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Report Highlights:

This report is an annual update of Venezuela's agricultural product import standards and enforcement mechanisms for U.S. exporters of agricultural commodities, foods, and beverages. Political uncertainty continues for Venezuela, yet the country remains a distinctly promising market for U.S. agricultural exports. In 2024, U.S. agricultural product exports to Venezuela totaled \$800 million, and the United States was the largest supplier of agricultural and food products by volume with 39 percent market share. Current U.S. sanctions exempt transactions related to the export of agricultural and food products and do not prevent export certificate issuance by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, the 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 all import requirements with their foreign customers, who are typically 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.**

Some links to websites in this document may not function depending on the physical location of the accessing device or network.

The USDA is unable to officially verify information provided with the host country due to the 2019 suspension of U.S. embassy operations in Caracas. Exporters are strongly advised to work closely with Venezuelan importers to confirm the information contained here.

Note for Exporters: The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) administers economic sanctions related to Venezuela. Exporters should review the [OFAC U.S. Department of the Treasury](#) website for further details. These sanctions exempt transactions related to the export of agricultural and food products and do not prevent the USDA's issuance of export certificates.

Executive Summary

From 2011-2020, Venezuela's economy lost 87 percent of its gross domestic product through a prolonged recession. Since 2021, the Venezuelan economy has mostly stabilized due to tacit economic liberalization, informal dollarization, and gradually lower inflation. At the same time, domestic agricultural production, imports, and consumption have risen.

After falling 1.2 percent in 2023, the Venezuelan economy grew by 3.9 percent in 2024 due to improved oil revenues, a more stabilized exchange rate, and lower inflation. However, for 2025, the economy is projected to decline 2.1 percent due to the reimposition of sanctions on the petroleum industry and accelerating inflation. As a result of decreased foreign exchange availability, total imports are expected to drop 18 percent year-on-year.

Venezuela's agricultural imports fell to an all-time low of \$1.33 billion in 2019 but have recuperated significantly since then. In 2024, the value of Venezuelan agricultural imports rose by 9 percent to \$3 billion, and volume grew by 16 percent to 4.9 million metric tons (MMT).

In 2024, U.S. agricultural exports reached a five-year high, growing 18.4 percent by value to \$800 million and 52 percent by volume to 1.9 MMT, driven mainly by an increase in bulk exports. Comparing by volume, the United States was the largest supplier of agricultural and food products in 2024 (39 percent market share), surpassing Brazil (28 percent). Top U.S. exports included soybean meal¹ (\$296 million), corn (\$148 million), rice (\$82 million), wheat (\$71 million), and soybean oil (\$47 million).

Venezuela's food and agricultural regulatory system remains complex as the authorities inconsistently apply laws, conventions, and rules to trade, often making arbitrary decisions. Although certain agencies that enforce import regulations and procedures have online processing systems available, these systems have sporadic failures and might be difficult to access outside Venezuela. Most exporters rely on local partners for importing and product registration.

Section I - Food Laws

The Official Gazette (Spanish: Gaceta Oficial) is Venezuela's principal legal publication that announces updates, changes, and new norms and regulations. The Gazette is found online at: <http://www.imprentanacional.gob.ve>.

1. Food Laws

Venezuelan legislation governing domestically produced and imported processed food products, beverages, additives, and coloring agents for foods destined for human consumption are contained in its "General Food Norms" regulation. This food safety directive outlines all requirements (including labeling) which processed food products must meet prior to commercial sales. The norms also require registration for locally produced and imported processed food products. Complementary norms were established on March 3, 1996 (Official Gazette N° 35,921). The Food Law and the Complementary Norms are [available here](#).

¹ Venezuela was the sixth-largest market for U.S. soybean meal and the tenth-largest market for U.S. rice in 2024.

Venezuela's food laws were established in 1959 (Official Gazette N° 25,864), and the regulation originally stated that the Ministry of Health (MINSALUD),² along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAT), were responsible for controlling food product quality (for human consumption). However, the Ministry of Food (MINPAL) now administers this specific task, as MINSALUD now enforces food recalls and advises MINPAL on whether to issue bans on locally produced and imported processed food products deemed harmful to human health.

2. Law on Animal and Plant Health Defense/Comprehensive Agricultural Health Law

The Law on Animal and Plant Health Defense establishes regulations, conditions, and prohibitions for imports and exports of animal and plant products. Published in the Official Gazette in 1941 (N° 20,566), the law outlines the government mechanisms to manage and control plant and animal disease and pest outbreaks that may affect the production of animal and plant products, which also relate to the study and prevention of diseases, pests, and all other harmful agents to animal and horticulture (and products). The National Institute of Integral Agriculture and Animal Health (INSAI) is the regulatory enforcement agency for these laws. The 2008 "Comprehensive Agricultural Health Law," published in the Official Gazette N° 5.890, replaced the Law on Animal and Plant Health Defense (Ley sobre Defensas Sanitarias Vegetal y Animal). The law is available at http://www.insai.gob.ve/?page_id=145.

3. Seed Law

On December 28, 2015, the Maduro authority published its Seed Law (Gaceta Oficial 6.207) that banned the use of modern agricultural biotechnology, application, and research in Venezuela. The law prohibits the following practices:

- In vitro nucleic acid techniques, including the recombinant DNA technique and the direct injection of nucleic acids into cells or organelles.
- The fusion of cells of species beyond the taxonomic family, which exceeds the natural barriers of reproduction or recombination and are not techniques used in traditional reproduction and selection.

