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**Report Highlights:**

This report provides information on export certification requirements for U.S. food and agricultural exports to Nicaragua. There were no significant changes to required export certificates since the 2022 report. This report supplements the 2023 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS) Country Report.

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in Managua 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.

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## **Executive Summary**

The Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) and the Ministry of Health (MINSa) require registration of imported products prior to issuing import permits. IPSA is responsible for the inspection of agricultural products at ports of entry and the registration of animal feeds, agrochemicals, and seeds. MINSa regulates processed food registration and issues import permits for processed foods. Every importer must request an import permit from IPSA and/or MINSa prior to the importation of any shipment. Importers request the import permits for processed foods from MINSa, except for commodity shipments, such as grains, raw meats, and fresh produce, which are overseen by IPSA, due to the products’ sanitary/phytosanitary risks. Commodity importers must provide a copy of the commercial invoice, certificate of origin, and required sanitary/phytosanitary certificates along with the import permits issued by the Government of Nicaragua.

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

The following certificates are requested when the products (except for plants and animals) have been registered with IPSA or MINSA. Plants and animals require an import permit, sanitary or phytosanitary certificate, a copy of the certificate of origin, and the commercial invoice.

<b>Product(s)</b>	<b>Title of Certificate</b>	<b>Attestation Required on Certificate</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Requesting Ministry</b>
Agrochemicals and Veterinary Drugs	Certificate of Origin Certificate of Analysis Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	To certify U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated requirements	IPSA
Feedstuffs	Certificate of Origin Sanitary / Phytosanitary Certificate Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority Specific attestations pertaining to product risk	To certify U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated requirements	IPSA
Plants and Plant Products	Certificate of Origin Phytosanitary Certificate Certificate of Chemical Treatment (as needed) Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority Specific attestations pertaining to product risk	To certify U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated phytosanitary requirements	IPSA
Animals and Animal Products	Sanitary Certificate Certificate of Origin Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority Specific attestations pertaining to product risk	To certify U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated sanitary requirements	IPSA
Processed Foods	Certificate of Origin Sanitary / Phytosanitary Certificate (as needed) Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificates must be issued by a competent government authority Specific attestations pertaining to product risk	To certify U.S. products meet bilaterally negotiated food safety requirements	MINSA

## **Section II. Purpose of Specific Export Certificates**

### **Certificate of Origin**

The certificate of origin is submitted to customs to certify the country of origin of the goods. The minimum information a certificate of origin should contain is: name of issuer and contact information, customs tariff code and description of the merchandise, origin, and date of the certificate. IPSA requests certificates of origin issued by chambers of commerce in the exporting country. In addition, when the General Customs Authority (DGA) has doubts of the product's origin, DGA may send the importer a questionnaire requiring additional information on the imported product. If the importer does not fill out the questionnaire, the company may be subject to penalties and fees. In the attached files, you can find a copy of the DGA country of origin questionnaire.

### **Phytosanitary Certificate**

A phytosanitary certificate is used to attest that consignments of plants and plant products meet phytosanitary import requirements. A phytosanitary certificate for export or re-export can be issued only by a public official who is technically qualified and duly authorized by a National Plant Protection Organization. In the United States, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) [Plant Protection and Quarantine](#) (PPQ) program issues phytosanitary certificates for U.S. plant and plant product exports.

### **Sanitary Certificate**

IPSA requires sanitary and health certificates for animals and animal products. APHIS's Veterinary Services (VS) provides health certificates for live animals, including hatching eggs. APHIS sanitary certification for [animal](#) and [animal product](#) exports to Nicaragua can be confirmed on the linked APHIS International Regulations (IREGS) pages.

USDA Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) provides sanitary certificates for poultry, beef, and pork meat and products. FSIS lists eligible / ineligible products as well as specific attestations required for specific products the [Nicaragua](#) page of the FSIS Export Library.

The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) issues health certificates for fisheries products. A copy of the latest NOAA health certificate for fisheries products is attached to this report.

### **Commercial Invoice**

A commercial invoice is a bill for the goods from the seller to the buyer. These invoices are often used by governments to determine the value of goods when assessing customs duties. Governments that use the commercial invoice to control imports will often specify its form, content, number of copies, language to be used, and other characteristics.

### **Certificate of Analysis**

IPSA requires a certificate of analysis for agrochemicals and veterinary products. The certificate provides information about active components of the product and is issued by the manufacturer.

### **Certificate of Free Sale**

MINSA requests a certificate of free sale for product registration. The certificate of free sale must state that goods such as food items, cosmetics, biologics, or medical devices are legally sold or distributed in the open market, freely without restriction, and approved by the regulatory authorities in the country of origin. U.S. Exporters typically request certificates of free sale from U.S. chambers of commerce, State governments, and/or the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Note: On October 1, 2018, FDA stopped issuing the certificate of free sale for most of its food products, including conventional foods, food additives, and substances that are in contact with infant food. FDA will instead be issuing the “Certificate to a Foreign Government” or the “Certificate of Exportability” for most food products under its jurisdiction. However, FDA will continue issuing the certificate of free sale only for dietary supplements, medical foods, and foods for special dietary use. A copy of FDA’s new certificates are attached at the end of this report.

### **Section III. Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificates**

A competent government authority from the exporting country must issue all required certificates and the products (e.g., agrochemicals, animal feeds, food products, etc.) must be registered in Nicaragua prior to export. Please refer to the 2023 FAIRS Country Report for registration requirements for different products. IPSA may require specific attestations for specific animal or plant products. During periods of disease outbreaks in the exporting country, IPSA will provide importers with a detailed account of the attestations required on the sanitary / phytosanitary export certificates.

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

IPSA or MINSA must issue an import permit prior to each importation. The importer requests the import permit with supporting information, including of a copy of a sanitary / phytosanitary certificate (as needed), certificate of origin, and a commercial invoice. Consistent information such as amount, description, origin, and point of shipping must be stated in the request form. MINSA requires that processed food products be registered in Nicaragua prior to importation. Product samples for non-commercial use are allowed one entry without registration, but they must be accompanied by a certificate of free sale.

Sanitary and phytosanitary technical officers review the supporting documents and inspect a product at the time of entry. An import permit is valid for one shipment. If the import permit is not used within thirty days, the importer may request a renewal from Government of Nicaragua authorities. IPSA and MINSA will accept only certificates issued by the competent government authorities of the exporting country. When shipments do not meet Government of Nicaragua import requirements, products are normally detained at the port of entry for sampling. Samples are subject to laboratory analysis to

determine their physical and chemical characteristics. A product may be subject to destruction or re-export, depending on the determinations of Nicaraguan government authorities.

## **Section V. Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements**

Nicaraguan imposes no additional certification or accreditation requirements on U.S. exporters beyond those listed above and in the 2023 FAIRS Country Report.

## **Appendix I. Export Certificate Forms / Examples**

Please refer to attached documents.

**Attachments:** [IPSA \(Phyto\)Sanitary Import Permit Request.pdf](#)

[NOAA Health Certificate for Fishery Products.pdf](#)

[FDA Certificate of Exportability.pdf](#)

[Commercial Invoice \(Example\).pdf](#)

[CAFTA-DR Certificate of Origin \(Example\).pdf](#)

[Certificate of Origin Issued by a Chamber of Commerce \(Example\).pdf](#)

[NTON 11 005-08 - Nicaragua Phytosanitary Requirements \(Spanish only\).doc](#)

[MINSA Food and Beverage Import Permit Request Form.doc](#)