

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Philippine Department of Agriculture Issues New Rules for Food Safety and Traceability of Imported Seafood Products

Country: Philippines

Post: Manila

Report Category: FAIRS Subject Report, Fishery Products

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Report Highlights:

The Philippines recently issued rules and regulations for food safety and traceability of imported seafood for human consumption. Under the new rules, foreign fishery establishments must be accredited by the competent authority of the country of origin and endorsed for consideration of the Philippine government. The Philippines will also conduct risk-based pre-border audits of foreign fishery establishments.

On December 10, 2025, the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) issued [FAO 275](#), establishing new rules and regulations for food safety and traceability of imported seafood products. For foreign exporters, FAO 275 introduces the following pre-border control measures pursuant to [Republic Act No. 10611](#), also known as the Food Safety Act of 2013:

- a. **Accreditation and Endorsement of Foreign Fishery Establishments.** Section 12 of FAO 275 requires that foreign fishery establishments exporting to the Philippines be accredited by the competent authority in the country of origin and subsequently endorsed for consideration of the Philippine government prior to importation of fishery products. Subject to international laws and agreements, this requirement will take effect within one year of FAO 275's implementation. During the transition period, competent authorities must submit a list of their approved fishery establishments to the Philippine government.
- b. **Pre-Border Audit of Foreign Fishery Establishments.** Section 13 of FAO 275 authorizes the BFAR to conduct risk-based audits of establishments endorsed by the competent authority in the country of origin. These audits are intended to ensure compliance with Philippine food safety and traceability requirements. BFAR may suspend approval of foreign establishments found to be non-compliant with these standards. According to the new rules, the audits will occur one year after FAO 275's implementation.

Additionally, Section 14 of FAO 275 outlines Philippine border and post-border controls for imported seafood products. Competent authorities and exporters should note the updated requirements for health certification, packaging, and labeling. This information supersedes the requirements previously indicated in FAS Manila's GAIN Report on [Fishery Product Import Regulations and Standards](#) published in December 2022.

- a. **International Health Certificate.** An international health certificate issued by the competent authority must accompany fish and fishery/aquatic products exported to the Philippines. The certificate must comply with the requirements specified in Annex III of FAO 275, including information on microbiological analysis with regulatory limits as indicated in Annex IV.

An original copy of the international health certificate, supported by laboratory test results from the country of origin, is required as part of the documentation during inspection and verification procedures upon arrival at the designated port of entry.

- b. **Random and Risk-Based Sampling.** Fish and fishery/aquatic products will be subject to random and/or risk-based sampling for the required laboratory analysis.
- c. **Packaging and Labeling.** Packaging materials for fish and fishery/aquatic products must be food-grade, hygienic, and suitable for food contact. Packaging must not be reused or recycled and should not be easily broken or deformed by moisture or stress. Packaging materials must not be a source of contamination.

Labels must be made of waterproof and durable material, and must include the following information with an English translation:

- Name of importer;
- Country of origin;
- Species of fish/fishery products;
- Fishing ground (FAO Zone Number) for wild caught;
- Net weight;

- Lot code or batch code or production code;
- Information on the required temperature to preserve its quality, i.e., keep frozen at -18°C; and
- Shelf-life date.

Fish and fishery/aquatic products imported for processing or canning must include the following statement on the packaging: “IMPORTED FOR PROCESSING OR CANNING PURPOSES ONLY AND NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION TO WET MARKETS. VIOLATION THEREOF IS PUNISHABLE UNDER PENALTY OF LAW.” This requirement does not apply to products imported directly from a fishing vessel.

- d. **Storage and Transport of Imported Fish and Fishery Products.** Imported fish and fishery/aquatic products must be stored and transported under the following temperature conditions:
- Fresh chilled fish and fishery products stored and maintained at 4°C or below; and
 - Frozen fishery products shall be stored and maintained at -18°C or below.
- e. **Catch Certificate.** A catch certificate must accompany wild-caught marine fish and fishery products exported to the Philippines, subject to bilateral trade agreements. This certificate should be issued by the competent authority of the exporting country to ensure that the products are not sourced from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

FAO 275 further directs BFAR to document the movement of fishery products at specified stages of the supply chain, such as processing and distribution, to ensure traceability of imported products. Under Section 16, BFAR is required to begin digitizing its traceability system for verification and monitoring purposes within one year of FAO 275’s implementation.

Exporters should confirm requirements with their importers before shipping seafood products to the Philippines. Philippine importers must also complete licensing procedures as outlined in FAO 275.

The new requirements and procedures under FAO 275 may increase compliance obligations for U.S. seafood exporters. However, despite these regulatory changes, the Philippine market remains attractive due to its growing population, rising incomes, and the strong brand recognition and positive perception of American products. For more information on the Philippine seafood market, including market opportunities and recent policy developments on fish quota guidelines, please see [GAIN Report on Seafood Market Brief](#).

Attachments:

No Attachments.