This law also prohibits the production, import, use, release, and multiplication of transgenic or genetically engineered seeds and the granting of copyright protection and patents on any type of seed. Violators of this law can be subject to sanctions ranging from fines to imprisonment. The 2016 Seed Law is available at: <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC151761>.

4. Good Manufacturing Practices

Venezuelan Good Manufacturing Practices regulations established the rules for manufacturing, storage, and transportation practices of foods for human consumption, published in the Official Gazette in 1996 (N° 36,081). MINSALUD and the National Superintendence for the Protection of Socioeconomic Rights are the regulatory enforcement entities for these regulations.

² Acronyms for Venezuelan authorities and institutions are herein provided by their Spanish names/titles.

5. Law for the Defense of the People in the Access to Goods and Services

The 2008 presidential decree “Law for the Defense of the People in the Access to Goods and Services” (SUNDDE) is one of the more intrusive agriculture and food sector regulations. The decree’s objective is for the “The defense, protection, and safeguard of individual and collective rights and interests in the access of people to goods and services for the satisfaction of their needs...and to establish penalties, sanctions and compensation for injury; as well as to regulate its application...with the active participation of communities.” Venezuela amended the law in 2010, published under Official Gazette No. 39,358. The SUNDDE enforces this law and has the authority to inspect and, if necessary, close points of sales, manufacturing and processing facilities, and warehouses that do not comply with the decree.

6. Law on Fair Costs and Prices

The 2011 Venezuelan Law of Profits, Costs, and Fair Prices (amended January 2014) intends to stabilize prices, guarantee goods access, and address inflation. The SUNDDE is the primary regulatory authority enforcing the law and establishes the standards for the National Registry of Prices of Goods and Services and regulates prices. Under this law, SUNDDE has the authority to set maximum retail prices or price ranges for goods and services. The Law of Profits, Costs, and Fair Prices is available at: <https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/es/c/LEX-FAOC130875/>.

Section II - Labeling Requirements

There are three directives governing labeling requirements in Venezuela. These include:

- The “General Food Norm”
- The “Law for the Defense of People in the Access to Goods and Services”
- “General Standards for Labeling of Packaged Foods” (Venezuelan Commission for Industrial Norms, COVENIN No. 2952:2001)

The General Standards for Labeling of Packaged Foods is available at: <https://gifna.who.int/countries/VEN/policies>.

The MINSALUD oversees processed food labeling in Venezuela. Labeling is mandatory for both domestically produced and imported food products. The MINSALUD authorities may require the elimination or modification of any paragraph or phrase concerning a particular product and may recommend the addition information, wording, or phrase deemed necessary. Below is a summary of the labeling information.

Language

All labels must be in Spanish. The MINSALUD must authorize a Spanish translation of the original/foreign label, and once approved, the label must be affixed, stamped, sealed, or printed with indelible ink to the product prior to export. The exported product must enter Venezuela with its final label. The use of computer technology for labeling is allowed. Suppliers must inform the importer about the characteristics of the product and must indicate as percentages the components and ingredients of the product. Labels must be submitted for approval through the MINSALUD Sanitary Health Service system (Sistema de Información Automatizado de Contraloría Sanitaria), available at <http://www.sacs.gob.ve/site/sistemas-en-lineas>.

The product label must include the following information:

- Brand name or trademark
- Descriptive name of the product
- Net weight or net content (only metric measurements are accepted)
- List of ingredients, in decreasing order of importance
- “Manufactured by” (name of company) in (name of city, state, country)
- “Imported by” (name of importer/importing company)
- Special handling and storage requirements to keep the product safe, if any
- Cooking and oven temperatures, to be indicated both in Celsius and Fahrenheit
- Detailed instructions for preparation or use
- Expiration date and/or minimum shelf life, in a legible, visible, and indelible form
- The MINSALUD registration number
- The SENCAMER (metrology) registration number

Other Specific Labeling Requirements

Nutritional Labeling: Only foods for special dietary use must include nutrient information on the label (according to the Official Gazette No. 31.106, 1976).³⁴ Nutritional information must be expressed as a percentage of the recommended daily requirement set by the National Nutrition Institute (INN). Note that “Recommended Daily Nutritional Intake” levels may be different from U.S. nutrition standards. The complete list is available at the INN.⁵ The following additional information must appear on labels for processed foods that are marketed for specific dietary use:

- Energy value, protein, digestible carbohydrate, and fat contents (expressed in grams)
- Amounts of any nutrients claimed to have special nutritional value
- For Vitamins A and D, nutrient content must be expressed in international units. For all other vitamins and minerals, nutrient content must be expressed in milligrams or micrograms
- Energy values must be expressed in calories

Labeling of Foods for Human Consumption Containing High Sodium, Sugar, Saturated Fat, and Trans Fat Levels: According to resolutions No. 011 ([Official Gazette No. 41,804](#) of January 21, 2020) and 137 ([Official Gazette No. 42,271](#) of December 7, 2021), the MINSALUD set new guidelines for the labeling of foods for human consumption containing sodium (Resolution No. 001), sugar, saturated fats, and trans fats (Resolution No. 137). These labeling requirements are mandatory for foods containing high sodium levels (enacted on January 21, 2022). For foods containing high levels of sugar, saturated fats, and trans fats, these labeling requirements became mandatory on December 7, 2024.

