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Report Highlights:

SENASA and ARSA have made significant progress in expediting import procedures with the introduction of on-line options for requesting import permits, and sanitary authorizations of imported raw materials that provide immediate electronic delivery to ports of entry. They also authorized in 2021 a private logistics hub that includes SENASA and Customs Clearance.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL IMPORT REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS (FAIRS) ANNUAL COUNTRY
REPORT 2023

HONDURAS

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DISCLAIMER

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs, USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Tegucigalpa, Honduras 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 Honduran Government's (GOH) main regulatory agency responsible for food and agricultural imports and exports is the National Plant, Animal Health, and Food Safety Service (SENASA).

On July 1st 2020, SENASA launched an on-line import permit system for plant products and seeds. In January 2021, it was expanded to include plants, products and by-products of animal origin and live animals. The on-line module for request and issue of import permits for veterinary products is now available online at (<http://importaciones.senasa.gob.hn/#/login>) and for registration at: (<http://importaciones.senasa.gob.hn/#/registrar>) selecting the veterinary products tab.

SENASA is electronically delivering import permits for seeds, plant and animal products and live animals directly to the port of entry to SEPA (Agricultural Protection Service) and to importers in less than a day. SENASA and the Honduras Customs Administration are currently working jointly to link their on-line platforms to facilitate the import permit process.

On November 3rd, 2020, the Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA) implemented a new import requirement called Sanitary Authorization for Import of Raw Materials and Additives for Food and Beverage Production. Importers can now obtain sanitary authorizations, and sanitary registration numbers via the ARSA online services platform. ARSA has started discussions with SENASA on the scope of work of both agencies to avoid duplicating activities and causing delays in the import process.

In August 2021, the first private logistics hub near Puerto Cortes, which hosts ARSA, Customs and SENASA inspectors, received authorization from SENASA for customs clearance operations outside the port.

ARSA reviewed 1,300 public comments received from the industry for the “Food and Beverages Sanitary Control Regulation.” ARSA plans to start officially implementing the new regulations between November 30 and December 15, 2023.

The public comment period for the new Procedure to Grant Sanitary Registration and Sanitary Inscription (RTCA) 67.01.31.07 ended in August 2021. The Committee members representing the five Central American countries are in the process of revising and approving it to proceed with its final official publication. The amended RTCA 67.01.31.07 proposes eliminating some inscription requirements on the sanitary registration and introduces a new section on co-packing and requirements for co-packers. ARSA has already published the text of amended RTCA 67.01.31.07 for information purposes.

Section I. Food Laws.

The regulatory environment in Honduras related to the enforcement practices and import policies for food and agricultural products is governed by the GOH's National Plant, Animal Health, and Food Safety Service (SENASA), and the Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA). SENASA was created in 2016 by decree 38-2016 and ARSA in 2017 by presidential decree 032-2017, both as segregated agencies from the Secretariat of Agriculture and Livestock and from the Secretariat of Health, respectively.

Food and agricultural regulations and standards established in Honduras apply to all products equally, and to both domestic and foreign suppliers.

SENASA establishes regulations and procedures, and oversees compliance regarding imported live plants, animals, and foodstuffs. SENASA issues import permits for consumer-ready food products within the dairy, seafood, honey, and meat categories. Also, for semi-processed plant-based foods (i.e., pre-cut, vacuum packaged fruits and vegetables), products shipped in bulk for repacking, and inputs used in food processing for human or animal consumption. In addition, it issues import permits for agricultural chemicals and veterinary products that enter Honduras. Establishments that process or store and distribute food and animal products are required to register with SENASA.

ARSA issues sanitary licenses and registrations for outlets that distribute, manipulate, store, and sell foods and beverages. ARSA also issues product sanitary registrations for processed food, beverages. Starting November 3rd, 2020, ARSA also issues sanitary authorizations of imported raw materials and additives for food and beverage production. ARSA now issues special authorizations for importing food and beverage donations, samples, samples for tasting, standards (handled by the Medical Devices Directorate) and for personal consumption, including embassies.

