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### **Report Highlights:**

The Food Act No. 26 of 1980, Animal Feed Act No. 15 of 1986, Plant Protection Act No. 35 of 1999, and Import and Export Control Act No. 1 of 1969 are the main laws that govern food imports into Sri Lanka. Import regulation are in the hands of several state institutions, making the process complicated and time-consuming. Although several regulations have been in place for decades, new regulations are in the pipeline. In seeking to meet the commitments of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Sri Lanka is streamlining the processes of regulatory authorities. To streamline import and export trading processes, Sri Lanka has initiated two online platforms: The Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal and the National Single Window.

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**DISCLAIMER:** This report was prepared by the U.S. Embassy in Colombo – Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA), 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. [Note: Use Google Chrome to access links if they do not open with Microsoft Edge].

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka), an emerging free-market economy, failed to meet its foreign debt repayments in May 2022, resulting in the country’s first sovereign default since achieving independence from the Great Britain in 1948.<sup>1</sup> Policy choices dating back to 2019, have left the country with fiscal and current account deficits. Sri Lanka is recovering from the severe economic crisis (dating to 2021) with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund’s Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program (i.e., a bail-out package) of March 2023 and increased earnings from tourism and remittances. Under the EFF program, Sri Lanka received three tranches totaling about \$1 billion June 2024. Sri Lanka’s gross official reserves increased to \$5 billion in March 2024, up from \$2.2 billion in March 2023. This will help provide foreign currency liquidity needed to meet urgent imports of medicines, food, and fertilizers. The Sri Lankan rupee (LKR) has appreciated by nine percent against the U.S. dollar through April 30, 2024. The Sri Lankan government is gradually relaxing import controls and payment terms to facilitate trade. The government’s priority in the months to come is finalizing the debt-restructuring program.

Sri Lanka, to meet commitments made under the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), seeks to improve import-export regulatory authorities’ coordination, as well as access to and transparency of their processes. To streamline the import-export trading processes, Sri Lanka is implementing the Sri Lanka Trade and Information Portal and the National Single Window platforms. In August 2023, Sri Lanka introduced the electronic Certificate of Origin System (COS) to certify the origin of traded products, new e-payment services at the National Plant Quarantine Services, and e-registration system at the National Organic Control Unit (NOCU) of the Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB).

Sri Lankan labeling, packaging, food additives, standards and intellectual property rights’ regulations are comprehensive, as well as, at times, restrictive. New regulations are introduced for food labeling and advertising, trans-fats, the color coding for sugar levels in liquid food, refined wheat flour fortification, and heavy metal testing of fruits and dried fish. However, the effective implementing date for food labeling and advertising, trans-fat, color coding for sugar levels in liquid food is now January 01, 2025, to allow additional time for industry to adjust to the new food labeling and advertising regulations. Sri

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<sup>1</sup> It achieved independence from Great Britain on 4 February 1948, with Ceylon being granted independence as the Dominion of Ceylon. Dominion status within the British Commonwealth was retained through May 22, 1972, when it became a republic and was renamed the Republic of Sri Lanka (1972-1978).

Lanka is also drafting new regulations for cereals, pulses, legumes, fish and fish products, and meat and meat products, as well as for food mycotoxins.

Since June 2023, Sri Lanka enacted new regulations where food which contains or has genetically modified organisms (i.e., genetically engineered) or materials less than 0.9 percent, exempt from taking the prior approval of the Chief Food Authority when importing and regarding labeling requirements.

## SECTION I – FOOD LAWS

The [Food Act No. 26 \(1980\)](#), the [Animal Feed Act No. 15 \(1986\)](#), the [Plant Protection Act No. 35 \(1999\)](#), and Import and Export Control Act No. 1 (1969) regulate Sri Lanka's import controls. A Sri Lankan trader attempting to import, must meet the requirements of state regulatory institutions.

The main national competent authorities include:

- [Food Control Administration Unit](#) (FCAU)
- [Department of Agriculture](#) (DOA)\ [National Plant Quarantine Service](#) (NPQS)
- [Department of Animal Production and Health](#) (DAPH)
- [Department of Imports and Exports Control](#)
- [Sri Lanka Customs](#)
- [Sri Lanka Standards Institution](#) (SLSI)

**The Food Act No. 26 (1980):** The Act regulates the manufacture, import, sale, and distribution of food in Sri Lanka and this Act also establishes the formation of the “Food Advisory Committee (FAC)”. The Director of Health Services chairs the FAC, while the Assistant Director of Health Services in charge of the FCAU is the Secretary.

The Food Advisory Committee advises the Minister of Health on matters arising out of the administration of the Food Act No. 26 (1980), as well as implement functions assigned under the Act. The Food Advisory Committee appoints sub-committees, as it deems fit to exercise powers and perform the duties and or discharge functions of the FAC as delegated. The FAC appoints members to these sub committees. The Act provides for a food authority at the local administrative level to execute and enforce the act's provisions. The Director of Health Services serves as the chief food authority, supervising, guiding, and coordinating the work of subordinate, local-level food authorities.

The Ministry of Health's Deputy Director General for Environmental Health, Occupation Health and Food Safety leads the Food Control Administration Unit. The Director for Environmental Health, Occupational Health, and Food Safety, reporting to the Deputy Director General supervises daily activities in the Food Control Administration Unit.

Sri Lanka's Food Control Administration Unit implements import control procedures at the national borders to ensure the safety of the food for human consumption. Live animals, raw meat, and feed, which are controlled by the Department of Animal Production and Health, and plant products which are controlled by the Department of Agriculture\National Plant Quarantine Service, are not regulated by the Food Control Administration Unit. All parties, however, conduct coordinated regulation as necessary under required circumstances.

**Animal Feed Act No. 15 (1986):** This Act regulates Sri Lanka's animal feed imports. The Act regulates, supervises, and controls the manufacture, sale and distribution of animal feed and related matters. The Act establishes the Animal Feed Advisory Committee, consisting of the Director of Animal Production and Health, a representative from the animal feed trade, and three specialists with animal feed technical knowledge and experience, as appointed by the Minister of Health.

The Animal Feed Advisory Committee advises the Registrar of Animal Feed on 1) the licensing of animal feed and the manufacture, storage, preparation for sale, and the sale of animal feed; 2) establishes the minimum standard as to the composition, strength, quality, and purity of any approved animal feed; 3) fixes the maximum level of deleterious or inert material allowable in approved animal feed; 4) makes recommendations to the Controller of Imports and Exports on matters relating to the import and export of animal feed, and ingredients; 5) sets out the testing method by which animal feed shall be analyzed; and 6) takes other steps as prescribed that relate to or are incidental to the aforesaid matters.

The Department of Animal Production and Health (DAPH) is the state institution responsible for providing technical leadership to the livestock industry and its stakeholders. It controls the import of livestock, animal products, animal byproducts, and animal feed at the border. However, if the animal feed derives from a plant ingredient(s), the DAPH and the NPQS share responsibility. The import of such requires prior approval of both the DAPH and National Plant Quarantine Service. The Animal Feed Act No. 15 (1986) stipulates that no person shall manufacture or import any animal feed or animal feed ingredient without a valid license issued by the Registrar of Animal Feed. Entities desiring a license to manufacture any animal feed for sale must apply to the Registrar.

Four categories of consignments requiring animal quarantine inspection and sampling:

- Live animals
- Animal product and animal byproducts
- Animal feeds and feed ingredients
- Veterinary drugs and biologicals

**Plant Protection Act No. 35 (1999):** The National Plant Quarantine Service is responsible for the enforcement and implementation of the Plant Protection Act No. 35 (1999) as it pertains to plant quarantine activities. The Director General of Agriculture is responsible for the general administration of the act, nominating officers necessary for assisting in conducting the act's provisions. The Plant Protection Act No. 35 (1999) requires that exports to Sri Lanka adhere to phytosanitary requirements (including quarantine) specified in the NPQS issued import permit.

Agricultural product imports require a phytosanitary certificate. However, not all commodities require an import permit. Low-risk, regular bulk commodities enter freely without import permits (e.g. potato, onion) and without phytosanitary certificates.

Sri Lanka's law specific to the issue of genetic engineering (GE) are the [Control of Import, Labeling and Sale of Genetically Modified Foods Regulations \(2006\)](#) (known as the GM Food Regulations) and its [amendment](#) under the [Food Act No.26 \(1980\)](#). Provisions of existing laws, however, are used to control, check, and restrict the introduction of GE products. The import and sale of GE products, including ingredients for human consumption are highly restricted. Products intended for human consumption that contain GE ingredients must receive the approval of Sri Lanka's Chief Food Authority.

Sri Lanka's general quarantine procedure for the import of plant and plant products does not permit the entry of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and living modified organisms (LMOs). The absence of a functioning approval mechanism effectively restricts the sale of seeds and other agricultural products derived from genetic engineering. Sri Lanka has yet to approve food products with GE ingredients.

**Import and Export Control Act No. 01 (1969):** The Import and Export Act No. 01 (1969) established Sri Lanka's Department of Imports and Exports Control, with the objective of regulating imports and exports. The department implements the government's import and export policy decisions premised on national security, economic considerations, public health, environmental concerns, and or other determinants, in accordance with the act. It is the regulatory body responsible for imports and exports subject to licensing requirements. The department establishes and publishes regulations for the implementation of the government's import and export policies.