³ “Special dietary foods” refer to specific, processed, or prepared food products designed to meet dietary needs determined by physical or physiological conditions and/or specific diseases (e.g., foods for diabetics, foods for infants).

⁴ The original U.S. nutrition facts panel can be retained if the translated Spanish label includes all required information for “food for special dietary use.”

⁵ Information is not presently available online.

Sodium

Manufactured foods must comply with the labeling regulation whenever salt or any food additive or ingredient containing sodium is added in the manufacturing process, and in which the final composition, the sodium content is equal to or greater than 600 milligrams of sodium per 100 grams of solid food, and 300 milligrams of sodium per 100 milliliters of liquid food or beverages. Manufactured foods with sodium content equal to or higher than these parameters must have a black octagon-shaped figure with a white border on the front of the label or container label, with Spanish text inside that reads: “ALTO EN SODIO” (High in Sodium) (Figure 1). The label to be used is similar to the following figure:

Figure 1. Food Warning Label for Products Deemed High in Sodium⁶



Edible salt and sodium-based food additives are excluded from the regulation. Details of this regulation are found in the Official Gazette No. 41,804 (2020), available at <http://www.imprentanacional.gob.ve>.

Sugar, Saturated Fats, and Trans Fats

Manufactured foods must follow the labeling regulation if they contain any nutrients listed in their final composition the amount established below (Table 1).

Table 1. Label Requirements for Food Products Based on Nutrient/Fat Content

Nutrients	If 100 grams of solid food contains...	If 100 mL of liquid food contains...
Added Sugars	Equal or higher than 11 grams	Equal or higher than 5.5 grams
Saturated Fats	Equal or higher than 5 grams	Equal or higher than 3 grams
Trans Fats	Equal or higher than 0 grams	Equal or higher than 0 grams

Manufactured foods with sugar, saturated fat, or trans-fat content equal to or higher than these parameters must have a black octagon-shaped figure with a white border on the front of the label or container label, with Spanish text inside that reads: “ALTO EN” followed by “AZUCAR,” “GRASAS SATURADAS,” or “GRASAS TRANS,” as appropriate (Figure 2).

⁶ These labels mirror similar food warning labels found Latin America and the Caribbean, including Colombia.

Figure 2. Food Warning Label for Products Deemed High in Sugar, Fat Content



The following food products are excluded from the regulation:

- Foods to which sugar, saturated fats, or trans fats have not been added during the manufacturing process.
- Unprocessed or minimally processed foods. This includes fruits, vegetables, grains, seeds, cereals, meats, vegetable oils, sugars, and raw materials for the food industry.

Details of this regulation are published in the Official Gazette No. 42,271 (December 2021), available at <http://www.imprentanacional.gob.ve>.

Labeling for Baby Food: There are no special labeling requirements for baby foods, although MINSALUD remains concerned about the use of modified food starches. Mentioning processes used in modified food starches is strongly recommended at the time of product registration.

Seasonings, Colorings, and Flavorings: Locally produced and imported ingredients that could be used in the formulation or further processing of food products must be registered with MINSALUD. The names of spices used as seasoning, colorings, and flavorings of processed food products must be specified on the label.

Health Claims: Health claim information is subject to the Ministry of Health's consideration and is subject to case-by-case approval.

Products That May Cause Allergies: If a product contains any potential allergens, they must be enumerated on the label with the specific name as follows:

- Processed food products containing grain gluten (wheat, rye, oats, barley, spelt or any grain hybrid or product)
- Crustacean and by-products
- Eggs and by-products
- Fish and fishery products
- Soybeans and products
- Milk and dairy products, including products containing lactose
- Nuts and derived products

Section III - Packaging and Container Regulations

The National Autonomous Standardization, Quality, Metrology, and Technical Regulations Service (SENCAMER) enforces packaging and container regulations. The SENCAMER adheres to COVENIN's established standards and norms, but in some cases, the Codex Alimentarius apply (See Section IV). The MINSALUD established new manufacturing, storage, and transportation practices for foods for human consumption through Official Gazette N° 38,739, (2007) (which replaced Official Gazette N° 36,081, (1996). Containers, vessels, canning, bottling, and packing materials used to handle inputs or finished products should meet the following requirements:

- Manufactured with materials suitable for that kind of food, such as glass, tin, plastic, paper, cardboard, or another material approved by MINSALUD authorities.
- Must not transmit substances to the food beyond the allowed limits under the standards in force.
- Shall not be used for any different purpose that might contaminate the food.

All COVENIN standards related to food product packaging are available in the containers and packaging section at <https://sigbs.sencamer.gob.ve/>.

Packaging Sustainability Measures

Venezuela does not have regulations addressing packaging sustainability measures.

Section IV - Food Additives Regulations

General definitions concerning food additives and contaminants are in COVENIN Norm No. 910. Note that some food additives authorized by United States Food and Drug Administration are not authorized in Venezuela.

General guidelines concerning food additives include:

- COVENIN food standards specify food additives and contaminant tolerance levels.
- MINSALUD, using COVENIN standards, approves food additives during registration.
- In the absence of a COVENIN standard for specific food additives, MINSALUD will typically apply Codex Alimentarius (Codex) guidelines to approve additives on a specific case-by-case basis.
- For meat and meat products, sausages and hams, in combination with other foods, the total level of nitrite and nitrate must be indicated.
- "Maximum Level of Chemical Residues" is based on the Codex guidelines.
- When using monosodium glutamate (MSG), it is useful to specify the level used for MINSALUD's health registration purposes.