ARSA oversees supervision, review, control, surveillance, and inspection of wholesale and retail outlets and suppliers of food products. ARSA also inspects processed, pre-packaged foods, raw materials, and additives for food during the customs clearance process in coordination with OIRSA's Plant and Animal Protection Service (SEPA) and the Honduras Customs Administration. ARSA is georeferencing all the local establishments that they have inspected, and to whom they have provided a Sanitary License to store, distribute and sell food, including small and medium-sized food processors. In addition, ARSA oversees medicines, natural products, cosmetics, medical devices, and hygiene products.

ARSA eliminated the laboratory test previously required for food and beverage product registration. This requirement was replaced by an affidavit signed by the legal representative of the importing company. The laboratory analysis is now done during the surveillance stage when the products are in the market.

Food laws and technical regulations for imported products are enforced by SENASA through the registration and inspection of establishments that import, process or store food and animal products, requirements established for plant and animal products to issue import permits and confirming compliance with those requirements during inspections at the port of entry. ARSA enforces laws and regulations through product registration and inspection at port (pre-packaged food, food raw materials and additives) and at establishments that store, distribute, and sell food products at the retail and wholesale level.

Due to SENASA and ARSA's recent creation as separate agencies, they are still working to define jurisdictions over imported foodstuffs (especially raw materials for food processing) and to coordinate inspections during the customs clearance process.

Import policies are also governed by Central American regulations established by the Council of Economic and Trade Integration Ministers (COMIECO). COMIECO, as part of the Central American Secretariat of Economic Integration (SIECA), is assigned to establish economic integration policies for the region. COMIECO agrees unanimously on Resolutions that are approved as Central America Technical Regulations (RTCA in Spanish).

The objective of the RTCA is the harmonization of regulations by sectors such as: food and beverages, rules of origin, tariffs, sanitary registration, and others. COMIECO issues the resolution that approves the RTCA. The information in the RTCAs is in Spanish.

The resolutions can be found at: [Resoluciones archivos — SIECA](#)

In addition, import policies for food and agricultural products follow World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreements (CAFTA-DR), and CODEX Alimentarius guidelines.

Table 1 shows the general food RTCAs governing imported foodstuffs. The web links show the information in the RTCAs in Spanish.

Table 1. General food RTCAs governing imported foodstuffs.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
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Processed Food and Beverage Industry. Good Manufacturing Practices. General Principles	RTCA 67.01.33:06 can be found in Annex 4 of Resolution 176-2006	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-176-2006-comieco#
Food. Microbiological Criteria for Food Safety	RTCA 67.04.50:17 can be found in Annex of Resolution 402-2018	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-402-2018-comieco#

Section II. Labeling Requirements.

General Requirements

The language required on product labels is Spanish. The standard U.S. nutritional fact panel is acceptable. The label must be translated into Spanish with the same information that is given in the foreign language label. Stick-on labels shall comply fully with labeling requirements on product information but must not indicate the manufacturing or expiration date. Stick-on labels can be affixed at the importer's establishment prior to retail sale.

SENASA requests and enforces that the products of animal origin display the production and expiration date on the shipping carton(s) and are stamped on the primary package upon arrival at the port. The dates must be provided in the Day/Month/Year format. This requirement is closely inspected at the ports of entry.

Table 2 shows the RTCA that governs general labeling. The web link shows the RTCA in Spanish.

Table 2. General labeling RTCA for pre-packaged food.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
General Labeling for	RTCA 67.01.07:10 can be found in	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-280-2012-comieco#

Pre-packaged Foods	Annex of Resolution 280-2012	
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An outline of the information provided in the RTCA which must appear on an imported food product label:

- Name of the product
- List of ingredients
- Net content
- Sanitary Registration Number (SRN)
- Name and address of the importer or distributor of the product
- Country of origin of the product
- Lot number
- Expiration date

Other Specific Labeling requirements:

The RTCA 67.01.60: 10 – Nutritional Labeling (Table 3) provides nutrient content claims and descriptors. The web link shows the RTCA in Spanish,

Table 3. Nutritional labeling RTCA.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Nutritional Labeling of Pre-Packed Foods for Human Consumption of Population over Three Years Old	RTCA 67.01.60:10 can be found in Annex of Resolution 281-2012	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-281-2012-comieco#

The RTCA 67.01.32:06 (Table 4) provides special labeling requirements for sample-size products. The web link shows the RTCA in Spanish.

