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**Report Highlights:**

Panama recognizes the certificates and standards of the U.S. regulatory and sanitary inspection system, based on the United States – Panama Agreement regarding certain sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical standards affecting trade in agricultural products, of December 20, 2006, simplifying requirements for the importation of U.S. food and feed products. Panama is accepting the electronic export certificates issued by APHIS and FSIS; and the sanitary and free sale certificates issued by NOAA, FDA and Enterprise Florida, Inc. for food products exported to Panama. There is a free trade agreement in force since October 31, 2012, named the U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) which has the United States with 66% of the market share of food and feed imports in Panama.

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### Disclaimer

This report was prepared by the OAA in Panama City, Panama 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.

### Executive Summary

The [United States – Panama Agreement regarding certain sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical standards affecting trade in agricultural products](#), of December 20, 2006, established that all U.S. federally inspected establishments for meats and poultry are eligible to export to Panama. Other food products, including but not limited to dairy products from the United States, do not require plant-by-plant approval to export to Panama. U.S. federal government or state government certificates are accepted to accompany each shipment to Panama.

The Panamanian Food Agency (known as APA in Spanish); MINSA's National Directorate for Food Control and Veterinary Surveillance (DNCVV in Spanish) and/or MIDA's Executive Directorate of Agricultural Quarantine (DECA in Spanish) are the competent authorities for all U.S. export certificates for food and feed imports into Panama.

Panama accepts the USDA/APHIS Electronic Phytosanitary Certification (ePhyto).

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

The U.S-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement ([TPA](#)) entered into force on October 31, 2012. As outlined in the TPA, Panama issued special regulations that apply to imports of food and feed products from the United States. Due to certain sanitary and phytosanitary measures, and technical standards affecting trade in agricultural products, Panama recognizes the certificates and standards of the U.S. regulatory and sanitary inspection system.

A copy of the *United States – Panama Agreement regarding certain sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical standards affecting trade in agricultural products*, can be downloaded from the website of the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) in the following hyperlinks:

[December 2006 SPS Letter Exchange](#)

[Feb/Mar 2013 SPS Letter Exchange](#)

[June 2014 SPS Letter Exchange](#)

The certificates required by the Government of Panama, through the Panamanian Food Agency (known as APA in Spanish); Ministry of Health (MINSA); and/or Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) that must accompany the shipments from the United States are:

<b>Products</b>	<b>Title of Certificate</b>	<b>Attestation Required on Certificate</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Requesting Authority</b>
Meats and poultry	FSIS Export Certificate of Wholesomeness (FSIS form 9060-5)	Certifies that exported meats or poultry products come from approved establishments by USDA/FSIS, meet veterinary sanitary requirements and are fit for human consumption.	Food Safety	APA and MINSA
Egg products	FSIS Egg Product Export Certificate of Wholesomeness (FSIS Form 9060-5EP)	Certifies that exported egg products come from approved establishments by USDA/FSIS, meet veterinary sanitary requirements and are fit for human consumption.	Food Safety	APA and MINSA

Fresh vegetables and fresh fruits, grains in bulk loads or in bags	APHIS Phytosanitary Certificate (PPQ Form 577) and ePhyto	Certifies that exported vegetables, fruits or grains are inspected by USDA/APHIS/PPQ inspectors, meet phytosanitary import requirements and are free of quarantine pests, it varies by product. Panama accepts the USDA/APHIS Electronic Phytosanitary Certification (ePhyto).	Phytosanitary	APA and MIDA
Seafood and fishery products	NOAA's Export Health Certificate for fishery products	Certifies that exported seafood or fishery products come from approved establishments by NOAA, meet veterinary sanitary requirements and are fit for human consumption.	Food Safety and Animal Health	APA and MINSA
Dairy products	Certificate of Free Sale of the product, or any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your state authority (Agriculture or Health); or USDA/AMS Sanitary Certificate for Exports; or, USDA/APHIS Export Certificate for Animal Products (VS Form 16-4) <a href="#">FDA Certificates for Exportability and Certificates to a Foreign Government for food for human consumption,</a>	A Certificate of Free Sale of the product, or any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority within the last 12 months, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your State authority (Agriculture or Health), in which certifies that the product is fit for human consumption and complies with the Sanitary regulations in your State. A list of States authorities can be found at: <a href="https://www.fas.usda.gov/certificate-free-sale-point-contact-list">https://www.fas.usda.gov/certificate-free-sale-point-contact-list</a> Also, for dairy products the USDA/AMS Sanitary Certificate for Exports or, the USDA/APHIS Export Certificate for Animal Products (VS Form 16-4) can be used.	Food Safety	APA and MINSA