Section V - Pesticides and Other Contaminants

INSAI is the government agency authorized to regulate pesticide residues found in agricultural and processed food products arriving to Venezuelan ports. If INSAI suspects an agricultural or processed food product is contaminated with pesticides or related products, they can recommend

detaining the consignment until further analysis is performed. INSAI can recommend specific lab analyses to confirm contamination. However, MAT, MINAL and MINSALUD are responsible for enforcing product retention. If a lab's test results confirm pesticide contamination, INSAI will destroy the product without compensation.

All domestically produced and imported pesticides require INSAI registration. Venezuela does not have Maximum Residue Level (MRL) national standards for pesticides or contaminants. However, regulations and guidelines concerning the manufacturing, marketing, and use of pesticides fall under the "General Pesticide Regulations" (Reglamento General de Pesticidas), first published in 1968 (updated in 1991) as per Official Gazette No. 34877, [available here](#). INSAI generally observes the Codex "Pesticide Residue Tolerances Guidelines." Information about approved pesticides is available through INSAI, which maintains the list of prohibited or restricted pesticides, including severely hazardous pesticide formulations.

Section VI - Other Requirements, Regulations, and Registration Measures

Processed Food Products/Health Registration

Prior to commercialization to Venezuelan consumers, all domestically produced and imported processed food products must be registered with MINSALUD's Sanitary Control Service (www.sacs.gob.ve), through the Food Hygiene Division. Although Venezuelan law does not prohibit a foreign exporter from registering food products, a local consultant or agent may be a helpful resource to navigate the food registration process. Alcoholic beverage products must be registered with MINSALUD.

The Venezuelan Food Industry Chamber (CAVIDEA) provides a suggested list of experts for food product registry (See Appendix I). The Norms Committee represents CAVIDEA members. For additional information, see <http://www.cavidea.org>.

General guidelines for registering a processed food product:

- All consumer-ready food products classified under the following Venezuelan Harmonized Schedule (HS) headings and codes—03, 04, 05, 16, 19, 20, 21, and 22—are required to undergo registration.
- Prior to importing consumer-ready food products, importers should obtain a registration number from MINSALUD.
- Prior to importing consumer-ready food products, importers must secure a registration number from MINSALUD.
- Unregistered processed foods in the country of origin cannot be registered in Venezuela.
- Any new local or foreign processed food products must be registered before importation. This product requires approval for registration by MINSALUD following lab tests to confirm its suitability for human consumption.
- The foreign exporter/seller is the owner of the product registration, although authorized importers can proceed with the registration process.
- The processed food product health registration is valid for five years; however, renewals are permitted.
- MINSALUD can consider exceptions to the registration process for food imported by government entities in Venezuela.

- If an imported product does not meet the minimum quality standards or does not have a health registration number, it could be confiscated and destroyed by MINSALUD authorities.
- MINSALUD and SUNDDE authorities regularly inspect imported products at the point of sale to ensure they are safe for consumption, have a suitable shelf life, and are not adulterated.

Obtaining Health Registration Number for Processed Foods, a Step-by-Step

Typically, it takes 45 to 60 business days to register processed food goods with MINSALUD. However, it often takes longer due to the large number of applications. Exporters must apply for the Health or Sanitary Registration for Food (Form SIE 5 197) from MINSALUD. Documents accompanying the application, including the certificate of free sale, and the authorization or a power of attorney to a representative or a local consultant or agent must be issued by foreign authorities, translated into Spanish, and authenticated or stamped (as per the Hague Convention on Foreign Public Documents). Documents required as part of this process include:

- A certificate of free sale and consumption issued by competent authorities in the country of origin, which states that the food has been authorized for human consumption, for further processing, or for use as an input in food for human consumption in the country of origin, with a validity period of 12 months from the date of application (authenticated).
- Certificate of chemical, physical, and microbiological test conducted by an accredited lab in the country of origin.
- A power of attorney authorizing the Venezuelan representative to apply for health registration of the product in Venezuela (authenticated).
- A letter of authorization from the Venezuelan representative, if a third party is requesting the health registration on their behalf.
- One sample of the food product.
- Three copies of the original labels from the country of origin, and three examples of the label for marketing the product in Venezuela (in Spanish).
 - Labels should include the following information:
 - Descriptive name of the product
 - Trademark
 - Net weight
 - Net contents
 - List of ingredients in the manufacture of the product, in descending order
 - “Manufactured by” [company name], in [plant location]
 - “Imported by” [local importer/distributor]
 - MINSALUD registration number
 - For food products that involve special storage conditions, these requirements should be clearly indicated
 - Any other requirement listed by SENCAMER (COVENIN) standards, the General Food Norms, or specifications of MINSALUD
 - List of ingredients, including additives, colors, or preservatives

After submitting all required documents, MINSALUD will give authorization to conduct the corresponding laboratory testing for each food product to be registered. Lab tests for meat, poultry, and dairy products must be completed in the Rafael Rangel National Institute of Hygiene, MINSALUD's primary laboratory. MINSALUD assigns accredited private labs to conduct food testing for processed food products case by case. Lab results are submitted directly to MINSALUD which will then assign a health registration number if the lab results are considered satisfactory. Health registration numbers are published in the Official Gazette.