**Sri Lanka Customs,** a non-ministerial organization established by the Customs Ordinance No. 17 (1869), processes food inspection and certification. The Director General of Customs is the chief authority, and, in addition, there are five additional Directors General. Major functions of the department include the collection of customs duties, levies on behalf of other government authorities, and securing the nation's ports-of-entry.

**World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement:** On May 31, 2016, Sri Lanka submitted its Trade Facilitation Agreement's (TFA) instrument of ratification to the World Trade Organization. To meet its requirements, in June 2014, Sri Lanka established the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC). The Director General of Customs and the Director General of Commerce co-chair the NTFC, which consists of twelve state agencies and seven private sector chambers of commerce. The committee coordinates interagency TFA implementation activities, as well as other trade facilitation initiatives. Recently, Sri Lanka introduced [NTFC Monitoring Tool](#), a digital platform that monitors the implementation of Trade Facilitation reforms and provides real time insights for strategic decision-making. It also enhances coordination and collaboration among border agencies, NTFC members, and stakeholders enabling them to effectively meet the commitments of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

### **Major Trade Barriers Identified**

Sri Lanka traversed a severe economic crisis from mid-2020 until mid-2024. This situation resulted from the combination of running high trade deficits, diminishing foreign exchange reserves, and decreased government revenue intake. Sri Lanka focused on providing goods to its domestic market, instead of moving towards export-oriented economy. Country's import bill was much higher than its earnings from exports, creating trade deficit. As well as government income also reduced after introducing huge tax cuts in 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected the country's tourism sector, a critical source of foreign exchange revenue. As a result, foreign exchange reserves plummeted to \$1.81 billion by April 2022, nearly 80 percent lower than the pre-pandemic level, which led to the country's first sovereign default in May 2022. Limited foreign exchange reserves and the rapid depreciation of the national currency caused the Sri Lankan government to limit its imports significantly, creating acute shortages and increasing prices of essential products: fuel, medicine, food, and inputs, among others.

However, Sri Lanka is now on the path to economic recovery with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program of March 2023 and rebounded earnings from tourism and remittances. Under the EFF program, Sri Lanka received three tranches totaling about \$1 billion by June 2024. Sri Lanka's gross official reserves increased to \$5 billion in March 2024 from \$2.2 billion in March 2023. This will help provide foreign currency liquidity needed to meet urgent

imports of medicines, food, and fertilizers. Sri Lanka rupee appreciated by nine percent against the U.S. dollar through April 30, 2024. The Sri Lankan government is gradually relaxing import controls and payment terms to facilitate trade.

Previously, on April 16, 2020, the Sri Lankan government implemented temporary import controls (including import tariffs and temporary import suspensions) initially meant to mitigate the impact of COVID-19's effects on the economy, and the economic crisis spawned by the pandemic's outbreak. The government subsequently introduced additional import control measures again in May 2022 and August 2022. These measures sought to restrict imports of luxury items, vehicles, agricultural inputs, fresh fruits, dairy products, and other food items. However, regulations remained flexible enough to permit the import of raw materials for local value addition and export processing. See, [Sri Lanka Department of Imports and Exports Control](#), as well as also the following GAIN-SRI LANKA reports:

- [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2020-0012 | Sri Lanka Revises Import Control Regulations Further on July 16 Due to COVID-19](#)
- [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2023-0004 | Sri Lanka Extends Surcharge on Customs Duties for Select Food and Agricultural Products](#)
- [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2023-0002 | Sri Lanka's Foreign Exchange Crisis Driven Import Control Regulations](#)
- [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2023-0001 | Sri Lanka Import Control Regulations Suspend the Import of 26 Food and Agricultural Products](#)

The approval of the IMF extended fund facility, disbursement of other donor funds, increased revenue from remittances and tourism, and the government's monetary and fiscal policy measures resulted in the strengthening and built up of foreign reserves, while contributing to strengthen the Sri Lankan rupee since March 2023.<sup>2</sup> The Sri Lankan government commenced relaxing import control measures and their payment terms as of September 2022. The government's most recent regulation removes import restrictions on fish products, dairy products, and non-alcoholic beverages effective June 09, 2023 (see, [Department of Exports and Imports Control Current Regulations](#)).

Sri Lanka requires poultry meat to meet stringent, trade restrictive microbiological standards. The standards require that product samples be salmonella-free. Sri Lanka's draft [Food \(Meat and Meat Products\) Regulation \(2018\)](#) includes the same standards for meat and meat products. The Food Act No. 26 (1980) designates that only the [Medical Research Institute \(MRI\)](#) based in Colombo can conduct microbiological testing, which results in the testing being time-consuming and subject to delay.<sup>3</sup>

## SECTION II – LABELING REQUIREMENTS

### General Labeling Requirements

The [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2005\)](#) regulate general food labeling in Sri Lanka. The regulations require package or container labeling with the label printed in any two of the three official languages (i.e., Sinhala, Tamil, or English). The label must be indelibly printed, painted, or

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<sup>2</sup> [IMF Executive Board Approves \\$3 Billion Under the New Extended Fund Facility \(EFF\) Arrangement for Sri Lanka.](#)

<sup>3</sup> The city of Colombo is Sri Lanka's business capital. The country's official administrative capital is in Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte (Kotte). Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is a small satellite city, located within the urban area of Sri Lanka's de facto economic, executive, and judicial capital, Colombo.

affixed on the main panel (for imports, affixing a supplementary label is permissible). The regulation does not apply to packaged food weighed, counted, and or measured in the consumer's presence.

The product packaging's main panel must contain:

- The bolded common name of the contents which must appear in two of the three languages.
- Brand or trade name, if any, in any one or more of the three languages.
- Net contents of the package expressed in international symbols: grams (g); kilograms (kg); milliliters (ml); and or liters (l).

The product packaging needs to contain on a panel, except in the case of prepacked food products that do not exceed 25 grams, the following:

- Permitted food additives by name or INS number.
- Storage and use instructions.
- Name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor in Sri Lanka.
- Batch number.
- Date of expiry and manufacture (imported bulk food – date of manufacture and repacking) in the format of DD/MM/YY or YY/MM/DD. The expiry date can be on the bottle closure for bottled milk and carbonated milk cans – lid or top/bottom of the can. A date of expiry is not required for sugar, tea, cereals, and pulses sold in wholesale packs, fresh vegetables, fruits, roots, and tubers, and for bread (other than sliced bread).
- List of ingredients by common names in descending order of their proportions.
- Country of origin (for imported food).
- For foods treated with ionizing radiation, or utilizing ingredients of same effect, it must carry a written statement in proximity to the common name of the food, indicating the international weight/volume symbol.
- Any other declarations required by regulations.

Special regulations apply for, but are not limited to:

- Blended oil.
- Fruit-based beverages for direct consumption or reconstitution.
- Carbonated soft drinks.
- Vinegar.
- Use of fruits and pictorial presentation of fruits on non-fruit-based confectionaries, chocolates, biscuits, similar products, drink mixes, dessert preparations.
- Special nutritive values.
- Enriched food.
- Special dietary use.
- Use of terminology relating to medicinal property and use for specified illnesses.
- Irradiated products, or when an irradiated product is used an ingredient of a product.
- Use of “butter” in the label of chocolates and flour confectionary products.
- Use of “natural.”
- Use of “substitute.”

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Health's recently introduced the [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) and [Amendment](#). The new regulation is effective January 1, 2025, and will replace the existing [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2005\)](#).

The new regulation, [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) requires that food containers and packages display the following declarations indelibly and legibly on the main panel:

- Common name of the product in bold type in all three languages.
- Trade name and brand name (if any), in any one or more of the three languages.
- The net contents of the package or container expressed in the International System of Units (SI), more commonly referred to as the metric system the symbol “g” for grams or “kg” for kilograms in the case of solids, and ‘ml’ for milliliters or “l” for liters in the case of liquids and, if packaged in liquid medium, the net drained weight expressed as “g” or “kg.”
- The following declarations shall be made indelibly and legibly on any panel in any one or more of the three Languages:
  - i. A complete list of ingredients used in the food by their common names in descending order of ingoing weight (m/m) at the time of manufacture of the food including any permitted food additive by its common name and INS number as prescribed by regulations made under the Act.
  - ii. (A) The name and address of the manufacturer and distributor, and in the case of imported food products, in addition the name and address of the importer.  
(B) The name and address of the packer, if any.
  - iii. The batch number or code number or a decipherable code marking.
  - iv. The date of manufacture.
  - v. The date of expiry.
  - vi. In case where foods are imported in bulk and repacked, the date of manufacture and the date of repacking.
  - vii. The country of origin in case of imported foods.
  - viii. Nutrition labelling in letters of font size not less than 1.5 millimeters.
  - ix. Any other declarations stipulated under these regulations.
- Consumer warnings, if any, specified in any regulations under the Act in all three languages in letters of font size not less than 1.5 millimeters (mm).
- Instructions for storage and use, if any, in a minimum of two of the three languages.

The provisions of the new regulation shall not apply to prepackaged food products, the weight of which does not exceed 25 grams, or the volume does not exceed 30 milliliters. Where a label in any of the three languages has been affixed on an imported package or container of food, a supplementary label conforming to the regulations must appear clearly in bold type in the other two languages.

