Croatia

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

FAIRS Country Report

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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 the 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 US food exporters are listed in the Appendices. All sections of this annual report were updated in November 2014.
Section I. Food Laws:

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the US Foreign Agricultural Service in (Zagreb, Croatia) for US 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 US 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.

This report outlines specific requirements for food and agricultural product imports into Croatia. Croatia, as a member of the European Union, follows the EU directives and regulations. It is therefore recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) report produced by the US Mission to the European Union. 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 and http://www.hah.hr/zakonska.php English translation of some of the legislation can be found at: http://www.mvep.hr/hr/hrvatska-i-europska-unija/hrvatska-i-europska-unija0/prijevodi-pravnih-propisarpublike-hrvatske/

Croatia’s food legislation consists of the following key laws and implementing regulations:

-- The Food Act (Governmental Gazette NN81/2013, NN14/2014);
-- The Law on Food Hygiene and Microbiological Criteria for Food (Governmental Gazette NN81/2013);
-- The Act on Protected Designations of Origin, Protected Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialties Guaranteed (NN80/2013, NN14/2014);
-- The Law on Water for Human Consumption (Governmental Gazette NN56/2013);
-- The Law on Food Additives, Aromas and Food Enzymes (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013);
-- The Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013);
-- The Law on the Import of Food and Feed from Third Countries (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013);
-- The Law on Food for Special Nutritional Purposes (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013);
-- The Law on Materials and Objects in Direct Contact with Food (Governmental Gazette NN25/2013, NN41/2014)
-- The Law on Contaminants (Governmental Gazette NN39/2013)
-- The Law on the Transposition of the EU Regulation 396/2005 on Maximum Residue Levels of Pesticide in and on Food and Feed of Plant and Animal Origin (Governmental Gazette 80/2013)
-- The Law on Genetically Modified Organisms (Governmental Gazette NN70/2005, NN137/2009, NN28/2013, NN47/2014);
Section II. Labeling Requirements:

A. General Requirements


EU Regulation 1169/2011 establishes new horizontal food labeling requirements, which will become applicable on December 13, 2014, except for the new mandatory nutrition declaration requirement, which will apply from December 13, 2016. This means that until December 13, 2016, Croatian authorities will accept nutritional labeling done in accordance with the Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients (NN39/2013) or nutritional labeling in accordance with the EU Regulation 1169/2011. However, companies are advised to switch to the EU Regulation 1169/2011 as soon as possible. Food that is placed on the market or labeled before December 13, 2014 may be sold until stocks are exhausted. Part B of Annex VI to Regulation 1169/2011 setting out specific requirements for the designation of minced meat has already been in effect since January 1, 2014. The European Commission has prepared a “Questions and Answers on the Application of Regulation 1169/2011 on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers” which can be found on its website at http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/docs/qanda_application_reg1169-2011_en.pdf. The EU’s Food and Drink Industry Confederation has published a guidance document “Guidance on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers”. Several Member States have also published guides to compliance with Regulation 1169/2011, including the UK “The Food Information Regulations 2013 – Guide to compliance” and Ireland “Overview of changes to food labeling introduced under the new Food Information Regulation”. At the moment, Croatia does not appear to have any specific claims, besides those prescribed in the EU Regulation 1169/2011.

B. Requirements for Other Specific Labeling Requirements
For Nutritional Labeling Requirements and Nutritional/Health Claims see the Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients (NN39/2013);

For Medical/Health/Nutrition Claims see http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/nutrition-health-claims/

For Foods Containing or Derived from Genetically Modified Substances see the Law on the Transposition of EU Regulation 1829/2003 on GMO Food and Feed and Regulation 1830/2003 on Traceability and Labeling of Food and Feed Derived from GMOs that Amends EU Directive 2001/18/EC (NN18/2013, NN47/2014). Food and feed containing genetically engineered ingredients must have special, additional information on the label that informs consumers of all of its characteristics, that is, in Croatia a product must be labeled as GMO if it contains more than 0.9% of an approved event.

For Novel Foods see the law on the Transposition of EU Regulation 258/97 on Novel Food and Novel Food ingredients (NN18/2013, NN47/2014) regulates the labeling of novel foods. For details refer to the EU-28 FAIRS report (http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/fairs-reports/).