Registration Process Samples

Through the health registration process, either the U.S. exporter or Venezuelan importer must submit samples (no more than three) of each product or model for which registration is being sought to MINSALUD's previously designated and accredited Venezuelan laboratory. To qualify for exemption from import duties and value-added tax, samples that do not hold commercial value must comply with the following requirements:

- The sender must be the product's manufacturer, representative, or authorized exporter.
- The addressee shall be a company or an importer with experience in this activity.
- All documentation (commercial invoices, transportation invoices, or others) shall contain annotations demonstrating that the products are samples without commercial value.
- Samples should be identified as having no commercial value. It is advisable to mark the package with the following wording: "Muestras sin valor commercial para su registro en el Ministerio de Salud" (English: "Samples without commercial value for registration with the Ministry of Health").

Sanitary registration fees for Venezuelan food products are [available here](#).

Facility and Product Registration Requirements

Animal Products and Unprocessed Plant Products

Imported products and sub-products of plant or animal origin, breeding animals, and plant breeding materials are subject to sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) permit issuance from INSAI, which is authorized to restrict or prohibit the importation, marketing, or use of animal and plant products. For these cases, INSAI's "Standing Technical Advisory Body" recommends the appropriate course of action based on its risk analysis. The general guidelines for importing animal and plant products include:

- The importer, exporter, or producer must register with INSAI. The validity of this registration is indefinite, can be canceled due to non-compliance with dispositions stated by pre-established laws and regulations.
- Importers should request and obtain an SPS import permit from INSAI prior to importing animal products and/or unprocessed plant products.
- Specific SPS statements (treatment and other conditions) for each type of product are determined by INSAI on a case-by-case basis.
- The import permit issued by INSAI requires specific SPS statements.
- INSAI's SPS import permits have a non-renewable validity period between 60 and 90 days, depending on the product.

- Sanitary health import permits are issued for animal products and livestock-farming inputs (60-day validity).
- Phytosanitary import permits are issued for plant products (90-day validity).
- Import permits are only for one shipment and one pre-designated port of entry.
- Every shipment must have an import permit issued by INSAI and its corresponding U.S. Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) or U.S. Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) export certificate.
- The “Remarks” section of the APHIS or FSIS export certificate should include the specific SPS statements in both English and Spanish.
- Products must not be loaded in a vessel without receiving the import permit and including the sanitary statements from a competent authority in the export documentation.

Seeds

INSAI issues seed import permits after conducting the pest risk analysis and assessing the corresponding results. INSAI provides requirements for the pest risk analysis on a case-by-case basis. Both locally produced and imported seeds require registration through the National Institute of Agricultural Research at the Division of the National Seed Service.

Processed Animal Products

Each shipment of meat, poultry, or processed animal products must include a USDA FSIS certificate. Venezuela accepts imports from all FSIS-approved plants for meat products with existing market access to Venezuela. All federally inspected meat and poultry plants are eligible to export to Venezuela. Importers must have an import permit before shipping unprocessed meat and poultry products.

Other Certification and Testing Requirements

Inspections

Jurisdiction on inspected products is based on the type of imported product. The MINSALUD inspects processed products, while INSAI inspects all non-processed animal and plant-origin products. INSAI manages phytosanitary inspections which address plant pests and diseases. Sanitary inspections address human health concerns associated with hazardous pathogens and are handled by MINSALUD. All agricultural and processed food imports are inspected by SENIAT, the National Guard, and the Anti-Drug Command. There are no inspection fees.

Control of Products at Ports of Entry

The General Food Law authorizes MINSALUD, INSAI, the National Guard, and SENIAT authorities to reject, confiscate, or destroy imported food and agricultural products if any of the following conditions are reached:

- Incomplete documentation
- Invalid import permits
- Product deemed unfit for human consumption
- Product determined to have an insufficient shelf life
- Product considered adulterated

Rejected cargo can be temporarily stored at the port of entry at the importer's expense until the appeals procedures are completed. Importers cannot receive compensation if authorities deem imports unfit for consumption and confiscate or destroy them.

Section VII - Other Specific Standards and Laws

No applicable information.

Section VIII – Geographical Indicators, Trademarks, Brand Names, and Intellectual Property Rights

Venezuela's Intellectual Property Registration Service (SAPI) is responsible for intellectual property rights administration in Venezuela, including geographical indicators, trademarks, and brand names. Venezuela, a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization, has recently transitioned from applying Andean Community regulations despite being a signatory to various international intellectual property agreements. Through Andean Community Decision 486, Venezuela ratified the provisions of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. Despite Venezuela's status outside the Andean Community, the regulations governing trademark protection from the Andean Community continue to apply in Venezuela.

Brand Name and Trademark Registration Process

All geographical indicators, trademarks, and brand names of local and imported processed food products to be sold in Venezuela must be registered with SAPI. Typically, brand name and trademark registrations are among services provided by specialized Venezuelan law firms. The procedures for brand registry are found at: <https://sapi.gob.ve>. Procedures for geographic indicator registry are found at: <https://sapi.gob.ve/indicaciones-geograficas/>.

Essential guidelines for brand names and trademark registration include:

- A name search should be conducted prior to registering.
- Approval or rejection of a brand name is based on phonetics and spelling matches of brands for similar products.
- Approved and registered brand names are published quarterly in SAPI bulletins.
- All documents relating to patents, designs, trademarks, etc., are published in the Industrial Property Bulletin.
- The process generally requires three to six months for completion.