**Trans-Fat Regulation of Food:** The [Food \(Trans - Fat\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) and [Amendment](#) are effective January 1, 2025. It requires all packaged foods to declare the total amount of trans-fat on the label as per 100 grams or 100 milliliters. Food products manufactured exclusively for export are exempted from the regulation's requirements. New regulation restricts the sale of food where the trans-fat (other than trans-fat naturally occurring in fat of animal origin) content exceeds 2 percent of the total fat contained in the food. Further, sales of any partially hydrogenated oils are prohibited. However, if any food or food ingredient with

naturally occurring trans-fat having iodine value greater than four is allowed in the preparation of food or as an ingredient in food products unless it is hydrogenated and not completely or near completely saturated.

**Shelf Life of Imported Food:** Under the, [Food \(Shelf Life of Imported Food Items\) Regulation \(2011\)](#) the Food Control Administration Unit regulates the shelf life of imported food products. At the point-of-entry into Sri Lanka, the food should still have a minimum of 60 percent of its shelf life. The regulation states that the shelf life of an imported food is determined from the date-of-manufacture and the date-of-expiry declared by the manufacturer. During this time, the product is considered safe for human consumption and of satisfactory quality in terms of nutritional value, flavor, texture, and appearance. [Exemptions: An August 14, 2015, amendment exempts imported sugar, cereals and pulses in wholesale packs, fresh fruits and vegetables, bulbs, roots, and tubers which have not been peeled or cut from the food shelf-life regulation].

### **Other Specific Labeling Requirements**

**Labeling Food Sweeteners:** The [Food \(Sweeteners\) Regulations \(2014\)](#) provides labeling guidelines for use of combined, permitted sweeteners. The label shall provide the total percentage of the combination of sweeteners, not to exceed one hundred percent.

The label must contain:

- A description with “contains permitted sweeteners “X” and “Y.”
- A warning “Excessive consumption may induce laxative effects” when it contains polyols (Sorbitol, Xylitol, Lactitol, Mannitol, Maltitol, Erythritol) or Isomalt.
- When aspartame is present, the warning “Shall not be used by phenylketonurics” and “Not recommended for children.”

The [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) require food products with added sweeteners to label separately in bold upper case letters in a minimum font size of 1.5 mm, the statements:

- i. “CONTAINS SWEETENERS “X” and substituting for the letter “X” the names of any permitted sweeteners used.
- ii. “NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN UNDER THREE YEARS OF AGE.”

**Labeling Food Antioxidants:** As per the [Food \(Antioxidants\) Regulations \(2009\)](#) and its [Amendment](#), every package, or container of food with permitted antioxidants must include a legible label stating:

- For each permitted antioxidant, the common or usual name, the appropriate International Numbering System (INS) number, and the percentage of each antioxidant present in the preparation in the container.
- Where any other substance is present in the preparation, the common or usual name or an appropriate INS number of each such substance.
- If two or more such substances are present, the proportion of each permitted antioxidant and of each other substance present in the preparation.

**Labeling Food Preservatives:** The [Food \(Preservatives\) Regulation \(2019\)](#) mandates that the label on every package or container of food declares the added permitted preservative as specified in the Food (Labeling and Advertising) Regulation (2005). The regulation requires a label stating:

- For each permitted preservative, the common name, and INS number.
- Where more than one substance is present, the common names and INS numbers.
- Where a permitted preservative is mixed with a diluent, the proportions of the diluent and the preservative present, in the diluted preparation.

**Labeling Food Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers:** The [Food \(Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers\) Regulations \(2013\)](#) require the labeling of flavoring substances and enhancers to comply with the provisions of the Food (Labeling and Advertising) Regulations (2005). The label printed on, or attached to the package of food should state:

- A natural flavoring substance as an ingredient, including the words “natural (X) flavor” - (X).
- The description of the flavor (e.g., natural mango flavor, natural chicken flavor).
- Nature - identical flavoring substance as an ingredient, include “nature - identical (X) flavor.”
- An artificial flavoring substance as an ingredient, include the words “artificial (X) flavor.”
- Any flavor enhancer or enhancers as an ingredient, include the words “flavor enhancer used” or “flavor enhancers used,” along with the common name or names and the INS number or numbers.
- The label printed on or attached to the package of food shall not describe any nature - identical flavors in conjunction with any food as “natural flavors.”

The [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) outlines labeling requirements when flavor enhancers are added to food products. The new regulation requires to write separately in upper case letters in a minimum font size of 1.5 mm, the statements:

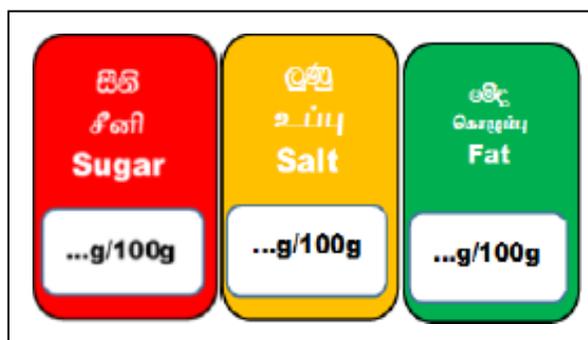
- “FLAVOUR ENHANCER(S) “X” ADDED” and substituting for the letter “X” the names and INS Numbers of any permitted flavor enhancers added.
- “NOT RECOMMENDED FOR CHILDREN UNDER THREE YEARS OF AGE.”

For confectioneries, chocolates or biscuits or any similar products, not based on fruits and in non-fruit based natural or artificial flavored drink mixes, jelly crystals and pudding mixes, the name of a fruit or fruits or a pictorial representation of a fruit or fruits may be made on the label. Provided that in the case of non-fruit based natural or artificial flavored drink mixes, jelly crystals and pudding mixes, the common name “X” flavored drink mix/jelly crystals pudding mix shall be used on the main panel of the label, where “X” is the name or names of the fruits.

**Labeling of GE Food:** Sri Lankan trade regulations require the mandatory labeling of imported goods with genetically engineered ingredients under [Control of Import, Labeling and Sale of Genetically Modified Foods Regulations \(2006\)](#) and [Amendment](#) under the [Food Act, No. 26 \(1980\)](#) (known as the GM Food regulations). All food product imports with a content greater than 0.9 percent (by volume) of GE-derived ingredients require prior approval and labeling.

**Labeling of Sugar, Salt, and Fat Containing Foods:** The [Food \(Color Coding for Sugar, Salt and Fat\) Regulations \(2019\)](#) regulate solid and semi-solid food. Locally manufactured , as well as imported foods retail containers require labeling for sugar, salt (sodium) and or for fat content (see, [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2020-0001 | Food Color Coding for Sugar-Salt-Fat Regulations 2019](#)). The regulation's effective date is June 1, 2019, which also included an extended grace period running until June 30, 2021.

For each of the components (sugar, salt, and or fat), the regulation: 1) defines the dimensions of the logo; 2) requires that the logo be displayed in Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages; 3) indicates the format of the quantitative descriptions of the package content; and 4) the color coding to be specified for each component on the packaging. For each component (sugar, salt, and fat), the logo will display in green, yellow, or red color, based on the content of those ingredients in 100 grams. Green signals healthy and safe levels of sugar, salt, or fat. Yellow suggests caution. While red signals an unhealthy level of sugar, salt, and or of fat.



The provisions of the regulation do NOT apply to the following:

- Primary agricultural products.
- Spices, condiments, curry mixtures or flavoring mixtures sold in a separate pack.
- Food for special dietary uses.
- Any food package, where the food is of the nature, quality, quantity, origin, or brand requested by the purchaser and which are weighed, counted, or measured in the presence of the purchaser.
- Bulk packages if the retail packages meet the specified regulations.
- Infant milk formulations.
- Products packaged solely for export purposes.
- Any solid or semi-solid food upon reconstitution as per directions of the label of the container of such food where such food becomes a liquid at consumption level; or
- Solid or semi-solid food manufactured before the date on which these regulations took effect.

**Labeling of Sugar Levels in Liquids:** The [Food \(Color Coding for Sugar levels\) Regulations \(2016\)](#) regulates the labeling of sugar level in liquid food effective from August 2016. Packed liquid foods which contain sugar need to label: a numerical description of the sugar content, a description of the relative sugar level, and color codes as per the regulation.

**TABLE 1: Sri Lanka, Sugar Contents, Relative Sugar Levels, and Color Codes for Liquid Food**

SUGAR CONTENT (PER 100 ML OF DRINK)	RELATIVE SUGAR LEVEL	COLOR CODE
More than 11g	High sugar	<b>Red</b>
2g to 11g	Medium sugar	<b>Yellow</b>
Less than 2g	Low sugar	<b>Green</b>

Source: Food (Color Coding for Sugar Levels) Regulation (2016).

Recently, the Ministry of Health introduced a new regulation, [Food \(Color Coding for Sugar Levels - Liquid\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) and [Amendment](#) to regulate labeling of sugar content of liquids effective January 1, 2025, replacing the existing regulation of [Food \(Color Coding for Sugar levels\) Regulations \(2016\)](#). For pre-packaged imported food products, a supplementary label may be affixed on the container or the package. The new regulation has modified the sugar content values for each code and added logos with color coding in red, amber, and green. Sugar content must display within the logo in Sinhala, Tamil, and English languages in bold white lettering. The new regulation is not applicable for the following:

- Food which contains inherent sugar or added sugar in an amount less than 0.5g/100 ml.
- Bottled or packaged drinking water or natural mineral water.
- Any standardized milk, semi-skimmed milk, low-fat milk, skimmed milk, non-fat milk, or toned milk which has been subjected to pasteurization or sterilization or Ultra Heat Treatment (UHT).
- Spices and spice mixes, food additives, flavoring substances, black tea, green tea, ground coffee, single ingredient herbal infusion, Bee honey, treacle, and 100 percent glucose.
- Infant formulae (starter), follow-up formulas.
- Food for special dietary uses or where the label predominantly displays that it is to be used under medical guidance or on the recommendation of a Medical Practitioner.
- Products packaged solely for export purposes.
- Bulk packs, where the retail packs contained therein complies with the new regulations.

