phone: (441) 278-5333
Fax: (441) 232-1941
E-Mail: gwsimons@gov.bm

FOR IMPORTS OF LIVE ANIMALS AND MILK:

Dr. Jonathan Nisbett
Government Veterinary Officer
Department of Environmental Protection
Ministry of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy
P.O. Box HM-834
Hamilton, Bermuda HM-CX
Phone: (441) 236-4201
Fax: (441) 232-0046
E-mail: animals@gov.bm
Website: www.animals.gov.bm

FOR IMPORTS OF PLANTS, PLANT PRODUCTS AND PESTICIDES:

Ms. Terry Lynn Thompson
Senior Plant Protection Officer
Department of Environmental Protection
Ministry of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy
169 South Road
Paget DV 04, Bermuda
Phone: (441) 236-4201
Fax: (441) 232-4866
Email: tthomps@gov.bm; plants@gov.bm

FOR INFORMATION REGARDING EMBARGO NOTICES (PRODUCE):

Mr. Thomas Sinclair
Agricultural Officer
Government Marketing Centre
Department of Conservation Services
Ministry of Public Works
Phone: (441) 292-4611
Fax: (441) 292-1967
E-mail: tjsinclair@gov.bm

Note: The Government Marketing Centre is transitioning to the Department of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy. The move is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2013.

FOR IMPORTS OF SEAFOOD PRODUCTS:

Dr. Tammy Trott
Senior Marine Resources Officer
Marine Resources Division
Department of Environmental Protection
Ministry of the Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy
Bermuda
Tel: (441) 293-5600 ext. 2225
Fax: (441) 293-2716
E-mail: ttrott@gov.bm

FOR TRADEMARK REGISTRATION:

Mrs. Thelma Trott
Acting Registrar General
Registry General
1st Floor, Government Administration Building
30 Parliament Street
Hamilton HM12, Bermuda
Tel: (441) 297-7706
Fax: (441) 292-4568
E-mail: tetrott@gov.m

FOR CUSTOMS AND TARIFF INFORMATION:

Classification & Valuation
H.M. Customs Bermuda
Ministry of Finance
Custom House PO Box HM 2084
Hamilton HMHX
Phone: (441) 295-4816, (441) 278-7422/23
Fax: (441) 295-5392
E-mail: customs@gov.bm (General Inquiries); tariffclass@gov.bm (Tariff Classification Officer);

customs_valuation@gov.bm (Customs Valuation Officer).

USEFUL WEBSITES

The websites below are provided for the readers' convenience; USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with the information contained in such websites.

1. <http://www.bermudalaws.bm/>

This search engine provides information on practically all Bermuda laws and regulations.

2. <http://www.customs.gov.bm>

H.M. Customs Bermuda website provides comprehensive information related to import procedures and regulations, customs forms, exchange rates to be used for customs purposes, as well as Bermuda's complete tariff schedule.

3. <http://tariff.bermuda.arembeis.com/browse.tcl>

Provides easy tariff search system for all types of products by HS product descriptions.

Appendix II. Other Import Specialist Contacts:

Caribbean Basin Agricultural Trade Office

Foreign Agricultural Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture

909 SE 1st Avenue, Suite 720

Miami, FL 33131

Tel: (305) 536-5300

Fax: (305) 536-7577

E-mail: atocaribbeanbasin@fas.usda.gov

Website: www.cbato.fas.usda.gov

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