Fresh shell eggs for human consumption	USDA/AMS Disease Free Certification Statements for Panama; and USDA/AMS Fresh Shell eggs Grading Certificate for consumption (AMS Form PY-210S).	USDA/AMS has specific Disease-Free Certification Statements for Panama for avian influenza and New Castle disease; the AMS grading certificate will state the grading, volume, and physical characteristics of the fresh shell eggs.	Food Safety, Animal Health and Quality requirements.	APA and MINSA
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<p>All processed food products for retail, bottled or packaged in some form with given name and brand</p>	<p>A Certificate of Free Sale of the product; or  Any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your State authority (Agriculture or Health); or  A Supplier or Manufacturer's Declaration.</p> <p>In the case of the State of Florida, the Certificate of Free Sale is issued by Enterprise Florida, Inc.</p> <p>The FDA's Certificates for Exportability and Certificates to a Foreign Government for food for human consumption, can be used to accompany shipments of U.S. food exports to Panama.</p>	<p>Certifies that the exported product is fit for human consumption and complies with the Sanitary regulations in your State; the Supplier or Manufacturer declaration must be on company letterhead, stating that the product is fit for human consumption.</p>	<p>Food Safety</p>	<p>APA and MINSA</p>
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Pet Food	USDA/APHIS Export Certificate for Animal Products (VS Form 16-4)	<p>Additional certification statements on USDA APHIS export certificates that accompany U.S. shipments of pet food containing animal origin ingredients to Panama are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The products may be freely sold in the United States as pet food.</li> <li>2. Dry, semi-moist, and dehydrated pet food products were subjected during processing to a heat temperature designed to ensure the destruction of pathogenic agents harmful to animals.</li> <li>3. Canned pet food products have been treated in hermetically sealed containers with an F0 of 3.0 or more.</li> <li>4. The product has been hygienically handled and packed in clean containers made of impermeable, hermetic, and strong materials that are sufficient to protect the product from environmental contamination and safeguard commercial sterility obtained during thermal processing.</li> </ol>	Animal Health	APA and MINSA
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**Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)**

The purposes of the above certificates are intended for food safety, animal health and phytosanitary requirements, depending on the type of product. The Panamanian Food Agency (known as APA in Spanish); MINSA’s National Directorate for Food Control and Veterinary Surveillance (DNCAVV in Spanish) and/or MIDA’s Executive Directorate of Agricultural Quarantine (DECA in Spanish) are the competent authorities to require all the above certificates for food and feed imports into Panama.

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

APA and DECA requires an additional declaration under the Phytosanitary Export Certificate (issued by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) for specific pests depending on the vegetable or grain product that is going to be exported to Panama, or a sprout inhibitor application on shipments of U.S. table stock potatoes. In order to meet this requirement for table stock potatoes, APHIS recommends that as part of the shipping documents the shipper provide a "Packer Affidavit" stating that a sprout inhibitor application on shipments of U.S. table stock potatoes has been given.

Potatoes must be free of the following pests: *Ditylenchus destructor*, *Ditylenchus dispaci*, *Phthorimaea operculella*, *Pratylenchus penetrans* and *Tylenchorhynchus claytoni*. In addition, potatoes must be produced in a free area of potato purple top or apply anti sprout fumigation, except for the State of Washington.

Onions must be free of the pest *Ditylenchus dispaci* and must be stated in the Additional Declarations line of the APHIS/PPQ Phytosanitary Export Certificate.

Onions and potatoes must have the harvest, packing, and expiration date, on each bag label, based on the respective technical regulations: [DGNTI-COPANIT 52-2017 for Onions](#), and [DGNTI-COPANIT 65-2019 for Potatoes](#).

For the importation of rice (*Oryza sativa L.*) milled, packaged, or re-packaged for human consumption and /or for processing originating in Asia, coming from the United States of America, the shipment must be accompanied by a phytosanitary export or re-export certificate, issued by USDA APHIS with the following additional declarations:

1. The rice has undergone a process of inspection and sampling, and during the storage period in the United States of America, the grains were not exposed to the risk of pest infestation or infection or pollutants.
2. The rice comes free of live insects of any kind, as well as other biological, chemical, and physical contaminants, including soils.
3. The phytosanitary export or re-export certificate must include an additional declaration certifying that the rice is free of *Trogoderma granarium*.