**TABLE 2: Sri Lanka, Sugar Contents and Color Codes for Liquid**

SUGAR CONTENT (PER 100 ML OF DRINK)	COLOR CODE
More than 8.0g/100 ml	<b>Red</b>
2.5g to 8.0g/100 ml	<b>Yellow</b>
Less than 2.5g/100 ml	<b>Green</b>

Source: Food (Color Coding for Sugar Levels-Liquid) Regulation (2022).

**Labeling Animal Feed:** The Animal Feed Act No. 15 (1986) requires affixing or printing a label on every container of animal feed sold. The label should include the following details in three languages (Sinhala, Tamil, and English):

- The trade name of the approved animal feed.
- The common names of the active ingredients of the approved animal feed.
- A statement of the composition of the approved animal feed expressed on a weight percentage basis, and in the case of liquid formulation, expressed as grams per liter.
- The name and address of the manufacturer.
- A statement as to whether the approved animal feed is a simple feed or a compounded feed.
- The statement "Approved animal feed under the Animal Feed Act No. 15 of 1986" shall be the

symbol indicating that the animal feed has been declared as an approved animal feed under this Act and the license number assigned to it by the Registrar.

- Any other particulars as may be prescribed by the act.

### **SECTION III – PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS**

The [Food \(Packaging Materials and Articles\) Regulations \(2010\)](#) regulate any food packaging material, or article, which under normal conditions is injurious to human health and or deteriorates organoleptic properties. It regulates packaging material used in food imports into Sri Lanka. This regulation extends to the manufacture, transport, advertisement for sale, sale, packaging, storing, use or distribution of any food packaging material in Sri Lanka.

The regulation prohibits import of food under the following circumstances:

- If the food is packed in any packaging material or article made of enamel or glazed earthenware which is capable of imparting lead, antimony, arsenic, cadmium, or any other toxic substance or if the material is not resistant to acid as prescribed by the regulation.
- If the food is packaged in rigid or semi-rigid packaging material or article or any vessel made of polyvinyl chloride that contains more than 1 milligram (mg)/kg of vinyl chloride monomer.
- If the food contains more than 0.05 mg/kg of vinyl chloride monomer.
- In any damaged package or container.
- Any vinyl chloride plastic in coating applied to fresh fruits to retain freshness.
- Any bottle, box or other container made of or containing acrylonitrile plastic or container.

Other food packaging requirements (but are not limited to):

- Plastic laminates used for packaging food, all components of laminate, including adhesives and inks, need to be certified by the manufacturer of each individual component, to be of required food grade quality, in compliance with international standards.
- Food may not be packed in packages, containers intended or used for non-food products.
- Some defined food products may not be packed in materials used for any other purpose.
- Any package, or container that is made from recycled plastic is not allowed for food packaging.
- The regulation defines tests for the packages, appliances, containers, and vessels used for storage of food and cooking.

No special packaging instructions are available for animal feed. However, the Act authorizes the relevant ministry to issue packing methods and specification regulations.

## Packaging Sustainability Measures

On January 21, 2021, the Ministry of Environment published in the Official Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka the [notification](#) of revisions to the National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980. The 2021 revision (effective March 31, 2021) prohibits the use of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Their use as packaging materials for agrochemicals is prohibited. Both PET and PVC are utilized in food packaging. The use of these plastic products is prohibited in any process, trade (i.e., for sale or offer for sale), or industry, including sachets having less than or equal to a net volume of 20 milliliters/net weight of 20 grams (except for packing food and medicines).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The regulation defines “plastic item” as being a product manufactured using polyethylene terephthalate, high density polyethylene, low density polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride, polypropylene, polystyrene, biodegradable plastic, or any other similar raw material or any mixture thereof. The September 30, 2006, notification of revisions (published in the official gazette on October 10, 2006) to the National Environmental Act, No. 47 of 1980, prohibited (effective January 1, 2007) the manufacture of polythene or any polythene product of 20 microns or below in thickness for in country use, as well as the sale or use of polythene or any polythene product which is 20 microns or below in thickness.

## SECTION IV – FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

**Food Additives:** Depending on the type, food additives fall under several regulations. However, the [Food \(Additives – General\) Regulations \(2019\)](#) sum up all the different types of regulations. The regulation identifies the food additives permitted in food imports, their manufacture, sale, advertisement, and storage and or distribution.

The regulation permits food additives used for technological functions, such as those noted below in Table 3. These are specified in the regulation and covered by the [list](#) and limits for the substances published in the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA) of the *Codex Alimentarius Commission*, unless regulated by food additives specified in product standards established under the Food Act.

**TABLE 3: Sri Lanka, Regulated Food Additives - Technological Functions**

CLASS OF FOOD ADDITIVE	TECHNOLOGICAL FUNCTION
Acidity regulators	Alerts or controls the acidity or alkalinity of a food.
Anticaking agents	Reduces the tendency of articles of food to adhere to one another.
Antifoaming agents	Prevents or reduces foaming.
Flour treatment agents	A substance added to flour to improve its baking quality and color.
Color retention agents	Stabilizes, retain, or intensifies the color of food.
Emulsifiers	Substances which when added to food can facilitate uniform dispersion.
Firming agents	Make or keep tissues of fruits or vegetables firm and crisp or interacts with gelling agents to produce or strengthen a gel.
Foaming agents	Make it possible to form or maintain a uniform dispersion of a gaseous phase in a liquid or solid food.
Glazing agents	A substance which is applied to the external surface of a food.
Humectants	Prevents food from drying out by counteracting the effect of a wetting agent atmosphere having a low degree of humidity.
Propellants	A gas, other than air, which expels a food from a container.
Raising/leaving agents	A substance, or combination of substances, which liberate gas and thereby increase the volume of a dough.
Sequestrant/emulsifying salt	Reacts with trace metals in food, forming tightly bound complexes, thereby preventing the auto-oxidation of fats and oils and fat-based products.
Stabilizers	Substances which, when added to food, stabilize emulsion.

Source: [Food \(Additives – General\) Regulations \(2019\)](#).

The following regulations permit food additives:

- [Food \(Preservatives\) Regulation \(2019\)](#)
- [Food \(Sweeteners\) Regulations \(2014\)](#)
- [Food \(Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers\) Regulations \(2013\)](#)
- [Food \(Antioxidants\) Regulations \(2009\)](#) and its [amendments](#)
- [Food \(Coloring Substances\) Regulation \(2006\)](#) and its [amendments](#)

The draft [Food \(Cereals, Pulses, Legumes and Derived Products\) Regulations \(2020\)](#) establish suggested food additives, as well as their limits in wheat flour, wheat bread, whole meal bread, other leavened products, biscuits, crackers, cookies, wafers, extruded snacks, instant noodles, cakes, processed cereal foods, and malted foods.

The [Food \(Refined Wheat Flour Fortification\) Regulations \(2022\)](#), requires manufacturing refined wheat flour for retail sale for domestic consumption, or for the manufacture of bread needs to be fortified with folic acid and iron as following:

- (a) Folic acid between the range of 2 to 3 mg/kg
- (b) Iron as Sodium iron ethylenediaminetetraacetate (NaFeEDTA) or Ferrous fumarate or Ferrous sulphate as specified in Table 4.

**TABLE 4: Fortified Iron Levels**

IRON TYPE	LEVEL
Sodium iron ethylenediaminetetraacetate (NaFeEDTA)	35 - 40 mg/kg
Ferrous fumarate	55 - 60 mg/kg
Ferrous sulphate	55 - 60 mg/kg

Source: Food (Refined Wheat Flour Fortification) Regulations (2022).

The draft [Food \(Fish and Fish Products\) Regulations \(2020\)](#), under review, list the approved/ permissible food additives for fresh, frozen, chilled and canned fish, Maldives fish, dry fish, smoked fish, comminuted fish products, fish (includes prawns and shrimp) paste, and fish sauce.<sup>5</sup>

The draft [Food \(Meat and Meat Products\) Regulation \(2018\)](#), currently under review, lists the permitted food additives in canned meat, ham, bacon, and comminuted meat products within the limits specified in the regulation.

**Food Sweeteners:** Sri Lanka does not permit the use of any sweetener in, or on any food specially prepared for infants or young children as per the Food (Sweeteners) Regulations (2014). The regulation establishes the maximum usage amount of each sweetener category depending on the food type.

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<sup>5</sup> Maldives fish is a cured (dried) tuna fish traditionally produced in the Maldives islands and exported regionally. It is a staple of the Maldivian and Sri Lankan cuisine, as well as of the Southern Indian states and territories of Lakshadweep, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Sri Lanka produces “Maldives fish,” using a similar process and the same geographical labeling nomenclature.