Additional information can be found at:

Ministry of Health
Directorate for Sanitary Inspection and Public Health
Ksaver 200a, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia
Tel: +385 1 4607 622,
Fax: +385 1 4607 631,
http://www.zdravlje.hr/ministarstvo/djelokrug/uprava_zalzantrarnu_inspekciju_i_javno_zdravstvo/nova_hrana

Further details on labeling of food and some specific food products (e.g. beef, wine, fruit juice, etc.) can be obtained from the FAS office in Zagreb.

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 Council Directive 76/211/EEC, as amended and transposed to Croatian Regulation on Measuring Requirements for Prepackaged Products of Constant Filling Marked with Weight or Volume (NN57/2013).

EU Directive 2007/45/EC abolishes older regulations on mandatory pack sizes at both the EU and national levels. The Directive sets sizes for all prepackaged products except wine and spirits and coffee. Mandatory nominal quantities for wines and spirits are set out in the Annex to Directive 2007/45/EC.
This was transposed in Croatia’s Regulation on Nominal Quantities of Prepackaged Products (NN56/2013).


Croatia is currently in the process of changing its waste disposal policy and practical Transposition of this policy. The new Law on Sustainable Waste Management (NN94/2013) mandates that the Government of Croatia pass new regulations on waste disposal, which will include new rules on packaging material waste.

The limitations on each type of packaging material are described in the Law on Materials and Objects in Direct Contact with Food (NN25/2013, NN41/2014). This regulation adopts EU Parliament and Council regulations and EU Commission regulations on this topic.

Section IV. Food Additives Regulations:

Additives are regulated by The Law on Food Additives, Aromas and Food Enzymes (NN39/2013). Furthermore, Croatia applies the EU Regulations and does not have specific, national requirements for additives. For details on EU regulations see the EU-28 FAIRS 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 EU Regulation 1333/2008 and Regulation 1334/2008 on flavorings.

New additives, flavorings and enzymes can be added to the list according to EU Regulation 1331/2008, which proscribes 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 EFSA on which the approval procedure is based. For details on EU procedure see EU-28 FAIRS report (http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/fairs-reports/).

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants:
The maximum content of certain pesticide or pesticide residues in foodstuffs is governed by The Law on Transposition of the EU Regulation 396/2005 on Maximum Residue Levels of Pesticides in or on Food and Feed of Plant and Animal Origin (NN80/2013). Other contaminants in food are regulated by the Law on Contaminants (NN39/2013), which incorporates all EU regulations dealing with contaminants, for details, see EU-28 FAIRS report (http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/fairs-reports/).

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 details see EU-28 FAIRS report (http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/fairs-reports/).

According to the Law on Transposition of the EU Regulation 1107/2009 on Placing of Plant Protection Products on the Market (NN80/2013), all pesticides must be registered. For details, see the EU-28 FAIRS report (http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/fairs-reports/).

U.S. exporters can obtain a list of approved pesticides at the EU level at:
http://ec.europa.eu/sanco_pesticides/public/?event=homepage&CFID=1031115&CFTOKEN=40636422&jsessionid=0904a9e85f1cf8f3aa805b3211e5d6c736aTR

Section VI. Other Regulations and Requirements:

A. All shipments that contain food go through a sanitary inspection. Random tests are conducted on GMO content and compliance with health standards.

B. In October 2010, Croatia published special import conditions for mandatory testing of almonds. However, as of September 3, 2014 special EU Import Conditions for U.S. Almonds are no longer applicable following the publication of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 884/2014 of 13 August 2014 imposing special conditions governing the import of certain feed and food from certain third countries due to contamination risk by aflatoxins and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1152/2009. With the removal of special import conditions for US almonds, the presence of a VASP (Voluntary Aflatoxin Sampling Plan) certificate will no longer be a pre-condition for import into the EU. However, the Almond Board of California strongly advises its members to continue to use the VASP certificate. The lifting of special measures will have no effect on testing levels for shipments with a VASP as those as those had already been lowered to random levels in January 2010. Shipments without a VASP will likely be subject to higher than random import control levels. With the complete removal of special import conditions, the use of the Common Entry Document and the prior notification of goods to the competent authorities at the designated port of entry will no longer be mandatory.

