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Venezuela

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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Report Highlights: The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is responsible, through its different Ministries, for issuing import permits, import licenses and conducting processed food product registrations. This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in Caracas for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. While all 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 or registration requisites with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped.

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

Product(s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Imported food and beverages	Sanitary Certificate of Country of Origin (equivalent to Free Sale Certificate)	Fulfill health requirements according to local sanitary authorities. See Section II.	Food safety	MINSALUD (Ministry of Health)
Imported plant products	Phytosanitary Import Permit	Fulfill health requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection. See Section II.	Health certificate	INSAI (Ministry of Agriculture)
Imported animal products	Sanitary Import Permit	Fulfill health requirements according to import permit and sanitary inspection. See Section II.	Health certificate	INSAI (Ministry of Agriculture)
Basic agricultural products (See list-Section III)	Import licenses	Importers are required to present a “certificate of non-production or insufficient food production” in order to obtain the import licenses. Section II	Trade	MINAL (Ministry of Food)

A. Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin

The Food Hygiene Division within the Ministry of Health (MINSALUD) requires the Sanitary Certificate of Origin (Spanish: *Certificado Sanitario del país de Origen*) to ensure that the food or beverage imported into Venezuela is also commercialized in the country of origin. In other countries they are also known by other names, such as Certificate of Free Sale, Health Certificate, Export Certificate, Sanitary Certificate, and/or Certificate of Origin.

B. Phytosanitary Import Permit or Certificate

INSAI, Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral, the Venezuelan Animal and Plant Health agency within the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, requires a Phytosanitary Certificate (Spanish: *Certificado Fitosanitario*) to ensure that import requirements are met in order to control the risk of pest and diseases entering into Venezuela. Certificates are issued by the sanitary authority of the exporting country.

C. Sanitary Import Permit or Certificate

INSAI requires a Sanitary Import Certificate (Spanish: *Permiso Sanitario de Importación*) to prevent the importation of animals, or their by-products, with sanitary problems in order to protect the domestic animal health and to ensure food safety. The sanitary certificate, submitted by the sanitary authority of the exporting country, must comply with local import requirements.

D. Import Licenses

MINAL, Ministry of Food issues import licenses (Spanish: *Licencias de Importación*) to importers for basic agricultural products considered as essential by the Government. Under its World Trade Organization (WTO) commitments, Venezuela is entitled to administer tariff rate quotas for up to 62 HS code headings. The tariff rate quotas are administered through an import license regime.

Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)

According to the Venezuelan harmonized tariff schedule, imports of food and agricultural products are subject to a list of requirements given by its “tariff regime” (Spanish: regimen legal). The requirements include sanitary import permits or certificates, import licenses, and product registration.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (BRV) is responsible, through its different Ministries, for issuing import permits, import licenses, and product registration. The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAT) issues import permits; the Ministry of Food (MINAL) issues import licenses and the Ministry of Health (MH) grants food registration for all domestic and imported processed food products. Foods not registered in the country of origin cannot be registered in Venezuela.

The BRV requires a “sanitary certificate” from the country of origin. Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are approved by authorities on a case-by-case basis.

1. Animal Products and Unprocessed Plant Products

The Venezuelan Agricultural Health Service or INSAI (Spanish: Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral) and agency within the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for quality control and inspection of everything related to the manufacture, processing, importation, exportation, storage, distribution, and marketing of food, biological products, medications and animal feed, as well as for the laboratories that control the quality of these products. INSAI is equivalent to APHIS in the United States.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary import permits

INSAI is in charge of issuing phytosanitary or sanitary import permits for imported products and sub products of plant or animal origin, and animals and plant breeding material. The following guidelines are provided by INSAI:

- Prior to importing animal products and/or unprocessed plant products, importers should request and obtain a sanitary health (SPS) import permit from INSAI.
- Required SPS statements (treatment and other conditions) for each type of product are decided by INSAI on a case-by-case basis.
- Required SPS statements are written on the import permit issued by INSAI.
- The “remarks” section of the export certificate on FSIS or APHIS letterhead certificate should include the required SPS statements, and should be written both in English and Spanish.
- An APHIS veterinarian or equivalent FSIS official must sign the export certificate.
- No product should be loaded in a vessel before the import permit is received and the sanitary statements required are written on the USDA export certificate.
- INSAI’s import permits have a non-renewable period of validity of between 60 and 90 days, depending on the product:
 - Sanitary import permits are issued for animal products and livestock-farming inputs (valid for 60 days).
 - Phytosanitary import permits are issued for plant products (valid for 90 days).