Table 4. Requirements RCTA for import of tasting and exhibition samples.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Requirements for Import of Processed Food for Exhibition and Tasting	RTCA 67.01.32:06 can be found in Annex 3 of Resolution 176-2006	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-176-2006-comieco#

All food products which have been treated with radiation (ionizing energy) must have specified on the label the nature of the treatment. Labels are not required for bioengineered products, health and functional food claims, or product tracing.

Table 5 shows the RTCA for alcoholic beverages labeling requirements. The web link shows the RTCA in Spanish.

Table 5. RTCA for labeling of alcoholic beverages.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Alcoholic Beverages Labeling	RTCA 67.01.05:11 and RTCA 67.01.06:11 can be found in Resolution 332-2013	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-332-2013-comieco# https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-332-2013-comieco#

The following products are excluded from expiration date labeling requirements:

- Alcoholic beverages containing 10 percent or more of alcohol by volume.
- Bakery products, which due to their nature, are generally consumed within 24 hours of the time they were produced (it is, however, common practice for bakeries to put an expiration date on products).
- Vinegar, chewing gum, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

There are currently no labeling requirements for organic, halal foods or genetically modified organisms that apply to products, ingredients, additives or processing aids. There are no current RTCA or national labeling requirements for plant-based meat or dairy alternatives. Only the interpretation guide in the RTCA 67.01.07:10 (general labeling) mentions them as examples.

Section III. Packaging and Container Regulations.

The GOH does not require any special packaging or limitations on container size. Shipments of food inputs waiting to be processed or repacked do not require labeling. If they are sold as individual units at the retail level, a label is required. Containers can be of plastic, metal, glass, cardboard or any other materials which comply with requirements to maintain the quality and safety of the product.

The web link in Table 6 indicates the amount of product in pre-packed foods in Spanish.

Table 6. RTCA of amount of product in pre-packed foods.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Amount of product in pre-packed foods	RTCA 01.01.11:06 can be found in Annex of Resolution 168-2006 and 291-2012	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-168-2006-comieco#

Packaging Sustainability Measures

Currently, there are no RTCA or Honduran packaging sustainability and recycling regulations.

Section IV. Food Additives Regulations.

The RTCA 67.04.54:18 Food Additives (Table 7) was last updated in 2019. The web link provides the information in Spanish. RTCA 67.04.54:18 is a positive list of additives (section 6) authorized for use in foods that does not include processing aids and substances usually utilized as ingredients.

Table 7. Central American food and beverage additive regulation.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Processed Food and Beverages: Food Additives	RTCA 67.04.54:18 can be found (in Spanish) in the Annex of Resolution 419-2019	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-419-2019-comieco#

The updated RTCA 67.04.54:18 adopts the Codex Stan 192-1995 in its current version. The additives accepted vary depending on the Codex 192-1995 food category, which can be found in the updated RTCA. Additionally, approved additives with limits different than Codex Stan 192-1995 are listed in Annex A grouped by food category and citing the source regulation (FDA, EU, etc.). Annex B lists approved food additives in now repealed RTCA 67.04.54:10 but not listed in Codex Stan 192-1995.

Honduras's regulatory authorities allow flavorings accepted by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Flavors and Extracts Manufacturing Association (FEMA), and the European Union based on Section 6.3 of RTCA 67.04.54:18 Processed Food and Beverages: Food Additives.

Industry requests for inclusion of an additive in one or several food categories or for exclusion or modification of maximum limits for use in different food categories must follow the procedure described in section 4.2 Update by Request from an Interested Party of RTCA 67.04.54:18.

U.S. exporters can request information (in Spanish) on permitted or prohibited food additives via email by contacting ARSA at alimentos@arsa.gob.hn.

Section V. Pesticides and Other Contaminants.

Pesticides and veterinary drugs are regulated by SENASA’s Plant and Animal Health Technical Directorates. Ministerial Decree No.642-98 establishes the requirements for registration, import, manufacturing, formulation, re-packaging, re-bottling, transportation, storage, sale, use, and management.