**TABLE 5: Sri Lanka, Permissible Sweeteners**

INS NUMBER	PERMITTED SWEETENER	FOODS IN OR ON WHICH PERMITTED SWEETENERS MAY BE USED
420	Sorbitol	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous*
421	Mannitol	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous
950	Acesulfame K	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
951	Aspartame	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
953	Isomalt	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous
954	Saccharin and its sodium potassium and calcium salts	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
955	Sucrose	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
960	Steviol glycoside	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
961	Neotame	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Non-alcoholic drinks, Miscellaneous
965	Maltitol/Maltitol syrup	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous
966	Lactitol	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous
967	Xylitol	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous
968	Erythritol	Desserts and related products, Confectionery, Miscellaneous

Source: Food (Sweeteners) Regulations (2014).

**Food Preservatives:** Sri Lanka regulates the food preservatives that can be imported and used in food. The Food (Preservatives) Regulation (2019) lists permitted food preservatives per food category.

**TABLE 6: Sri Lanka, Permissible Preservatives**

PERMITTED PRESERVATIVE	INS NUMBER	ALTERNATIVE FORM THE PERMITTED PRESERVATIVE MAY BE USED	INS NUMBER
Sorbic acid	200	Propionic acid	280
Benzoic acid	210	Sodium sorbate	201
		Potassium sorbate	202
		Calcium sorbate	203
Sulphur dioxide	220	Sodium benzoate	211
		Potassium benzoate	212
		Calcium benzoate	213
Ortho-phenyl phenol	231	Sodium sulfite	221
		Sodium hydrogen sulfite	222
		Sodium metabisulfite	223
		Potassium metabisulfite	224
		Potassium sulfite	225
		Potassium hydrogen sulfite	226
		Calcium sulfite	227
Nisin	234	Sodium ortho-phenylphenate	232
Potassium nitrite	249	Sodium propionate	281
Sodium nitrite	250	Calcium propionate	282
		Potassium propionate	283

Source: Food (Preservatives) Regulation (2019).

**TABLE 7: Sri Lanka, Food Categories, Permissible Preservatives**

SPECIFIED FOOD (CATEGORY)	PERMITTED PRESERVATIVES
Dairy Products	Sorbates/ Propionates/ Nisin
Fat emulsions of type water-in-all	Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates
Fruits, vegetables, and artificially flavored drinks	Sulfites/ ortho-phenyl phenol/ Sodium ortho-phenylphenate/ Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates
Water based flavored drinks	Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates/ Benzoates
Vegetable products (including mushrooms, roots, tubers, pulses, legumes, and nuts)	Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates
Carbohydrates, cereals, and their products	Sorbates/ Sulfites
Cereals and cereal products	Sorbates/ Propionates/ Nisin
Egg, fish, poultry, meat, and their products	Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates/ Nitrites
Sauces, soups, and miscellaneous items	Sorbates/ Sulfites/ Propionates

Source: Food (Preservatives) Regulation (2019).

**Antioxidants:** Sri Lanka permits food with certain antioxidants under the [Food \(Antioxidants\) Regulations \(2009\)](#). The regulations list permitted antioxidants, and the maximum permissible levels for use in edible fats and oils, margarine, fat spread, salad oils, lard and drippings and essential oils. The regulation does not allow the use of antioxidants on food intended for infants or young children. The regulation provides the type of food and antioxidant with the amounts permitted for each.

**TABLE 8: Sri Lanka, Permissible Antioxidants**

ANTIOXIDANT	INS NUMBER
Propyl gallate	310
Octyl gallate	311
Dodecyl gallate or Mixtures thereof	312
Butylated Hydroxy anisole (BHA)	320
Tert-Butyl hydroquinone (TBHQ)	319
Ascorbyl palmitate/	304
Stearate	305

Source: Food (Antioxidants) Regulations (2009).

**Flavoring and Flavor Enhancers:** Sri Lankan regulations define a negative list of food flavors under the Food (Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers) Regulations (2013). The regulations identify a positive list of flavor enhancers. Permissible flavor enhancers, however, may not be in any food for infants or children below three years of age, or any food listed under any the food categories in Table 9.

The flavoring substance or flavor enhancers require certification as safe and suitable for use in food by the relevant authority in the country of origin or manufacturer. Permissible solvents in flavoring substances found in the regulation (other than water), must conform to British or U.S. pharmacopoeia standards.

**TBALE 9: Food Use Flavorings, Enhancers**

<b>FLAVORING SUBSTANCES PROHIBITED IN FOOD USE</b>		<b>FLAVOR ENHANCERS PERMITTED IN FOOD USE</b>
(1) Aloin	(11) Eugenol methyl ether	(a) Monosodium glutamate - INS 621
(2) Berberine	(12) Hypericin	(b) Disodium 5' – guanylate - INS 627
(3) Beta-azarone and cinnamyl anthracillate	(13) Nitrobenzene	(c) Disodium 5' – inosinate - INS 631
(4) Cade oil	(14) Pyroligenous acid	
(5) Calamus oil	(15) Safrole and Iso-safrole	
(6) Cocaine	(16) Santonin	
(7) Coumarin	(17) Sassafras oil	
(8) Diethylene glycol	(18) Thujone, Iso-thujone, (& $\beta$ thujone)	
(9) Diethylene glycol mono-ethyl ether	(19) Tonka bean ( <i>Dipteryx odorata</i> )	
(10) Estragole	(20) Any other flavoring substance that is injurious or likely to be injurious to health	

Source: Food (Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers) Regulations (2013).

**TABLE 10: Sri Lanka, Permissible Solvents. Foods in Which Flavor Enhancers are Prohibited.**

PERMITTED SOLVENTS	FOODS IN WHICH FLAVOR ENHANCERS ARE PROHIBITED	FOODS IN WHICH FLAVOR ENHANCERS ARE PROHIBITED
(1) Dacetine (glycerin diacetate, glyceryl diacetate, glycerol diacetate)	(1) Milk and Milk Products	(13) Sago
(2) Diethyl ether	(2) Ice cream and frozen desserts	(14) Pastas and noodles (only dried products)
(3) Ethyl acetate	(3) Fats and oils	(15) Malt-based foods and milk-based Foods
(4) Ethyl alcohol	(4) Margarine and Fat Spreads	(16) Bakery products
(5) Glycerol	(5) Fresh, surface treated, peeled, or cut fruits and vegetables	(17) Fresh meat, poultry and game, whole pieces, or cuts or comminuted
(6) Isopropyl alcohol	(6) Mushrooms and their products	(18) Fresh fish and mollusks, crustaceans, and echinoderms
(7) Propylene glycol	(7) Fruit wines	(19) White sugar, brown sugar and sucrose, fructose, glucose (dextrose), xylose, sugar solutions and syrups, also (partially) inverted sugars, jaggery, treacle, sugar toppings, other sugars and syrups, bee honey
(8) Triacetin (glycerin triacetate, glyceryl triacetate, glycerol triacetate)	(8) All fruit and vegetable products except fruit powders, vegetable powders, instant fruit, and vegetable chutney mix (dry)	(20) Sugar confectionery
(9) Water		(21) Ice – candies
	(9) Vinegar	(22) Culinary herbs, spices, condiment powder and curry powder except special curry mixtures and flavoring mixtures in sachets
	(10) Food grains, pulses, oil seeds and ground/powdered food grains	(23) Black tea, green tea, coffee, herbal extracts, and cereal beverages
	(11) Whole, broken, or flaked grains, including rice	(24) Baking powder
	(12) Edible flours and starches	(25) Cocoa butter and Cocoa products

Source: Food (Flavoring Substances and Flavor Enhancers) Regulations (2013).

**Irradiation:** The Sri Lanka government does not require attestation of radioactivity for imports. Sri Lanka requires that imports of irradiated food comply with the [Food \(Irradiation\) Regulations \(2005\)](#). The shipping documents must accompany consignments and include:

- Proper labeling documentation.
- Documentation that the food irradiation facility concerned is duly licensed; and
- A certificate from the country of origin’s competent authority attesting to the inspection of the food by it.

The [Food \(Labeling and Advertising\) Regulations \(2022\)](#) require food treated with ionizing radiation to display a written statement indicating the treatment in close proximity to the common name of the food. In addition, the international symbol indicating a food product has been irradiated needs to be indicated in green coloring close to the common name.



When irradiated products are used as ingredients in another food, such products shall be declared separately in the list of ingredients and when a single ingredient product is prepared from a raw material which has been irradiated, the label of the product shall contain a statement indicating such treatment.

## **SECTION V – PESTICIDES AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS**

Sri Lanka recently introduced import control regulations for maximum-residue-levels (MRLs) or allowable limits for heavy metals for selected food. Commencing in June 2023, imported fruits and dry fish must be tested for heavy metals, including Lead. Further, some regulations specify testing for pesticides in food products such as dry chili, fresh fruits, potatoes, and onions. The draft [Food \(Cereals, Pulses, Legumes and Derived Products\) Regulations \(2020\)](#) indicate the allowable limits for the presence of heavy metals in cereals, pulses, legumes, and derived products thereof should not exceed: 0.23 mg/kg Lead (as Pb); 0.1 mg/kg Arsenic (as As); and 0.2 mg/kg Cadmium (as Cd). The regulation specifies MRLs for rice, maize, sorghum, and wheat flour and mycotoxin limits for cereals and cereal products.