- Import permits are only valid for one shipment.
- Every shipment must be accompanied by an import permit and its corresponding APHIS or FSIS export certificate.

Import Licenses

Import licenses are valid for one year, and can only be renewed if, upon expiration, they have not been used for reasons outside the importer’s control. When applying for a license, established importers are required to submit a monthly list of imports actually realized, indicating volume and value, together with the invoice on the most recent import that indicates the volume and value of the merchandise. The importer must indicate the amount of the allocated quota that remains unused, which in some cases is reincorporated into the quota to be reassigned. Importers are required to obtain a “certificate of non-domestically produced or insufficient food product” from Ministry of Commerce, as well as other requirements in order to obtain the import licenses. The following is the list of products that are subject to import licenses:

List of Products that Require Import Licenses

HS CODE	PRODUCT
1005	Yellow corn
1007	Sorghum
1201	Soya beans
1207	Palm nuts and kernels
1507	Soya bean oil
1510	Other oils
1511	Palm oil
1512	Sunflower seed oil
1513	Coconut oil
1515	Other vegetable fats and oils
1518	Animal and vegetable fats
1522	Degras, yellow grease
2304	Soya bean cake
0401	Milk and cream, not concentrated
0402.10	Milk in powder, not exceeding 1.5% fat
0402.21	Whole milk 26%
0406	Cheese

2. Processed Animal Products

An FSIS certificate must accompany each shipment of meat and poultry and/or products. Below are the certificate requirements of the Venezuelan Government currently included in the FSIS export certificate library. Importers are required to have an import permit before importing meat and poultry products. All FSIS inspected meat and poultry plants are eligible to export to Venezuela.

Eligible/Ineligible Products

- A. Eligible:
 - 1. Pork is eligible to export to Venezuela. (Most recent revision on 04/06/2006)
 - 2. Natural pork casings. (Most recent revision on 04/06/2006)
 - 3. Cooked poultry products
- B. Ineligible
 - 1. Ruminant meat and ruminant meat products. (Most recent revision on 04/06/2006)

Documentation Requirements

A. Beef, mutton and lamb - Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness

B. Pork and Pork Products

- 1. Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness
- 2. The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5:
 - a. *The meat was derived from animals that were born and raised in the United States or Canada;*
 - b. *The meat was received from slaughter and processing of clinically healthy swine, which originated from premises and localities free from infectious animal diseases, including swine vesicular disease and African swine fever; and*
 - c. *The meat comes from establishments or pork herds submitted under official control, in which in the last 24 months, trichinosis cases have not been detected or the product was submitted to freezing according to USDA 9 CFR 318.10 (c)(2), which guarantees the destruction of the parasite.*

Note (for information-this is not a required statement): The term "infectious animal diseases" means that, at the time of slaughter, the animals were not under official quarantine or any other State or Federal restriction due to disease and passed *antemortem* and *postmortem* inspection.

- 3. In addition to the above statements which are required for pork meat, exporters or their agents must provide the following certification on company letterhead:
 - a. *The meat is shipped in refrigerated containers that guarantee its temperature; and*
 - b. *The containers were washed and disinfected using products approved by the exporting country.*

Note: This certificate is not signed by FSIS personnel. However, it must include the MP number from the FSIS 9060-5 for identification with a particular shipment.

C. Cooked poultry products - Obtain FSIS Form 9060-5 Export Certificate of Wholesomeness. The following statements must be included in the "Remarks" section of FSIS Form 9060-5: *"Cooked poultry product was cooked, reaching an internal temperature of not less than 68° C (155° F)."*

D. Animal Casings - Obtain FSIS form 9060-18, Animal Casings Export Certificate for Countries Requiring Ante-Mortem, Post-Mortem, and Sound and Clean Statements

E. The importer must obtain a health import permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Animal Health and Industry Administration.