SENASA uses a list of pesticides approved for use in Honduras and applies the maximum residue levels (MRLs) for imported food products set forth by CODEX here: <http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/codex-texts/dbs/pestres/pesticides/en/>. If the tolerance levels are not covered by CODEX, then SENASA applies the MRLs from the U.S.Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The importer and the pesticide must be registered with SENASA’s Plant Health Sub-Directorate. SENASA follows international regulations for its registration process. An application for pesticide registration must be submitted with documents such as: Certificate of a Registered Pesticide Product issued by EPA or USDA and Certificate of Qualitative and Quantitative Composition issued by the producer or manufacturing company of the product.

In addition, other documents required are toxicological and ecotoxicological studies. After the product and the importer are registered with SENASA, the importer requests a permit from SENASA to import the product. Among the data required for the import permit are pro-forma invoice, location and name of the manufacturer, lot number of the product, and amount to import.

U.S. exporters can obtain information on approved pesticides and allowed MRLs at SENASA’s Plant Health Sub-Director’s Office. Aflatoxin levels for corn in Honduras can be obtained at SENASA’s Food Safety Sub-Directorate. Honduras defers to CODEX standards for aflatoxin levels on food products. Please contact SENASA, listed in Appendix I.

The RTCAs shown in Table 8 provide pesticides regulations. The web link shows the RTCAs in Spanish.

Table 8. RTCAs for botanical and microbiological pesticides for agricultural use.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Botanical Pesticides for Agricultural Use. Requirements for Registration	RTCA 65.05.62.11 can be found in Annex of Resolution 346-2014	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-346-2014-comieco#

Microbiological Pesticides for Agricultural Use. Requirements for Registration	RTCA 65.05.61:11 can be found in Annex of Resolution 297-2012	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-297-2012-comieco#

Veterinary drugs:

Veterinary drugs are controlled by SENASA’s Animal Health Technical Directorate. The RTCA shown in Table 9 provides the regulation. The web link of the RTCA is in Spanish.

Table 9. RTCA for veterinary medicine registration and control.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Veterinary Medicines and Related Products. Requirements for Sanitary Registration and Control	RTCA 65.05.51:08 can be found in Annexes of Resolutions 257-2010, 326-2013 and 362-2015	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-257-2010-comieco# https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-326-2013-comieco#

Section VI. Other Requirements, Regulations, and Registration Measures.

The official certificates and documents that must accompany shipments can be found in the GAIN Reports for Honduras:

- Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) – Export Certificate Report (https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Food%20and%20Agricultural%20Import%20Regulations%20and%20Standards%20Export%20Certificate%20Report_Tegucigalpa_Honduras_09-30-2021), and

- **Exporter Guide**
(https://apps.fas.usda.gov/newgainapi/api/Report/DownloadReportByFileName?fileName=Exporter%20Guide_Tegucigalpa_Honduras_12-31-2021). The regulations do not request a Certificate of Free Sale. Honduras does not require any inspection or testing procedures prior to shipment. Products are monitored at the retail level.

Facility Registration:

U.S. facilities do not need to be registered with a Honduran regulatory authority prior to export. Under the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), Honduras recognizes the U.S. inspection services as equivalent. This equivalence eliminates the requirement of a certification by Honduras of the U.S. plant to export to the Honduran market.

Product Sanitary Registration:

In order to register their products for import, companies must follow a general procedure, which consists of obtaining a Sanitary Registration Number (SRN) with ARSA. The SRN is required for imported and domestic processed foods to be sold at the retail and wholesale level.

The requirements, documents, and application for an SRN are published in ARSA's website

at:<https://arsa.gob.hn/requisitos-alimentos-y-bebidas/>

In April 2020, ARSA implemented the online submission for SRN. The authorization is sent with a CQR code to ARSA's customs representative and the importer. ARSA and the Customs Administration are in talks to implement shared access of their on-line platforms for the customs clearance process.

The product should be registered by the legal representative of the company who imports or distributes the product. It is not necessary to have a Lawyer. Domestic or international industries that manufacture the product are also able to register the product.

The specific documentation that must be submitted with the request of SRN is the following:

- Copy of Sanitary License
- Free Sale Certificate
- Product label
- Affidavit signed by the legal representative.

For further information, companies can visit ARSA's website in reference to the above-mentioned requirements and documents at:

<https://arsa.gob.hn/requisitos-registro-sanitario/>

The SRN process takes about 90 days.