In accordance with the sanitary import requirements published on [Resolution AUPSA-DINAN-008-2018 of April 13, 2018](#), all seafood imports, including fish meal for human consumption, can only be imported into Panama if they come from eligible countries, regions, zones, or facilities recognized by the Government of Panama. This import requirement is applicable for all the countries.

The certifying authority of the exporting country must certify that the products comply with the analysis control laboratory tests for maximum limits of chemical residues established for seafood and aquaculture for human consumption, as set at [MINSA's Resolution No. 368 of May 15, 2009](#).

In addition, the certifying authority of the exporting country must certify that the products comply with the analysis control laboratory tests for maximum limits of microbiological residues established for seafood and aquaculture for human consumption, as set at [MINSA's Resolution No. 765 of July 27, 2010](#).

Laboratory analysis will not be required in the case of heat-sterilized, hermetically sealed, cooked, pasteurized products subjected to heat treatment (or an equivalent time / temperature combination that has been shown to inactivate the viruses).

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

APA is the Government of Panama agency created to oversee all processes of food importation. In compliance with the bilateral SPS agreement, they receive requests for food and feed products sanitary



registration and provide answers within 24 hours up to 21 days. This procedure can be made online and is free of charge. The submission of documentation as indicated in this section may be done through [APA's website](#), which is user friendly but only available in Spanish.

In 2021, the Government of Panama issued [Law 206 of 2021](#), which eliminated AUPSA and created APA and returned the regulatory authority over food imports to the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the Ministry of Health. All procedures for food imports, exports, and local food industry production will be submitted through [APA's website](#), as a single window, using the Integrated Processing System (SIT in Spanish) to request: sanitary food registrations; sanitary and phytosanitary import requirements for food and feed products; prior notifications for food imports; plant approvals, among others. These procedures are regulated through [Executive Decree No. 125 of September 29, 2021](#).

Articles 37 and 38 of Law 206 of 2021, establishes that sanitary and phytosanitary import requirements for food and feed products, sanitary registrations, approved food facilities, and sanitary and phytosanitary eligibility of countries issued by AUPSA will remain in force until their expiration date, or until the competent authorities (MIDA or MINSA) modifies them.

Also, on May 14, 2021, the Ministry of Health created the National Directorate for Food Control and Veterinary Surveillance (DNCAVV in Spanish), through [Executive Decree No. 770, 2021](#). On March 6, 2024, the National Assembly of Panama approved the Law that creates under the Ministry of Health, the National Directorate for Food Control and Veterinary Surveillance (DNCAVV in Spanish), this law is still pending for Panama's President signature to enter into force. DNCAVV replaces the former Food Protection Department, and the former Zoonosis Control Department of the Ministry of Health, merging them into a higher-level National Directorate under the Minister of Health. DNCAVV is responsible for approving and issuing the sanitary operations permits; processing, retail, and slaughtering facilities approvals; the sanitary registrations for local and imported food products; and all the sanitary requirements related to food safety.

According to Article 24 of [Law 206 of March 30, 2021](#), all processed food products for retail, bottled or packaged in some form with given name and brand, must be [registered](#) at the Panamanian Food Agency (APA), prior to importation. This means that all food products intended for retail as a final product for direct consumption should be registered before import, sale, or trade, including alcoholic beverages, snacks, and canned food, among others.

Based on the article 7 of the [United States – Panama Agreement on Certain Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures and Technical Standards affecting Agricultural products of December 20, 2006](#), for food Product Sanitary Registration, the importer or the exporter must send the following information:

1. Product Name
2. Name and address of the product manufacturer, packager, or distributor, as specified on the label.
3. Product description as stated on the label.
4. Product ingredients (in descending order by weight) as stated on the label.
5. For U.S. food products either:
  - a. A **Certificate of Free Sale** of the product, or any other certificate issued by any U.S. federal or state or local authority within the last 12 months, such as a Sanitary Certificate issued by your State authority (Agriculture or Health), in which certifies that the product is fit for human

consumption and complies with the Sanitary regulations in your State. This Certificate of Free Sale can be used for multiple shipments of the same products.

- b. A **Supplier or Manufacturer's Declaration**, on company letterhead, stating that the product is fit for human consumption.