Plants Eligible to Export

All Federally inspected meat and poultry plants are eligible to export to Venezuela. (Most recent revision on 04/06/2006)

3. Processed Food Products

All domestic and imported processed food products must be registered with the Government of Venezuela, through its Ministry of Health (MINSALUD) before it can be sold to Venezuelan consumers. With the exception of special cases, such as Government or military sales, as determined by MINSALUD, all new-to-market foreign food products must be submitted for registration before being imported. MINSALUD, through its Sanitary Control Service (Spanish Servicio Autónomo de Contraloría Sanitaria) and its Food Hygiene Division (Spanish: División de Higiene de los Alimentos), supervises food safety.

The registration of the processed food product is valid for five years. After five years, a new application may be made to MINSALUD for renewing the registration. (Although Venezuelan law does not prohibit foreign exporters registering food products, a local consultant or agent may prove to be the best resource to complete the food registration process.) For further information, please refer to GAIN Report No. VE1215.

No specific certificate from the exporting country is required at the time of entering Venezuelan ports, if the product has been already registered with MINSALUD.

Required documents for Registering Imported Food Products in Venezuela

1. Complete the form (SIE-5-197) from the Sanitary Food Registry Division of (Spanish: Registro Sanitario de Alimentos, RSA) MINSALUD and attach a stamp duty
2. Certificate of Free Sale and Consumption in force, issued by the competent authorities of the country of origin. This should be apostilled or sealed by a Public Notary.
3. Notarized Power of Attorney from the Manufacturer to the Importer
4. Certificate of the Physicochemical and Microbiological Analysis from the country of origin issued by the official laboratory
5. Authorization from the Importer to the representative or advisor to do the Sanitary Registration (Notarized Power of Attorney)
6. Three (3) Originals Labels of the product as it is sold in the country of origin
7. Proposed Draft labels

8. Copy of the Importer Mercantile Registry (Company Registry)

9. One product control sample

10. Physico-chemical and microbiological analyses of the product made in Venezuela, as specified by the COVENIN norms. The food products listed below should go to the labs of "Instituto Nacional de Higiene Rafael Rangel" or to other official laboratories:

Meat products, wheat flour, fish products, dairy products (except ice-cream), poultry products and their derivatives, corn flour, food supplements of vitamins and minerals, dietary supplements, food products that declare nutrition properties, special dietary, infant formula, wheat flour, natural products qualifying to be registered within RSA, fortified foods, liquors, and those which are outside the above list can go to private laboratories accredited by SENCAMER.

NOTE: In order to register a product, all documents issued abroad must be authenticated by the Venezuelan Consular officials accredited in the country of origin and are valid for one (1) year, counted from the date of issuance, and if written in a language other than Spanish, must be translated into Spanish by a certified public interpreter.

Free Sale Certificate

Venezuela requires sanitary export certificates issued by competent authorities in the country of origin. The certificate must state that the food is for human consumption, processing, or for use as an input in food for human consumption in the country of origin, with a period of validity of 12 months from the date of application. The Venezuelan authorities do not accept sanitary export certificates issued by local or states authorities; they must be endorsed by FDA and/or USDA-APHIS, depending on the product.

These Free Sale Certificates do not always satisfy the certification requirements of the Venezuelan Custom Authorities (SENIAT) which may ask for additional information or testing. If this is the case, after a scientific evaluation, the Venezuelan APHIS equivalent, INSAI, will decide whether or not to accept the Free Sale Certificate. INSAI has the authority to recommend the acceptance of the Certificate. However, INSAI has a long history of accepting "Free Sale Certificates" from third countries, based on common sense and its scientific knowledge.

Sometimes there may be situations where customs officials may not accept certain semi-processed and processed food products that are normally exempt from "sanitary certificates" issued by third countries in these cases it is necessary to get an explanatory letter from the USDA which states that the products considered have been processed or manufactured to the extent that there is negligible risk of harboring injurious plant pests and in that sense are not eligible for Federal Phytosanitary certification. The Certificate of Free Sale and Consumption issued by competent authorities in the country of origin must be "apostilled" or stamped by a Public Notary as per The Hague Convention on Foreign Public Documents.

4. Wood Packing Material

All wood packaging materials arriving into Venezuela must carry the agreed international seals certifying that the wood has been treated as recommended by the international conventions after August

1, 2005, “Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade” under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC).

Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificate(s)

Specific sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) statements (treatment and other conditions) are required for each type of product and are determined by INSAI’s authorities on a case-by-case basis. They are provided by INSAI authorities when an application for an import permit is submitted by an importer.

Section IV. Government Certificate’s Legal Entry Requirements

- Original Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin need to accompany the product at the time of entry.
- Sanitary Certificates from the country of origin are only accepted for one shipment and one specified port of entry.
- The Venezuelan Government does not accept “Suppliers or Manufacturers Export Declaration” as proof of compliance.
- For processed food products no specific certificate from the exporting country is required at the time of entering Venezuelan ports, if the product has been already registered within MINSALUD.
- The Venezuelan Government does not accept sanitary export certificates by US state-level authorities.

Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements

The Venezuelan Government provides information about import requirements through its harmonized tariff schedule (Spanish: Arancel de Aduanas). The following table lists the import requirements (Legal Regimen):

Import Requirements

Legal Regime	Description
Note 1	Prohibited Import
Note 2	Imports reserved to the Government
Note 3	Permit from the Ministry of Health
Note 4	Permit from the Ministry of Commerce
Note 5	Sanitary Certificate from the Country of Origin
Note 6	Sanitary Permit from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 7	Permit from the Ministry of Defense
Note 8	Import License administered through the Ministry of Food
Note 9	Import License administered through the Ministry of Commerce
Note 10	Permit from the Ministry for the Environment
Note 11	Permit from the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum
Note 12	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Health

Note 13	Sanitary Registry issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
Note 14	Permit from the Ministry of Food
Note 15	Permit from the Ministry of Basic Industries and Mining

Source: SENIAT/ Official Gazette No. 5.774 June 28, 2005

Author Defined:

APPENDIX A

A. Services and Agencies under the MINISTRY OF HEALTH

(Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Salud –MPPS)

Servicio Autónomo de Contraloría Sanitaria

Dirección de Higiene de Alimentos (equivalent to the FDA)

Address:

Edificio Sur, Piso 3, Of. 313

Centro Simón Bolívar, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 408-0502 / 408-0474 / 408-0482

Fax: (58-212) 483-1533 Web-page: <http://sacs.mpps.gob.ve/siacs/index.php>

Instituto Nacional de Higiene Rafael Rangel

Gerencia de Control y Registro de Alimentos

Ciudad Universitaria UCV, Los Chaguaramos, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 219-1670 / 219-1663 Web-page: <http://www.inhrr.gob.ve/pa/index.html>

B. Services and Agencies under the MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND LANDS (MAT)

Ministerio de Agricultura y Tierras (equivalent to the Department of Agriculture)

Address:

Av. Urdaneta, Esquina de Platanal a Candilito,

Edificio MAT (antiguo edificio Fondo Común)

La Candelaria

Caracas, Venezuela

Tel: (58-212) 509-0188/0121/0111

Tel: (58-243) 672-6880

Fax: (58-212) 574-2432 Web-page: <http://www.mat.gob.ve>

Instituto Nacional de Salud Agrícola Integral -INSAI

(Equivalent to the US Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-APHIS)

Address:

Avenida Principal Las Delicias

Sector El Toro, Edificio INIA, dirección El Castaño,

Maracay, Estado Aragua

Tel/Fax: (58-243) 241-4090

E-mail: insaipresidencia@gmail.com or presidencia@insai.gob.ve

Web-page: <http://www.insai.gob.ve>

C. MINISTRY OF FOOD

Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Alimentación

Address:

Av. Andrés Bello, Edif. Las Fundaciones

Caracas, Venezuela

Tel: (58-212) 507-2649/ 507-2647 / 395-7474

E-mail: minpalexportaciones@minpal.gob.ve

Web-page: <http://www.minpal.gob.ve>

D. USDA/ FAS Caracas Office Contact Information

Office of Agricultural Affairs

American Embassy

Calle F c/c Suapure, Colinas de Valle Arriba

Caracas, 1070, Venezuela

Tel: (58-212) 907-8333

Fax: (58-212) 907-8542

Email: AgCaracas@fas.usda.gov

Web-page: <http://caracas.usembassy.gov>

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