Products such as milk powder and infant formula require certification confirming that such products are free of melamine and DCD. The [Food \(Melamine in Milk and Milk Products\) Regulations \(2010\)](#), effective January 1, 2011, prohibit both the import and domestic use of milk or milk products containing melamine in levels exceeding 1.0 mg/kg (parts per million). The health certificate from the national food safety authority of the country of origin and/or of the country of export, must conform to the regulation's specified levels. The Atomic Energy Board (AEB) of Sri Lanka assesses consignments for radioactive level conformity. Fresh or frozen fish require testing for formaldehyde contamination levels. Fish-and shrimp-meal export certificates require declarations of freedom from non-protein nitrogenous compounds, including melamine or its derivatives.

In 2019, Sri Lanka similarly drafted regulations for mycotoxins. The draft Food (Mycotoxins) Regulations (2020) establishes the maximum permissible level for mycotoxins in imported and domestic foods sold within the country.

The draft [Food \(Fish and Fish Products\) Regulations \(2020\)](#), stipulate permissible levels for the presence of heavy metals in fresh, frozen, chilled and canned fish, Maldives fish, dried fish, smoked fish, comminuted fish products, fish paste (includes prawns and shrimp), and fish sauce.

The draft [Food \(Meat and Meat Products\) Regulation \(2018\)](#), lists the permissible levels of lead, arsenic, and

cadmium in smoked meat, canned meat, fresh, chilled, frozen, and minced meat, ham, bacon, cooked, smoked and cooked, dry and semi-dry comminuted meat products.

## **SECTION VI – OTHER REQUIREMENTS, REGULATIONS, AND REGISTRATION MEASURES**

### **General Requirements**

The certification requirements for imported food products differ by product. Veterinary certificates are required for meat, poultry, fish, and dairy products. Further product processing in a third country during transit requires appropriate certification from the transit country.

### **Animal Feed Imports**

Only registered animal feed importers and licensed animal feed manufacturers can import permitted raw materials for their own feed mixing operations. They must refrain from selling raw material in the local market. The Department of Animal Production and Health's Registrar of Animal Feeds is the authorized registration officer. Separate [applications](#) are required for different feeds; Sri Lanka considers differing nutrient compositions as different feeds.

The importer and or feed manufacturer must submit a request letter along with a proforma invoice, veterinary health certificate, draft label, composition of feed, and other required information for approval. The Animal Feed Advisory Committee (AFAC) reviews new products, requiring submission of product registration in the country of export, product registration in other countries, records of evaluations, certification of composition stability, and other requested details in the application.

The import of animal feed raw material is permissible only from states free of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). For products coming from plants in the proximity of HPAI presence, the site location must be over 100 kilometers from reported outbreak areas. Import clearance requests require the following:

- An HPAI-free certificate issued by the competent national veterinary authority.
- A map or sketch indicating HPAI infected areas, storage, and transportation route to the port of loading.
- Compulsorily fumigation using methyl bromide prior to loading. An original fumigation certificate is required for clearance.

Preclearance is required to import animal feed. The Department of Animal Production and Health's animal feed import applications are publicly available at [this link](#).

**Import of Fish- and Shrimp-Meal:** Fish- and shrimp-meal imports are permissible only from registered and accredited exporters or suppliers operating in accordance with the respective regulatory requirements of the exporting countries. The international veterinary export certificate should carry additional declarations including freedom from non-protein nitrogenous compounds, including melamine or its derivatives and that the product is heat processed to ensure the destruction of all pathogenic organisms including the HPAI virus. Sri Lanka's draft [Food \(Fish and Fish Products\) Regulations \(2020\)](#) specify quality standards, microbiological standards, heavy metal contamination

levels, and approved food additives for the import of fish- and shrimp-meal.

**Import of Pet Food:** Import of pet food containing ruminant materials is permissible only from *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*- (BSE) free countries.

**Import of Meat and Bone Meal (MBM):** The MBM is a licensed product under the Import and Export Control Act, to prevent the entry into Sri Lanka of *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*. Imports are permissible only from BSE-free countries. Imports require the following:

- Details of the manufacturing or processing establishment including the profile of the company, manufacturing process, and the registration number assigned by the responsible national competent authority of the respective country.
- Quality assurance certification obtained from accredited certifying agencies/bodies.
- Certificate of analysis for composition and stability data obtained from an accredited laboratory.
- Certification of country of origin and original invoice are required at the time of inspection.

### **Import of Meat, Meat Products, By-Products, Poultry and Poultry Products**

The Import and Export Control Act regulates the import of ruminants, ruminant products, and ruminant by-products to prevent the entry of *bovine spongiform encephalopathy*. Such product imports require BSE clearance from the Director General of the DAPH (see, [import procedures link](#)).

All other animal products and by-products imports require prior approval from the Department of Animal Production and Health Director General. Approval to [import meat, meat products](#), and [frozen fish requires](#) submission of the following:

- An [application](#).
- A *proforma* invoice.
- Country of origin certificate (if the country of export is different).
- Microbiological test report (evaluated to assess suitability for human consumption – depending on the product, the requirements may differ).
- Specimen of the International Veterinary Health Certificate issued by the national authority.

Meat, meat products, [gelatin, and edible offal](#), [poultry meat products and egg products](#), require declarations pertaining to processing procedures, processing plant registration, and certification from the exporting country. Poultry meat and processed poultry products require additional declarations on the veterinary health certificate for free from HPAI, for processed poultry products - certification of time/temperature combination process followed to destroy influenza viruses. The Department of Animal Production and Health regularly reviews disease outbreaks and conducts risk analyses. The department makes determinations based on risk assessments that take three-to-seven days. Meat, meat products, frozen fish, gelatin, and edible offal consignments failing to meet Sri Lanka Standards Institution standards require re-export or destruction. Sri Lanka does not allow chicken imports except for its Temporary Importation for Export Processing scheme.<sup>6</sup> Sri Lanka will not release poultry products not fit for human consumption.

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<sup>6</sup> Poultry products include mechanically deboned meat, other types of poultry meat, chicken powder, egg powder, and other types of chicken and egg products.

The importer or the agent must submit upon arrival of goods for clearance the following:

- Customs declaration form (duly endorsed).
- Import Permit/Import approval original from the DAPH (importers copy).
- International Veterinary Health Certificate and other declarations (originals).
- Certificate of Origin - Country of Origin (originals).
- Bill of Lading.
- Invoice.
- Packing list.
- Delivery Order.
- Other certificates ex: Treatment certificate (fumigation certificate, phytosanitary certificate, fisheries approval).

### **Plant Quarantine Phytosanitary Requirements**

Sri Lanka requires that all phytosanitary certificates reference the import permit corresponding to the shipment, but not all commodities require an import permit. Low-risk regular bulk commodities are permitted entry without import permits or without phytosanitary certificates. Permit issuance normally takes two weeks, and the validity period of an import permit is three months. The National Plant Quarantine Service's [import requirements are publicly available at this link](#).

Sri Lanka restricts imports of tropical fruits and vegetables by imposing import permits.<sup>7</sup> Other fruits and vegetables for consumption are not permissible from countries where the *Tephritidae* species of fruit flies occur. The exporting country must specify that the products be from an area free of the fruit fly, with the products treated in an approved manner. [A list of prohibited/restricted plant products is available at this link](#).

The import clearance process requires the original NPQS-issued import permit (IP), original copies of the phytosanitary certificate issued by the exporting country, treatment certificates, additional declarations, and other documents as required in the import permit.

**Facility Registration:** Registration details of the establishment assigned by the exporting country are required for select products including meat and meat products, poultry products, gelatin, and edible offal imports. The import of baby chicks is permissible only from hatcheries registered with the DAPH, through the importer. Registration recurs every six months. Other live animal imports take place in accordance with negotiated bilateral health protocols between the two countries.

**Product Registration - Prior Approval:** Not all products require prior approval for import. Food and feed products requiring importing licensing, due to domestic policy priorities, require prior approval of the Department of Imports and Exports Control. Certain food products with biosecurity risks require an import permit from the National Plant Quarantine Service. The restriction or prohibition of import is

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<sup>7</sup> The Plant Protection Ordinance (Gazette Extraordinary of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, No. 165/2, of Monday, November 02, 1981) lists prohibited/restricted plants. The import into Sri Lanka of the plants is prohibited or restricted except if imported under Regulation 14 or Regulation 15: any plant capable of further growth or propagation, and originating in the American tropics or any country in which South American Leaf Blight (*Microcyclusulei*) occurs; South American countries where leaf blight is present (Brazil, Belize, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fr. Guiana, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, St. Lucia, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago, and Venezuela).

sometimes a decision of biosecurity, but otherwise a policy decision. Of food imports, mainly fresh vegetables, tropical fruits, temperate fruits (usually not allowed), rice, wheat, maize for animal feed, grains for animal feed, groundnut, beans, coconut, and spices require the NPQS' [import approval](#). All animals, animal products (except dairy products) and animal feed require prior DAPH [approval](#).

Infant formula and bottled drinking water require prior FCAU approval. Sri Lanka has an adopted standard for infant milk formulae under the [Food \(Adoption of Standards\) Regulation \(2008\)](#). Imports of both infant formulae and follow up formulae should comply with the SLS1387 and SLS651. Product registration must be renewed annually or if the composition is changed. The application for approval accompanies the analytical report of the product on chemical, microbiology, DCD, melamine and radioactivity, product sample, and the product label.