C. Product samples shipped via express mail and food for fairs are treated like any other food import-they must comply with the health standards and are randomly sampled. The invoice must also state that it is a sample and free of charge - then it is treated as a sample.
Section VII. Other Specific Standards:

A. Consumer packaging or municipal waste disposal, see Section III.

B. Only metric weights and measures are accepted.

C. Fortification of foods with vitamins and minerals is permitted. In this case, labeling must be carried out per the Regulation on Citing Nutritional Value of Food (NN29/2009) and the Law on Nutritional and Health Claims and Food Enriched with Nutrients (NN39/2013).

D. Food products produced from substances derived from GMOs are regulated by the Food Act (NN81/2013, NN14/2014); the Law on the Transposition of EU Regulation 1829/2003 on GMO Food and Feed and Regulation 1830/2003 on the Traceability and Labeling of Food and Feed Derived from GMOs that Amends EU Directive 2001/18/EC (NN18/2013, NN47/2014); the Instruction on Placing on the Market in the Republic of Croatia of GMO food and feed (NN83/2013).

Novel foods are regulated by the Law on the Transposition of EU Regulation 258/97 on Novel Food and Novel Food Ingredients (NN18/2013, NN47/2014);

E. Dietetic or special use foods fall under the Law on Food for Special Nutritional Purposes (NN39/2013).

F. Food sanitation: This subject is covered by the Law on Food Hygiene and Microbiological Criterions for Food (NN81/2013).

Only a small number of foods are authorized to be preserved with ionizing radiation according to the Regulation on Food Treated with Ionization Radiation (NN 38/2008). Ionization of food needs to be stated on the food label.

G. 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 import 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 Service, Ministry of Agriculture, for contact information please see Appendix I

Croatian wine legislation is based on the EU wine legislation. The Croatian Wine Act, including related ordinances, transposes the relevant EU regulations of the Common Market Order (CMO) of wine. Croatia, however, has maintained its individuality. Three general quality designations are recognized: table wine, wine of quality, and “top quality” wine. The categories are determined by the quality of processed grape, yield per hectare, amount of alcohol and other natural ingredients and organoleptic (sensory) properties. Mandatory information on the label should include: wine category, real alcoholic strength, net quantity, for some wines (sparkling) - amount of sugar, for some wines (protected GI, etc) traditional name, origin, bottler for still wines, producer for sparkling wines, lot number, importer and amount of allergens. Additional data on the label can include: geographical area of production, vintage (for wines with at least 85 percent of the grapes from that vintage), grape variety, bottling place, etc.

Wines from third countries can be marked only as wine or as wine with geographical origin.


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

Section VIII. Copyright and/or Trademark Laws:

Trademarks are legally protected in Croatia. A trademark is valid for a period of 10 years, and after ten years the validity has to 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 all information and Transposition forms are available. Some information and Transposition forms can also be obtained at the State Intellectual Property Office web page: http://www.dziv.hr/en/intellectual-property-protection/trademarks/, http://www.dziv.hr/files/File/obrasci/zig/z-1.pdf

Besides trademark protection in the national offices of the EU Member States, there is possibility to protect a Community Trade Mark. A Community Trade Mark (CTM) is valid in all Member States of the European Union, and the registration procedure is carried out by the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (OHIM) with headquarters in Alicante, Spain. A CTM is valid in the European Union as a whole, it is not possible to limit protection geographically only to certain Member States.

Protected Geographical Indications (GI)

Third countries can have their geographic names for food and wine recognized and protected at the EU level, which is then also valid in Croatia.


Contact information for State Intellectual Property Office:

State Intellectual Property Office of The Republic of Croatia
Ulica grada Vukovara 78
HR - 10000 Zagreb
CROATIA
Director General's office
Tel: +385 1 61 06 100
Fax: +385 1 61 12 017

INCENTIV - Information center for intellectual property (information and customer services)
Tel: +385 1 61 09 825
Fax: +385 1 61 12 017
e-mail: info@dziv.hr
Receiving office
Tel: +385 1 61 06 418
Fax: +385 1 61 12 017

Section IX. Import Procedures:

Incoming goods must go through customs storage at transport terminals or airports. After the goods arrive at the customs storage, the importer or freight forwarder should start procedures for checking and clearing goods, which includes special documents that should be sent to the Inspection Departments and the Customs Office. The procedure starts at the Sanitary Inspection Department of the Ministry of Health, which checks all products (except animal products, which are checked by the Veterinary Inspection Department from the Ministry of Agriculture). 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 of suspicious quality and/or health standards their sale will be prohibited until the analytical results are returned and they are deemed to be safe. Customs clearance and removal from storage is carried out under the supervision of a customs officer who compare the documents with the commodities after they have been checked by the sanitary or veterinary inspector for quality, ingredients and health standards.

