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POLICY

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India

Post: New Delhi

Updated Guidelines for Importing Trade Shows Samples

Report Categories:

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Beverages

Retail Foods

Snack Foods

FAIRS Subject Report

Market Promotion/Competition

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Report Highlights:

The report updates previous guidance concerning the shipment of samples to trade shows in India.

Importers will now have to provide an affidavit stating how samples will be used, destroyed, or re-exported. In addition, the Government of India issued guidelines to food safety officials working in ports. This report is based on discussions with local officials, freight forwarders and notifications from food safety authorities.

Disclaimer: This summary is based on a cursory review of the subject regulations and therefore should not be viewed under any circumstance, as a definitive reading of the regulation in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests.

The report replaces [IN3063](#) and provides an updated overview of requirements for shipping samples to trade shows in India. These are gleaned from discussions with food safety and customs officials, local freight forwarders and a review of official documents. Trade show participants should work closely with their Indian representative, trade show organizer or prospective importer to ensure that their products comply with Indian requirements. The rule of thumb for shipping samples is if the samples will be consumed in India, the samples are subject to the same requirements as a general import. If samples are not for consumption, the import requirements may be simplified.

- The U.S. exporter, or the exporter's Indian representative, notifies Indian customs authorities of their intent to ship samples by executing an end-user bond (*to establish the end use of the product*). The U.S. exporter has to clearly state whether the sample will be used for consumption at the show (no consumption of samples outside the show is permitted) or used only for display purposes. If the sample is meant for consumption, then the sample shipment will be treated the same as an actual food import shipment and will be subject to testing under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI). For more information on shipment clearance procedures, please refer to the [Food Import Clearance System \(FICS\) manual](#). If the samples are intended for display only, customs authorities will likely clear the shipment directly, i.e. without inspection by food safety officials.
- In the event that testing is required, FSSAI inspectors will take a sample for testing. If the sample meets FSSAI requirements it will be cleared for use at the trade show. For more information on FSSAI requirements visit <http://www.fssai.gov.in>. In some cases, FSSAI may relax some packaging or labeling requirements depending on the nature of the product. As a rule of thumb, local freight forwarders indicate that exporters should expect that food safety officials will take about 10 percent of their trade show product samples for further testing.
- While there is no official process of approving labels prior to shipment, an importer may be able to work with a local FSSAI office to obtain feedback concerning a proposed label.
- On February 6, 2014, FSSAI issued new [guidelines for authorized officers](#) to follow for food articles imported for display purposes in a trade shows and exhibitions. Importers are now required to provide an affidavit clearly stating that after the conclusion of the trade event, the imported food articles will be properly destroyed or re-exported to the country of origin.

Documents Required

- Commercial Invoice/Bill of Entry (clearly state that imported food articles meant for display at trade)
- Certificate of Origin
- Free Sale Health Certificates
- Import Permit from Indian Plant Quarantine and a Phytosanitary Certificate – *For Fresh Vegetable and Plant Products*
- Copy of the Bill of Lading
- Copy of the end-user customs bond or undertaking executed, if any.
- Certificate of participation at the trade show
- Stuffing List / Packing List (in the case of multiple food items packed in a single container).
- Affidavit for post-show disposal of food articles either by destruction or re-exports to country of origin.

Prohibited Items

Imports of most U.S. animal and livestock-derived food products are effectively banned because the United States cannot comply with Indian import requirements. This includes dairy products classified in Chapter 4 and Chapter 21 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule, poultry meat, lamb and mutton, seafood, goat, and pork products including pet foods. Imports of beef are banned due to religious concerns.

Additional reports

The following reports may be of interest to U.S. exporters interested in India. These, and related reports prepared by this office, can be accessed via the FAS Home Page: www.usda.fas.gov by clicking on “Attaché Reports” and searching by the report number. Reports given below will provide additional information to exporters interested in Indian market.

[IN3164](#) - FAIRS Country Report

[IN3161](#) - FAIRS Export Certificate Report

[IN3152](#) - Exporter Guide

[IN3150](#) - Retail Foods

[IN3153](#) - Food Processing and Ingredients

[IN3151](#) - Food Service: Hotel Restaurant Institutional Annual 2013

[IN3027](#) - E-retailing Grocery Market in India

[IN3056](#) - India’s Quick Service Restaurant Sector Growing