In addition, to enable APA to corroborate the above information, it is necessary to send the legible scanned copy of the label and bar code.

The originals of such documents shall be presented at the APA's Registry office, within a period of 30 working days. Also, APA will accept electronic documents in a printable .pdf format, including the FDA's *Certificates for Exportability and Certificates to a Foreign Government for food for human consumption*, which can be verified online.

Sanitary registration for U.S. origin food products shall remain in effect as long as the information provided remains unchanged. Starting October 1, 2021, APA requires an [inscription for the import of raw materials](#), ingredients, and additives, such as fresh meats (which are not packed and ready for retail, or which are used for food service or food processing), fresh vegetables and fresh fruits, dry beans, grains in bulk loads or in bags, dairy product in bulk loads or in bags for further processing, and ingredients and additives for the process of a final food product. This inscription needs to be accompanied by a Technical Sheet, with the following information:

1. Name of the manufacturing or exporting company on letterhead paper
2. Name and description of the product.
3. List of Ingredients (if applicable)
4. Country of origin or full address on letterhead of the establishment.
5. Product characteristics.
6. Physical, chemical and/or microbiological specifications (essential in products of animal origin)
7. Product packaging, container and/or presentation material (kilograms, or liters).
8. Shelf life of the product.
9. Storage conditions.

The technical sheets must have the signature of the person in charge or the stamp of the establishment, which endorses or validates the information presented. The safety data sheets (MSDS) or data sheet, the analysis or quality certificates, the HACCP, Kosher, Halal, private certifications, among others, and the official sanitary or phytosanitary certificates, are not considered by APA, as a technical data sheet or specification of a product, for the inscription of raw materials, ingredients, or additives.

## **Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements to ensure market entry**

To import any agricultural food or feed into Panama, an importer must present upon arrival of the shipment at the Point of Entry into the country, the following documentation:

- a) [Prior Notification Form made in APA's online system](#) (SIT in Spanish), this prior notification must be made 48 hours prior to the arrival of the shipment at the Port of Entry).
- b) Certificate issued by the official authority of the United States, according to the type of food, as listed in Section I of this report.
- c) Product's Certificate of Origin

- d) Copy of the product's Commercial Invoice
- e) Pre-customs or customs declaration.

As stated above in Section IV, Panama has an online Sanitary Registration process for statistical purposes in APA, for all processed food products for retail, bottled or packaged in some form with given name and brand.

All U.S. exporting or manufacturer facilities seeking to export food or feed to Panama shall ensure compliance specifically with the Technical Regulations for the following products:

- Cereals, Pastas, Wheat flour
- Ethylic alcohol for alcoholic beverages
- Rum (local)
- Fruit and Vegetable juices
- Fruit nectars
- Tomato juice
- Orange juice concentrate
- Orange juice
- Milk and Dairy Products
- Vegetable oils
- Animal fats
- Sugar
- Onions
- Table salt
- Additives
- Colors
- Fish, frozen
- Fishmeal
- Beef and products
- Poultry and products
- Eggs and egg products

Complete information (in Spanish language) may be accessed at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry website for [Technical Regulations](#).

All U.S. federally inspected establishments for meats and poultry are eligible to export to Panama. The list of these can be found at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/inspection/establishments/meat-poultry-and-egg-product-inspection-directory>

Panama does not have plant-by-plant approval requirements for the United States in accordance with [article 8 of the United States – Panama Agreement regarding certain sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical standards affecting trade in agricultural products, of December 20, 2006](#).

#### **APPENDIX I. Electronic Copy of the above export certificates**

- Attachments of the certificates listed in section I.

**Attachments:** [APHIS PPQ Form 577.pdf](#)

[APHIS VS Form 16-4 sample.pdf](#)

[Certificate of Free Sale Example \(1\).pdf](#)

[Enterprise Florida Inc. Certificate of Free Sale Example.pdf](#)

[FDA Certificate of Exportability food for human consumption Sample.pdf](#)

[FDA Certificate to a Foreign Government food for human consumption Sample.pdf](#)

[Fresh Shell Eggs Certificates samples.pdf](#)

[FSIS Form 9060-5 S sample and guidelines.pdf](#)

[FSIS Form 9060-5 sample and guidelines.pdf](#)

[FSIS Form 9060-5EP-instructions and sample.pdf](#)

[NOAA Export Health Certificate.pdf](#)

[certificado-de-origen-tpc.pdf](#)