Customs clearance for food products, if all documents are in order, can be done in one day.

Complete information on EU import rules for food products may be found at:
Import certificates must be in the official language of Croatia, which is Croatian that is of the Member State where the border inspection occurs. In Croatia, according to the Law on Import of Food and Feed from Third Countries (NN39/2013), the responsible party in the import procedure is obligated to provide inspectors with analytical reports and certificates in the Latin alphabet and translated into Croatian. For the time being, however, the English version of certificates is being accepted by the inspection team although it is expected that the goods start arriving accompanied with bilingual certificates (English and Croatian).

Appendix I. Government Regulatory Agency Contacts:

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

Government of the Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
Tel. +385 1 6106 111
Fax. +385 1 6109 201
E mail: office@mps.hr
www.mps.hr

Government of the Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Agriculture
Planinska ulica 2a,
10000 Zagreb
Veterinary Directorate
Tel. +385 1 6443 540
Fax. +385 1 6443 899
E mail: veterinarstvo@mps.hr
www.mps.hr

Control over products that are governed by the food law (all food except meat), including sanitary inspection, are regulated by:

Government of the Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Health
Ksaver 200a
10 000 Zagreb
Directorate for Sanitary Inspection
Tel. +385 1 4607 622
Fax. +385 1 4607 631
http://www.zdravlje.hr/
Control of metrological requirements for packages and bottles as measuring containers is regulated by:

State Office for Metrology
Department for Metrology
Grada Vukovara 284/6
10 000 Zagreb
Tel: +385 1 563 00 00
Fax: +385 1 370 00 01
E-mail: pisarnica@dzm.hr
http://www.dzm.hr/en/

General trade legislation is overseen by:

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Economy
Grada Vukovara 78
10000 Zagreb
Tel: +385 1 6106 111
Fax: +385 1 6109 110
www.mingo.hr

Control over the laws dealing with waste disposal are regulated by:

Government of Republic of Croatia
Ministry of Environment and Nature Protection
Ulica Republike Austrije 14
10 000 Zagreb
Tel. +385 1 3717 111
Fax. +385 1 3717 149
http://www.mzoip.hr

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
Fax. +385 1 4561 545
E mail: poljoprivreda@hgk.hr
www.hgk.hr
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
E-mail: ured-ravnatelja@carina.hr, javnost@carina
http://www.carina.hr/Test/ConstructionEN.aspx

Selected food laboratories in Croatia:

Croatian Public Health Institute
Department for Food Safety
Rockefellerova 7
10 000 Zagreb
Tel. +385 1/4863-222
E-mail: hzjz@hzjz.hr
http://hzjz.hr

Public Health Institute "Dr. Andrija Štampar"
Mirogojska cesta 16
10 000 Zagreb
Tel.+ 385 1 46 96 111
Fax. + 385 1 64 14 006
E-mail:info@stampar.hr
http://www.stampar.hr

Croatian Veterinary Institute
Savska cesta 143
10 000 Zagreb
Tel. +385 1 612 36 66
Fax: +385 1 619 08 41
E-mail: ured@veinst.hr
http://www.veinst.hr/en/

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

Hitro HR
Tel. 0800 0080
E-mail info@hitro.hr.
http://www.hitro.hr/Default.aspx?sec=43

EMBASSY (USDA/FAS) POINT OF CONTACT

For questions regarding other issues not covered in this report, please contact:
Ms. Andreja Misir
American Embassy
Foreign Agricultural Service
Thomas Jefferson St. 2
10000 Zagreb
Tel. +385 1 665 8951
Mob. +385 91 455 2365
E mail: andreja.misir@usda.gov

Information for reports on Croatia and other countries can be found at:
http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Pages/Default.aspx