**Wheat Grains Import Regulations:** Sri Lanka's NPQS has revised wheat grains import regulations. Previously the national authority had issued a blanket approval for the import of wheat for flour milling for human consumption. The blanket approvals were revoked in December 2020 and were replaced with import permits valid for one-year. Permits for U.S.-origin wheat consignments now include additional declarations. FAS Colombo\New Delhi (Post) and APHIS New Delhi's successfully negotiated with the NPQS additional declaration language that meets Sri Lanka's phytosanitary requirements, while remaining consistent with APHIS export certification policy. Sri Lanka is now also permitting wheat imports for animal feed milling, but under highly restrictive entry conditions. Sri Lanka's import requirements effectively disallow U.S.-origin feed wheat imports (see, [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2021-0006 | Sri Lanka Updates Foreign-Origin Wheat Import Requirements](#)).

#### **Conditions for Importation of Wheat for Animal Feed from United States:**

1. Country or area of production is free from *Tilletia indica* (karnal bunt) and *Trogoderma granarium* (khapra beetle). (Only if the country or area is free from these pests).
2. Consignment is inspected as per official procedures and found free from *Tilletia tritici* (common bunt), *Tilletia controversa* (dwarf bunt), *Prostephanus truncatus* (larger grain borer) and *Ditylenchus dipsaci* (stem and bulb nematode).
3. Consignment was tested and found free from *Sclerophthora macrospora* (downy mildew), *Diaporthe phaseolorum var. meridionalis* (Soybean stem canker), *Erwinia stewartii* (bacteria wilt of maize) and *Erwinia rhapontici* (rhubarb crown rot).
4. The consignment is free from quarantine weed seeds in Sri Lanka.
5. The consignment has been fumigated appropriately at the exporting country (pre shipment fumigation) with recommended dosage of either Methyl Bromide or Phosphine to eliminate any stored pests. Treatment details must be endorsed on the Phytosanitary Certificate.

#### **Import of Alcoholic Beverages**

The [Excise Department of Sri Lanka](#) regulates alcoholic beverages production and distribution within the country. It regulates imports of alcoholic beverages. The Excise Department allows to import alcoholic beverages with a license in small quantities as samples. Once samples are approved by the

government analyst, permission is granted to import at commercial scale.

### **Import of Fertilizers and Agrochemicals**

On May 6, 2021, Sri Lanka's Minister of Finance Mahinda Rajapaksa, in accordance with Section 20 read together with Sub-Section 4 (1) and Section 14 of the Imports and Exports (Control) Act, No. 1 of 1969 as amended by Act No. 48 of 1985 and Act No. 28 of 1987, promulgated the "Imports and Exports (Control) Regulations No. 07 of 2021 (regulation), effective its publication in the Sri Lanka Gazette (No. 2226/48 of May 6, 2021). The Sri Lankan government restricted and banned the import of fertilizers and agrochemicals (including insecticides and herbicides) (see, [GAIN-SRI LANKA | CE2021-0007 | Sri Lanka Restricts and Bans the Import of Fertilizers and Agrochemicals](#)). Following months of mass protests by farmers and a surge in food price inflation, the Sri Lankan government on December 1, 2021, removed the ban. However, during the seven months that the ban was in place, agricultural production was devastated in the Yala 2021 (May to end of August) and Maha 2021- 22 (September to March) seasons, with rice production yields dropping nearly 50 percent. The [Imports and Exports \(Control\) Regulations No. 15 \(2021\)](#) has allowed the import of chemical fertilizers and agrochemicals consistently since November 30, 2021.

## **SECTION VII – OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS/LAWS**

Imported products must conform to the standards listed in the [Food \(Adoption of Standards\) Regulation \(2008\)](#), and the [Imports and Exports Control \(Standardization and Quality Control\) Regulation \(2017\)](#). Food product evaluation follows conformity assessment procedures and the guidelines of the Sri Lanka Standards Institution (SLSI). Compliance certificates issued by an accredited laboratory of the country of export go to the SLSI Director.

**Halal Certification:** In Sri Lanka, halal certification is voluntary. There are no specific laws or regulations regulating halal certification. The Halal Accreditation Council (Guarantee) Limited (HAC) is the sole certifying body; it conducts internationally accepted halal compliance audits.

## **SECTION VIII – GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATORS, TRADEMARKS, BRAND NAMES, AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

In 2002, Sri Lanka passed the [Intellectual Property Act No. 36](#). The act establishes the [National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka](#) for the registration, administration of industrial designs, patents, marks, and any other matters. Provisions of the Act include, but are not limited to, regulation of the rights of an owner of an industrial design and rights of an owner of a patent. The Intellectual Property Act also introduces amendments to the Custom Ordinance; it prohibits the import and export of counterfeit trademark goods or pirated copyright goods or any other goods in contravention.

## SECTION IX – IMPORT PROCEDURES

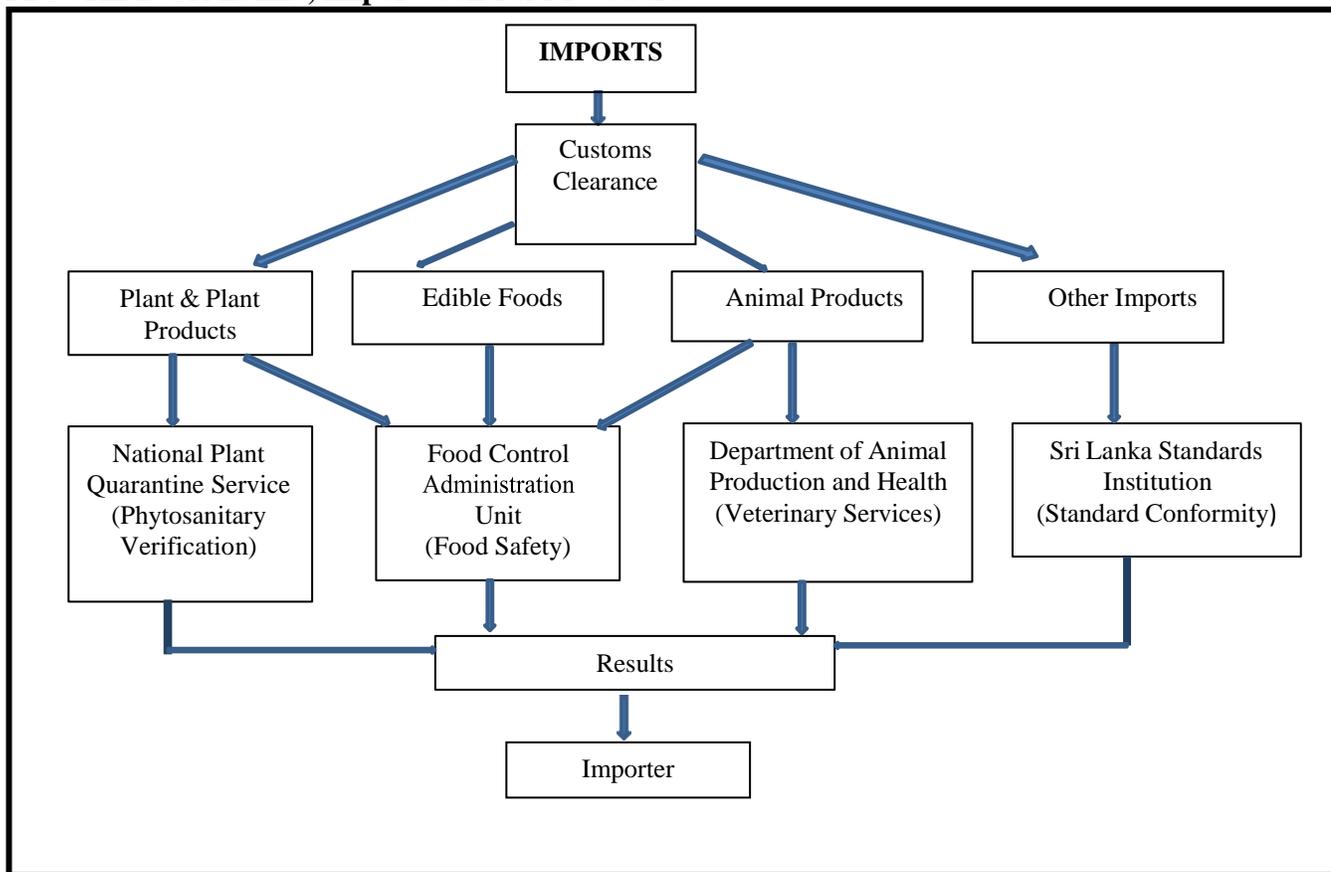
Sri Lankan regulations require prior registration of all importers. Registration for a tax identification number and payment of related value added tax, in compliance with paragraph 115A of the Customs Ordinance are mandatory. The importer signs the Importers Proxy, while a licensed customs house agent signs the Acceptance Proxy. The guide to submit these Proxies are available on [Customs Website](#). Except for the licensed products, which require an import license from the Department of Imports and Exports Control of Sri Lanka and that are not subject to specific sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, other products can proceed with the importation by submitting a declaration to Sri Lanka Customs. Importers often rely on customs brokers or their own staff to check on shipments and to clear products through Customs. There is no requirement for translation of documents to the local language.