The importer's representative should regularly check ARSA's website to review if their sanitary registration number has already been processed.

ARSA has a price schedule system (based on Accord 003-2021) to expedite the process that can be accessed here: <https://arsa.gob.hn/legislacion-vigente/> . Fees vary depending on time of delivery (working days). The SRN is valid for five years.

ARSA has the following contact information to assist companies in the product registration process:

- Product registration: consultas@arsa.gob.hn.
- Food and beverage product registration: alimentos@arsa.gob.hn
- Complaints: denuncias@arsa.gob.hn

The RTCA 67.01.31.07 – Procedure to Grant Sanitary Registration and Sanitary Inscription (Table 10) indicates the process to obtain a product registration. The web link shows the current RTCA in Spanish. However, the RTCA is presently being reviewed by the Central American countries, and it is undergoing review of public feedback. A new version is expected to become active in 2022. The main proposed changes are the elimination of inscription to an existing sanitary registration, the figure of co-packing and requisites for co-packers.

Table 10. RTCA of sanitary registration and inscription.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Processed Food. Procedure to Grant Sanitary Registration and Sanitary Inscription	RTCA 67.01.31.07 can be found in Annex of Resolution 325-2013	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-325-2013-comieco#

ARSA also issues a Sanitary Inscription, which is the authorization granted to an importer or distributor of a previously registered product. The sanitary registration number assigned will be the same registration number of the distributor who initially registered it. The sanitary inscription is also processed online and is valid for five years. The Sanitary Inscription process is also being reviewed.

Central America Mutual Recognition

Central America Customs Union (CACU) members agreed that for the products produced or processed in a CACU country, when a product obtains an SRN, it does not need to be registered in another. Products produced in the United States are not eligible for the registration exemption. It is important to note that the origin of the product is a CACU country if the product is processed in a CACU country, even if the raw material is not from a CACU member country.

To receive this CACU benefit, the only procedure that a CACU country must carry out is to request a “Registration Acknowledgment” which is the same throughout Central America. The acknowledgment lasts the length of time that the product is registered, which is five years.

Section VII. Other Specific Standards.

Vitamin Enrichment: The requirements are regulated by the RTCA 67.01.60: 10 - Nutritional Labeling of Pre-Packed Foods for Human Consumption, (Table 11). The RTCA is presently being reviewed by the Central American countries and is undergoing a public review period.

Table 11. RTCA for nutritional labeling of pre-packed foods.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Nutritional Labeling of Pre-Packed Foods for Human Consumption of Population over Three Years Old	RTCA 67.01.60:10 can be found in Annex of Resolution 347- 2014	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-347-2014-comieco

Food category-specific standards:

Table 12 shows RTCAs governing imported dairy foods.

Table 12. RTCA standards for dairy products.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Dairy Products. Ultra-High Temperature Milk (UAT or UHT). Specifications	RTCA 67.04.73:17 can be found in Annex of Resolution 403-2018	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-403-2018-comieco#
Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link

Dairy Products. Cheeses. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.70:14 can be found in Annex of Resolution 366- 2015	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-366-2015-comieco#
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Dairy Products. Non-Matured Cheeses, Including Fresh Cheese. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.72:17 can be found in Annex of Resolution 396-2017	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-396-2017-comieco#
Dairy Products. Matured Cheeses. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.75:17 can be found in Annex of Resolution 406-2018	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-406-2018-comieco#
Dairy Products. Butter. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.77:20 can be found in Annex of Resolution 435-2020	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-435-2020-comieco#
Pasteurized Milk	RTCA 67.04.66:12 can be found in Annex of Resolution 337-2014	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-337-2014-comieco#
Dairy Products. Powdered Milk and Powdered Cream. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.76:18 can be found in Annex of Resolution 413-2019	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-413-2019-comieco#

Table 13 shows RTCAs governing imported fruit, vegetable, grains, and seed products.

Table 13. RTCA standards for plant products.

Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Processed Food and Beverages. Fruit Nectars	RTCA 67.04.48:08 can be found in Annex of Resolution 226-2008	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-226-2008-comieco#

Prepared Food and Beverages. Oils and Fats. Specifications	RTCA 67.04.40:07 can be found in Annex of Resolution 215-2007	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-215-2007-comieco#
Flours. Fortified Wheat Flour. Specifications	RTCA 67.01.15:07 can be found in Annex of Resolution 201-2007	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-201-2007-comieco#
Category	Central American Technical Regulation (RTCA)	Web link
Agricultural Inputs. Requirements for the Production and Commercialization of Certified Basic Grain and Soy Seeds.	RTCA 65.05.53:10 can be found in Annex of Resolution 259-2010	https://www.sieca.int/?product=resolucion-259-2010-comieco#

Special Use Foods: The General Law of Food Fortification provides the framework for products that are widely used by the population. These products require added ingredients to provide an increase in their nutritional value and be properly labeled as fortified, such as:

- Sugar for human consumption must be fortified with vitamin A.
- Salt must be fortified with iodine.
- Wheat flour must be fortified with iron, folic acid, vitamins B1 and B2, and niacin.

Currently, there are no national or regional standards regarding plant-based meat and/or dairy alternatives.

Section VIII. Trademarks, Brand Names, and Intellectual Property Rights.

The GOH has taken actions to improve Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). In 1993, Honduras passed a comprehensive IPR law. The GOH has since complied with the requirements of this legislation by creating an IPR Office within the Economic Development Secretariat.

As a signatory to the Uruguay Round agreements and member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Honduras has accepted the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) standard. In addition, Honduras has signed CAFTA-DR, which contains a chapter on IPR. To be protected under Honduran Law, trademarks must be registered with the Economic Development Secretariat. Trademark registrations are valid for 10 years from the registration date. “Notorious marks” are protected under the Pan-American Convention (1917) of which Honduras is a member. Illegal registration of a notorious mark, however, must be contested in court by the original holder.

Section IX. Import Procedures.

The GOH’s institutions involved in the customs clearance process for imported food and agricultural goods are the National Plant, Animal Health, and Food Safety Service (SENASA), Sanitary Regulation Agency (ARSA) and the Honduran Customs Administration (ADUANAS). Because of the recent creation of ARSA, the number of inspectors at customs is limited and cover more than one post.

SENASA delegated the responsibility of all quarantine inspections and treatments of agricultural imports to the International Regional Organization for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA). OIRSA’s Plant and Animal Protection Service (SEPA) inspectors are located at the borders, ports, and airports. SEPA follows SENASA’s instructions to enforce the import requirements of raw animal and plant products, processed and consumer-ready foods (dairy, meat, seafood, and honey products) as well as raw materials from these same categories used in food processing at the time of entry. ARSA officials inspect additives, raw materials, and consumer ready foods from other categories. ADUANAS officials review that the invoice complies with the GOH’s revenue tariff.

SEPA, ARSA and ADUANAS inspectors coordinate and conduct the customs clearance of imports of food and agricultural products at the port of entry by reviewing:

- Compliance of requirements indicated on the import permit approved by SENASA.
- Electronic documentation review: consistency of information across all original documents submitted in the Import Permit, Phyto or Zoo sanitary Export Certificate, Certificate of Origin, Commercial Invoice, Bill of Lading and Packing List such as: names of importer, exporter, shipment’s content, amounts, product description, and country of origin and point of shipping. Import documents do not need to be translated into Spanish.
- The SEPA inspector conducts an inspection of the product. SENASA requests and enforces that the products of animal origin display the production and expiration date on the shipping carton(s) and are stamped on the primary package upon arrival at the port. The dates must be provided in the Day/Month/Year format (DD/MM/YYYY). These requirements are closely inspected at the ports of entry. SENASA is flexible with the wording, but the most common issue is that the date is not printed at all both on the primary (SEPA is adamant on this one even for bulk products such as meat cuts) and tertiary package (carton box).