Section IX - Import Procedures

The Venezuelan authorities implement the United Nations Customs Computerized System in most Venezuelan ports of entry. By law, only nationals and private customs agencies with Venezuelan local staff can conduct customs procedures. A customs agent assesses customs fees, port charges, and taxes and fills out paperwork. The customs agent's fee is one percent of the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value, plus any other charges accrued during offloading. Customs clearance typically takes 5-8 working days.

Imported goods must be declared to SENIAT authorities within five days of arrival at ports of entry. Fines may be levied and applied to any shipment when the customs entry is made later than five days after the arrival date. If an importer delays or refuses to claim a product arriving at Venezuelan ports, SENIAT will impound the unclaimed goods. If substantial fines and storage fees are not promptly paid, the goods will be sold at auction.

All shipments must be made on a direct consignment basis. Customs regulations stipulate that the consignee is the shipment owner and is responsible for all customs payments. Importers must register all products with the MINSALUD Comptroller prior to the product entering the Venezuelan market.

Import Duties

Import duties are calculated using the WTO Harmonized Scheduled Tariff classification system on the CIF value of the products (using the commercial invoice as basis). They are assessed, due, and payable at the time of arrival, in local currency (Bolivars), regardless of the currency listed on the commercial invoice. A value added tax (VAT) rate of sixteen percent is calculated based on the CIF value (See Section IX, Value Added Tax).

Customs Fees

SENIAT charges one percent of the CIF value for processing shipments and for the use of the port of entry. In some cases, an additional stamp fee is added to offset the cost of processing these imports. Both the SENIAT Customs and Port Fee and Customs Stamp Fee are calculated using the CIF value.

Procedures at the port of entry may include:

- A SENIAT agent inspects incoming shipments. The SENIAT agent compares the contents of the load to the import documentation such that it conforms to the invoices, packing lists, and other paperwork.
- Following the SENIAT inspection, MINSALUD (or INSAI) inspects the goods.
- A SENIAT appraiser checks invoice price against global prices to spot dumping or tax evasion.
- A customs agent assesses customs fees, port charges, and taxes, and completes a liquidation form.
- SENIAT and port authorities stamp the liquidation form, accompanied by the required MINSALUD import permits.
- The customs agency deposits the amount due in a SENIAT account in a local bank and presents the deposit slip to SENIAT and port authorities to obtain final clearance.
- After completing procedures and meeting obligations, Venezuelan Customs releases the merchandise.

Document Requirements

According to Venezuelan customs regulations, all imports must be warehoused at the port of entry while customs clearance is being completed. All shippers are urged to provide all documents tendered for customs purposes (in Spanish) to avoid processing delays. The documents needed for customs clearance may include, but are not limited to:

- Customs declaration of value
- Commercial invoice (original invoice, no photocopies accepted). Insurance and freight must be listed separately on the commercial invoice.
- Bill of Landing
- Certificate of Origin
- Shipment manifest
- SPS certificate, if required
- Import license, if required

Import Tax Exoneration for Some Agricultural and Food Products

Since 2018, the Venezuelan public authorities have issued temporary tariff exemption decrees for food products, agricultural products, and raw materials. The list of products included in the exoneration decrees has been constantly modified without prior notice or public comment period (Table 2). The exoneration decrees and regulations are published in the Official Gazette.

Table 2. Products Eligible for Import Tax Exemption

Live bovine animals	Meat of bovine animals, fresh, chilled, frozen, including boneless	Powdered milk, infant formula, and soy-based infant formula
Durum and other wheat	Potato seeds	Sugar cane seed for sowing
Oilseeds (soybean, sunflower, cottonseed and palm nuts, and kernels) for sowing	White and yellow corn seed for sowing	Vegetables, for sowing: onion, broccoli, carrot, lettuce, and tomato
Dry beans, peas, and lentils for sowing	Dry beans, peas, and lentils	Protein concentrates and textured protein substances

Data Source: Official Gazettes of The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Value Added Tax

Venezuela, through the SENIAT, applies a flat 16 percent VAT on sales of both domestically produced and imported food products. The applied VAT on imports is based on the total customs value. Certain food products from the basic food basket are VAT exempted (Table 3).

Table 3. Products Exempted from VAT

Rice	Coffee, beans or grounded	Milk, soy-based
All flours of vegetable origin	Tuna, canned, natural	Cheese, white, hard
Bread and pasta	Sardines, canned	Margarine and butter
Eggs	Milk, crude or pasteurized	Poultry, fresh or frozen
Salt	Milk, powdered	Certified seeds
Sugar	Milk, infant formulas	Vegetables

Data Source: Official Gazettes of The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Section X – Trade Facilitation

Some Venezuelan public agencies involved in importing food and agricultural products have made online systems available to manage import procedures, certifications, and registrations. However, to date, these systems have sporadic failures and are generally difficult to access outside Venezuela. As of March 2024, Venezuela has not ratified the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement.

APPENDIX I: Venezuelan Regulatory Key Agency Contacts

Foreign Agricultural Service in Caracas

Operations through the Office of Agriculture Affairs and the U.S. Embassy in Caracas remain suspended. Contact the Office of Agriculture Affairs at U.S. Embassy Bogota, Colombia at AgBogota@USDA.gov for any Venezuela-related questions.