Importers declare imports through the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) system's Customs Goods Declaration CUSDEC (customs declaration) in an online system. This system automatically calculated custom duties. After payment of duties and levies, submission of hard copies of the following documents occurs for shipment release. Calculation of duties follows the transaction value as per the commercial invoice.

- Copy of the CUSDEC.
- Bill of lading.
- Original commercial invoice.
- Certificate of origin (varies by product).
- Export/health certificate (varies by product).
- Packing lists.
- Certificate of insurance.
- Payment guarantees from a local bank advising of payment transfer to the supplier.
- Import permit (issued to Sri Lankan importer for licensed products).

Sri Lanka's three major ports are Colombo, Trincomalee, and Hambantota, with most food imports clearing at the Port of Colombo.

**FIGURE 1: Sri Lanka, Import Control Procedures**



Source: FAS Sri Lanka office research.

### **Food Sample Imports (Trade Show, Non-Commercial Distribution)**

Sri Lanka permits food sample imports in small quantities. The rules pertaining to the import of a food sample is dependent on the product being imported and is determined based on the food safety risk associated with the product and the justification for its import. Imports of small quantities of most food products, apart from high-risk items (e.g., fish, eggs, meat, meat products, and milk), are permissible without prior approval.

For high-risk food sample(s) requiring import clearance, the commercial invoice must include a cover letter with justification for the import. Animal products, animal by-products, and meat products that are food samples require prior approval from Sri Lanka’s Department of Animal Production and Health. Import procedures for these do not differ from normal, commercial shipments, and follow customary import procedures; import approval is subject to case-by-case consideration. Similarly, animal feed and nutrition supplements samples require the DAPH’s prior import approval. Animal feed sample(s) imports do not require registration; however submission of the feed’s technical information is required when requesting the import permit.

At the time of clearance, the food sample(s), requires labeling stating “testing (or exhibition) purposes only.” Food products that otherwise normally require import permitting and or clearance from Sri Lanka’s national plant quarantine authority are treated on a case-by-case basis.

## SECTION X – TRADE FACILITATION

Sri Lanka is initiating measures to improve transparency and facilitate trade. To assist trade, it is providing access to the national regulatory agencies through online systems.

The [Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal](#) is a one-stop point for import-export information on all government and semi-government regulatory institutions (hosted by the Department of Commerce). Although launched in 2018, newer, more user-friendly functionality continues to expand. The portal improves transparency regarding the country's trade legislation and procedures by providing a repository of import-export and in-transit regulatory and procedural information. This initiative aligns with the government's commitment to the WTO, in compliance with the TFA's Article 1.

The [National Single Window](#) provides access to regulatory agencies' online systems. This portal facilitates online permit applications, as well as monitors the progress of applications. Sri Lanka's DAPH, the NPQS, and the Sri Lanka Standards Institute are currently online. Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance/Department of Information Technology brought online the country's regulatory agencies – Sri Lanka Standards Institute, the National Plant Quarantine Service, and the Department of Public Enterprises online in 2021. Since August 2023, the National Plant Quarantine Service introduced e-payment facility for exporters, importers, and other stakeholders. Further, Sri Lanka's Department of Commerce introduced electronic Certificate of Origin System to facilitate international trade.

The Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal serves as the starting point for an import's automated processing linking to the National Single Window. The system serves as a single-entry point for opening import permitting applications.

**TABLE 11: Sri Lanka, Institutions on the Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal Website**

1. Sri Lanka Customs	2. Department of Rubber Development
3. Department of Commerce	4. Department of Agriculture
5. Department of Import and Export Control	6. Board of Investment
7. Department of Foreign Exchange	8. Sri Lanka Standards Institution
9. Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources	10. Sri Lanka Tea Board
11. Department of Forest Conservation	12. Sri Lanka Export Development Board
13. Department of Ayurveda (indigenous medicine)	14. Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Sri Lanka
15. Sri Lanka Atomic Energy Regulatory Council	16. National Medicines Regulatory Authority
17. Food Control Administration Unit	18. National intellectual property office of Sri Lanka
19. National Gem and Jewelry Authority	20. The Department of Animal Production and Health (DAPH)
21. National Dangerous Drugs Control Board	22. Sri Lankan Cargo
23. Department of Trade and Investment Policy	24. The Department of Export Agriculture
25. Ministry of Industry and Commerce	26. The Department of Excise
27. Ministry of Petroleum Resources Development	28. Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA)
29. Department of Inland Revenue	30. Coconut Development Authority
31. Geological Survey and Mines Bureau	32. Department of Wildlife Conservation
33. The Department of Archaeology	34. Consumer Affairs Authority (CAA)
35. Central Environmental Authority	

Source: Sri Lanka Trade Information Portal Website, 2021.

## **APPENDIX I – GOVERNMENT REGULATORY KEY AGENCY CONTACTS**

U.S. Embassy Sri Lanka\USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Physical Address: 210, Galle Road, Colombo 3, Sri Lanka.  
Phone: +94-112-498500/ +94-112498721 • Fax: +94-112-437345 • Email: [agcolombo@usda.gov](mailto:agcolombo@usda.gov)

U.S. Embassy New Delhi\USDA-Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Physical Address: Shanti Path, Chanakya Puri, New Delhi, 110021, India.  
Phone: +91-112-419-8000 • Fax: +91-112-419-8530 • Email: [agnewdelhi@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agnewdelhi@fas.usda.gov)

(\*) NOTE: SEARCH GAIN: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/search>. The GAIN Report System was redesigned in 2019 and includes reports from all previous legacy systems going back to 1995. Because these reports were created in different systems, it might be necessary to try a variety of search options to retrieve older reports. If you have any questions about the GAIN search engines or wish to report unavailable reports, please contact [1-GAINAppSupport@fas.usda.gov](mailto:1-GAINAppSupport@fas.usda.gov).

### **Ministry of Health\Food Control and Administrative Unit**

Contact: Dr. Thilak Siriwardhana, Director  
No. 26, Medi-House Building, Sri Sangaraja Mawatha, Colombo 10.  
Tel: +94-0112-112718 • Email: [direoh@health.gov.lk](mailto:direoh@health.gov.lk)  
Website: <http://eohfs.health.gov.lk/food/>

### **Department of Agriculture of Sri Lanka**

Contact: Director General (Vacant)  
P.O. Box 01, Peradeniya.  
Tel: +91-812-388331/32/34 • Email: [info@doa.gov.lk](mailto:info@doa.gov.lk)  
Website: <https://www.doa.gov.lk/>

### **Department of Agriculture\National Plant Quarantine Service**

Contact: Ms. L. Champika Hewage, Additional Director  
Canada Friendship Road, Katunayake.  
Tel: +94-112-252028/29 • Fax: +94-112-253709 • Email: [champikalcc@gmail.com](mailto:champikalcc@gmail.com)  
Website: <https://doa.gov.lk/npqs-home-en/>

### **Department of Animal Production and Health**

Contact: Dr. Hemali Kothalawala, Director General, Colombo-Kandy Road, Kandy 20400.  
Tel: +94-812-388195 • Email: [dgdaph@slt.net.lk](mailto:dgdaph@slt.net.lk)  
Website: [www.daph.gov.lk](http://www.daph.gov.lk)

### **Department of Animal Production and Health**

Contact: Dr. V.R.N. Munasinghe, Director  
Veterinary Regulatory Affairs Division, Colombo- Kandy Road, Kandy, 20400.  
Tel: +94-812-389342 • Email: [daphimport@yahoo.com](mailto:daphimport@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.daph.gov.lk](http://www.daph.gov.lk)

**Department of Animal Production and Health**

Contact: Dr. N. Priyankarage, Registrar, Animal Feed  
Veterinary Regulatory Affairs Division  
13 Colombo-Kandy Road, Kandy 20400.  
Tel: +94-812-385061 • Email: [daph.animalfeed@gmail.com](mailto:daph.animalfeed@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.daph.gov.lk](http://www.daph.gov.lk)

**Sri Lanka Standards Institution**

Contact: Dr. Siddika Senaratne, Director General, 17 Victoria Place, Elvitigala Mawatha, Colombo 08.  
Tel: +94-11-2671574 • Email: [dg@slsi.lk](mailto:dg@slsi.lk)  
Website: [www.slsi.lk](http://www.slsi.lk)

**Department of Commerce**

Contact: Mr. Ananda Dharmapriya, Director General of Commerce (Acting)  
Rakshana Mandiraya, 21 Vauxhall Street, Colombo 02  
Tel: +94-112-329733 • Email: [dgc@doc.gov.lk](mailto:dgc@doc.gov.lk); [fortrade@doc.gov.lk](mailto:fortrade@doc.gov.lk)  
Website: [www.doc.gov.lk](http://www.doc.gov.lk)

**Sri Lanka Customs**

No.40, Main Street, Colombo 11  
Tel: +94-112-221602-3/ +94-112-221607 • Customs Information Center: +94-112 143434  
Email: [dgc@customs.gov.lk](mailto:dgc@customs.gov.lk)  
Website: <http://www.customs.gov.lk/>

**APPENDIX II – OTHER IMPORT SPECIALIST CONTACTS****The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce**

50, Navam Mawatha, Colombo 02, Sri Lanka.  
Tel: +94-112-421745-7/ +94-112-5588800 • Fax: +94-112-437477 • Email: [info@chamber.lk](mailto:info@chamber.lk)  
Website: <https://www.chamber.lk/>

**Attachments:**

No Attachments