- The entry of animal products and by-products depends on the food safety conditions of the product itself. It also depends on the exporting country's current animal health and pest's status. In cases that a quarantine pest is found, a treatment will be applied by SEPA's Quarantine Treatment Services (SITC) unit prior to allowing the product to enter the country. When a non-quarantine pest is found alive or dead, the quarantine treatment will not be applied.
- Product samples and mail orders are subject to the same import regulations as all other products.
- The entire customs clearance procedure depends on various factors such as: the type of submission (electronic/hard copy) of all the documents to Customs, that the documents comply with all the requirements, or if a pest is found, among others. In cases where the documents show discrepancy, or a pest is found, SENASA issues a notification of detained/or rejected product.
- Product sampling is done randomly. It is taken from animal products origin, seeds that the import permit requires it, and when bacteria or fungi are found. Samples are submitted to laboratory analysis to check the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the product.
- The specialized container and cargo terminals in Puerto Cortes (Honduras' main port) took over the loading and unloading cargo operations. The "Operadora Portuaria Centroamericana" (OPC) loads and unloads containers. The "Terminal Especializada de Honduras" (TEH) manages the bulk cargo. In 2022, 96% of imported bulk grains and meals from United States entered via TEH and 75% of container cargo via OPC terminals. Importers have complained about OPC container unloading understaffing, and lack of coordination between Customs, ARSA and SEPA that cause delays and merchandise overstay fees assessed by OPC to importers.
- Post notes that any products shipped on wooden packing material must show the NIMF-15 stamp on all pallets, or the product will require additional fumigation upon entry. There were 445 seizures of U.S. Agricultural products in 2020. The majority were caused by non-compliance of wood pallets with NIMF-15 international regulation (heat treatment seal absent or unreadable). In 2021, 95% of seizures caused by non-compliance with NIMF-15 came from the United States. Some exporters take photos of the NIMF stamps before the shipment is sent due to doubts about the veracity of local inspector findings, although this is of course not a requirement and may not help avoid demands for fumigation.
- Temporary SEPA retentions of U.S. Agricultural products totaled 2172 in 2022. Of these, 96% (2,085) were caused by a missing document and 4% (87 cases) were held due to imported quantity exceeding the declared amount. Of the shipments missing documents, 36% lacked the U.S. Phytosanitary Export Certificate (782), 26% were missing the SENASA issued import permit (565), and 10% lacked the ARSA issued Sanitary Registration (217).

For additional information see [the Honduras GAIN Report: Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) – Export Certificate.](#)

Section X. Trade Facilitation.

SENASA has an online “Imports Requirements System” platform with the requirements for imports of plants and animal products into Honduras. The exporter/importer should search the product by country of origin, common or scientific name and the import requirements are displayed. The system can be accessed at: <http://importaciones.senasa.gob.hn/#/consultar-requisito>

In May 2020 SENASA started the process for importers to submit the import permit request electronically for products and byproducts of animal origin and live animals. By January 2021, six online services modules were fully operational, including new modules for plant products and seeds import permits. Importers can register into SENASA online Records Management System (GER) and obtain cloud-based storage of all their SENASA issued permits, certificates and lab analysis reports here: <https://ger.senasa.gob.hn/>

The system allows the importer to register with SENASA, enter all the data and required documents of the product to be imported, and have the import permit in a few hours. The average time it takes to issue an import permit has been reduced about 90% from over three working days to less than four hours. Then, SENASA transfers the import permit electronically to SEPA at the port of entry and the importer.

Importers of seeds, plant and animal products can access SENASA’s on-line system at: <http://importaciones.senasa.gob.hn/#/login>

SENASA has made available the online import permits for veterinary products as of August 2021.

The customs clearance is usually granted within a short period of time; however, depending on the workload at the port and whether all the SENASA and ADUANAS requirements are complete, the average release time can range from a few hours to a week.

In August 2021, the first private logistics hub nearby Puerto Cortes, which hosts ARSA, Customs Administration and SEPA inspectors, received authorization from SENASA for customs clearance operations outside OPC premises. This public-private partnership offers an alternative for importers to OPC.

U.S. facilities do not need to be registered with a Honduran regulatory authority prior to export. Under the United States-Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), Honduras recognizes the U.S. inspection services as equivalent. This equivalence eliminates the requirement of a certification by Honduras of the U.S. plant to export to the Honduran market.

Common delays for plant and animal products are caused by data in the import permit request and documents required by SENASA not being consistent with the information provided about exporter, amounts, product description, origin, and point of shipping.

APPENDIX I. Government Regulatory Key Agency Contacts.

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For further information on exporting U.S. agricultural products to other countries, please visit the Foreign Agricultural Service's home page: www.fas.usda.gov.

Attachments:

No Attachments