Ministry of Food

Av. Andrés Bello - Edificio “Las Fundaciones”

Municipio Libertador, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 577-0257 / 395-7474

Fax: (58-212) 578-2647

Website: <http://www.minpal.gob.ve>

Email: oirp@minal.gob.ve

The Ministry of Food (MINPAL) is responsible for ensuring food safety. Imports and exports of food for human consumption are also under the authority of MINPAL through the issuance of import permits, licenses, and any other document needed for agricultural and processed food products. MINPAL oversees the production, distribution, and storage of food for consumption.

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

Av. Urdaneta, Edificio “MAT”

Esquina de Platanal a Candilito

La Candelaria, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 509-0347/ 0348/ 0359/ 0360/ 0361

Website: <http://prensamat.blogspot.com>

Email: RelacionesPublicasMAT@gmail.com

The Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAT) is responsible for promoting sustainable development of the Venezuelan agricultural and livestock sectors through the support, direction, and evaluation of agricultural activities.

National Institute of Integral Agriculture and Animal Health

Av. Principal Las Delicias

Edif. INIA, Maracay, Edo. Aragua

Tel. (58-243) 242-8062

Website: <http://www.insai.gob.ve>

Email: PresidenciaNuevoINSAI@gmail.com

The National Institute of Integral Agriculture and Animal Health (INSAI) is MAT’s principal sanitary/phytosanitary (SPS) authority. INSAI is responsible for managing and protecting domestic agricultural production, including ensuring the legislation and compliance of SPS regulations to prevent the introduction or spread of diseases and pests that threaten sustainability and Venezuela’s claim to food sovereignty. Among various functions are regulating the export, import, and internal movement of animals and plants and agricultural products and by-products. INSAI ensures the overall agricultural health of the nation, similar to USDA APHIS.

Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture

Av. Lecuna, Torre Este, Parque Central, Piso 17, Caracas

Tel. (58-212) 577-76-45. (58-212) 574-43-11

Website: <http://minpesca.gob.ve/>

Email: Atención@MinPesca.com

The Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture (MPA) is responsible for regulating and promoting the national fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The MPA promotes production, industry development, and related marketing activities that support domestic product demand and promote international trade. In addition, MPA regulates the fisheries and aquaculture sectors through the Venezuelan Fishing and Aquaculture Institute.

Fishing and Aquaculture Institute

Av. Santa Lucia con Av. Principal del Bosque y Santa Isabel

Urb. El Bosque, Torre Credicard, piso 9. Caracas

Tel. (58-212) 593.86.91 . (58-212) 951.39.86

Website: <http://insopesca.gob.ve/>

Email: info@InsoPesca.com.ve

The Fishing and Aquaculture Institute (INSOPESCA) is the regulatory arm of MPA that establishes and implements policies that support the sanitary development of the fishing and aquaculture sectors.

Ministry of Health

Av. Baralt, Centro Simón Bolívar, Edificio Sur

El Silencio, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 408-0000

Website: <http://mpps.gob.ve/>

Email: AtencionalCiudadAnompps@gmail.com

The Ministry of Health (MINSALUD) regulates domestically produced and imported processed food products, beverages, additives, and food colors destined for human consumption.

MINSALUD is responsible for developing and implementing food norms and regulations, including the enforcement of food recalls, and providing recommendations to other ministries to ban local and/or imported food products deemed hazardous to human health. The following are MINSALUD's key regulatory authorities for food products:

- The Sanitary Health Service (or Comptroller)
- The Rafael Rangel National Hygiene Institute
- The National Nutrition Institute

Sanitary Health Service (Comptroller)

Directorate for Food Safety and Inspection
Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Salud
Av. Baralt, Centro Simón Bolívar,
Edificio Sur, piso 3, Of. 313
El Silencio, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 408-1533/ 484-3066
Website: <http://www.sacs.gob.ve/site>
Email: SACSDireccion@gmail.com

The Sanitary Health Service (or Comptroller), through the Directorate for Food Safety and Inspection, is responsible for registering processed food products. Imported and local products must be registered with the Comptroller before being sold in Venezuela.

Rafael Rangel Hygiene Institute

Gerencia de Control y Registro de Alimentos
Ciudad Universitaria UCV, Los Chaguaramos, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 219-1670 / 219-1663
Website: <http://www.inhrr.gob.ve>
Email: grcontrol@inhrr.gob.ve

The Rafael Rangel National Hygiene Institute serves as the Venezuelan authority's reference laboratory for all food testing. This is the only authorized institute to conduct food analysis for product testing and registration.

National Nutrition Institute

Av. Baralt, Esquina El Carmen
Edificio INN
El Silencio, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 482-6473
Website: <http://www.inn.gob.ve>
Email: prensa@inn.gob.ve

The National Nutrition Institute (INN) is responsible for establishing nutrition guidelines and recommends daily nutritional intakes.

Ministry of Commerce

Av. Lecuna, Torre Oeste de Parque Central
Entrada Nivel Lecuna, Caracas
Tel. (58-212)-596-7616
Website: <http://mincomercional.gob.ve>
Email: AtencionCiudadanaMppcn@gmail.com

The Ministry of Commerce (MINCOMERCIO) has primary responsibility Venezuela's industrial and commercial sectors, including policies regarding technical standards and intellectual property. MINCOMERCIO also participates in an inter-ministerial commission along

with MINPAL, MAT, and MINSALUD that defines import criteria for agricultural and processed food products. This authority also supervises advertisements pertaining to food, food quality, labels, and other health-related issues.

The following MINCOMERCIO agencies are involved with agricultural and processed food products:

- The National Autonomous Standardization, Quality, Metrology, and Technical Regulations Service
- The Intellectual Property Registration Service
- The National Superintendence for the Protection of Socio-Economic Rights

National Autonomous Standardization, Quality, Metrology, and Technical Regulations Service

Av. Libertador, C.C. Los Cedros, Planta Baja
La Florida, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 761-6474
Website: <http://www.sencamer.gob.ve>
Email: Acreditacion@sencamer.gob.ve

The National Autonomous Standardization, Quality, Metrology, and Technical Regulations Service (SENCAMER) is responsible for technical standardization, quality control, metrology, and certification programs and maintains the register of mandatory technical regulations. Selected processed food products must be registered through SENCAMER, which regulates and administers brand names, trademarks, and product quality standards. The previous Venezuelan Commission for Quality and Industrial Norms (COVENIN) was formerly the compiling body for technical standards and norms; however, that responsibility now lies with SENCAMER, but the name “COVENIN” has been kept for the published norms. Note that the Fund for Standardization and Quality Certification (FONDONORMA) is no longer authorized to certify products and quality systems.

Intellectual Property Registration Service

Centro Simón Bolívar, Edificio Norte, Piso 4
El Silencio, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 481-6478
Website: <https://sapi.gob.ve>
Email: RecepcionVirtual@sapi.gob.ve

The Intellectual Property Registration Service (SAPI) is responsible for the administration of intellectual property rights in Venezuela. SAPI has two main operational branches: 1) The Industrial Property Registration Directorate (DRPI), responsible for granting patents, utility models, industrial designs, breeder certificates (for plant varieties), and the registration of trademarks, trade names, commercial slogans and appellations of origin; and, 2) The National Copyright Directorate (DNDA), which maintains administrative responsibilities for registration, monitoring, and inspection in connection with copyright and related rights.

National Superintendence for the Protection of Socioeconomic Rights

Av. Libertador, C.C. Los Cedros, PB

La Florida, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 705-3100 (0-800-5658-786)

Website: <http://www.sundde.gob.ve>

Email: Sundde.Rupdae@gmail.com

The National Superintendence for the Protection of Socioeconomic Rights (SUNDDE) is responsible for protecting consumers and end-users against fraudulent sales and promotions, overpricing, usury, and warranty incompliance. It has the authority to conduct on-site inspections of points of sale, manufacturing and processing facilities, and warehouses. SUNDDE's inspections can lead to the shutdowns of businesses and the expropriation of private sector property and manufactured goods.

National Integrated Tax Administration Service

Av. Blandín, C.C. Mata de Coco, Torre SENIAT

La Castellana, Caracas

Tel: (58-212) 274-4000/ 274-4026

Website: <http://declaraciones.seniat.gob.ve>

Email: AsistenciaAduanas@seniat.gob.ve

The National Integrated Tax Administration Service (SENIAT) administers customs services and is responsible for the surveillance and control of imported and exported products through Venezuela's borders and ports, as well as the assessment and collection of import duties and taxes. SENIAT observes the Organic Law of Customs and corresponding customs import and export procedures regulations and has the authority to shut down businesses based on contraband charges or non-compliance with tax collection policies.

Venezuelan Central Bank

Details on the currency exchange system are available at the Venezuelan Central Bank at

<https://www.bcv.org.ve>.

APPENDIX II: Other Import Specialist and Technical Contacts

Venezuelan American Chamber of Industry and Commerce (VENAMCHAM)

2da. Av. de Campo Alegre
Torre Credival, Piso 10, Ofic. A, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 263-0833/267-20-76/64-81
Website: <http://www.venamcham.org>
Email: Eventos@venamcham.org

Venezuelan Food Industry Chamber (CAVIDEA)

Av. Principal de los Ruices
Centro Empresarial Los Ruices, Piso 5, Ofic. 510, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 237-6183
Website: <http://www.cavidea.org>
Email: Administracion@cavidea.org

National Association of Supermarkets (ANSA)

Av. Principal de los Ruices
Centro Empresarial Los Ruices, Piso 1, Ofic. 116, Caracas
Tel: (58-212) 234-4490 / 235-7558
Fax: (58-212) 238-0308
Website: https://twitter.com/ansa_venezuela
Email: Info@ansa.org.ve

APPENDIX III: Food Products Potentially Subject to Regulated Price Controls

Beef – Several types, carcass meat
Bologna sausage
Bottled water
Cheese – White, Soft, Gouda, Dembo, Edam, Fynbo, Munster, etc.
Chicken – whole, cut, breast, legs
Chicken (feed for chicken)
Cocoa (domestic production)
Coffee (domestic production) beans, roasted and ground
Corn (domestic production) white and yellow
Corn flour
Corn oil
Fruit juices
Infant formulas
Jams/baby food
Margarine
Milk, infant formulas
Oatmeal
Pasta and bread
Peas, lentils, and black beans
Pork – Chops and pork ribs
Powdered milk
Refined sugar and brown sugar
Rice
Salt
Sardines and Tuna
Sorghum
Soy milk
Soybeans
Sunflower
Sunflower oil
Tomato sauce
Vegetable oil – mixed
Wheat bread
Wheat flour

Attachments:

No Attachments