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**Report Highlights:**

The Netherlands, as a Member State of the European Union (EU), conforms to all EU regulations and directives. However, rules for the certification of imports are complicated and, in practice, are not always harmonized across EU Member States. This report lists the recent developments related to Dutch import requirements for the certification of agricultural and food imports.

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs in The Hague (FAS/The Hague) 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 Netherlands is a Member State of the European Union (EU). Accordingly, we strongly recommend that this report be read in conjunction with the [EU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#). Ports in the Netherlands function as the major entry point for agricultural exports to Northwestern Europe. FAS The Hague regularly assists in releasing shipments from the United States. The most frequent reasons for detainment are: the shipper using the wrong/old certificate model, the absence of a certificate, the certificate was issued after the date of departure, or missing statements or references in the certificate. The most frequent products which are detained are meat, dairy, and composite products.

Following an update of the EU's Animal Health Law ([Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#)), which entered into force on April 21, 2021, the EU has updated all required health certificates for products of animal origin. Models for the new certificates were published in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) No 2020/2235](#), as amended by [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1471](#). In early August 2021, the European Commission (EC) extended the transition period for the acceptance of the pre-existing certificates.

## **Section I List all the Export Certificates required by Government**

The Netherlands, as a Member State of the EU, conforms to all EU regulations and directives. We therefore recommend that this report be read in conjunction with the [EU Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards \(FAIRS\) Export Certificate Report](#), published November 13, 2023. This report and other related FAIRS reports can be found on the FAS website at: <https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/>

Please note that between two and three percent of all shipments entering Europe through the Netherlands are detained. The most frequent products which are detained are meat, dairy, and composite products. The main reasons provided for detained shipments from the United States are generally as follows, in order of prevalence:

- the certificate was issued after the date of departure;
- incorrect strike outs of standard text in certificates;
- missing or incorrect statements or references in the certificate;
- the shipper using the wrong/old certificate model,
- the certificate is absent;
- there were typographical errors (such as the wrong EU plant approval number);
- missing stamps (on one or more pages) or stamp/initials missing by strike outs (all strike outs must be initialed and stamped);
- page number or certificate number is missing (must both be present on all pages);
- missing information such as HS code, packaging, batch number, place of loading or vessel name;
- the number of packages listed on health certificate does not match the number of packages shipped;
- selection of the wrong Harmonized System (HS) code (in box I.19) and/or incorrect description of the goods (in box I.28); and,
- the shipment was not registered in the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES).

Additionally, changing EU legislation and the resulting changes in import requirements are often a reason for errors, such as issuance of the incorrect certificate model (e.g., using the old model), typos, and/or incorrect strike outs. Please keep these in mind when shipping to the Netherlands.

If a container with U.S. product is detained in the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, or Iceland, FAS The Hague may be able to serve as a resource. If you require assistance, please contact us by e-mail at: [AgTheHague@usda.gov](mailto:AgTheHague@usda.gov).

## **Section II Purpose of Specific Export Certificate(s)**

Please read the [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#).

## **Section III Specific Attestations Required on Export Certificates(s)**

Please read the [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#).

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

Please read the [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#).

## **Section V Other Certification/Accreditation Requirements to ensure market entry**

### ***New EU Animal Health Certificate Requirements***

Following an update of the EU's Animal Health Law ([Regulation \(EU\) 2016/429](#)), which entered into force on April 21, 2021, the EU updated all required certificates for products of animal origin. Models for the new certificates for foods of animal origin were published by the EU and implemented by U.S. agencies. Several amendments to the new certificates were made since their first publication. They are available online in [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2020/2235 \(consolidated version July 14, 2022\)](#). FAS cooperates closely with the regulatory agencies to ensure that their export libraries are up-to-date and that the applicable versions of the certificate are made available to exporters. The Implementing Regulation also defines the general requirements for certificates, including signatures, stamps, initials, page set-up, language, and other requirements. For more information see FAS GAIN Report – [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report Annual](#), published on November 13, 2023, by the USEU.

### ***New EU Requirements for Composite Products***

The EU defines a composite product as a food product containing both processed products of animal origin (dairy, egg, fishery products, or meat products) and products of plant origin. Following an update of the EU's Animal Health Law, which entered into force on April 21, 2021, the EU has updated all required certificates for products of animal origin and for composite products. Models of the new certificates for foods of animal origin were published by the EU and implemented by U.S. agencies. The new EU requirements for composite products will in particular impact stakeholders who have not been required to obtain an export certificate from the AMS Dairy Program in the past. For more information see FAS GAIN Report – [EU FAIRS Annual Country Report Annual](#), and [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report Annual](#), both published on November 13, 2023.

## *Dating Certificates*

One of the EU's requirements (Regulation (EU) 2020/2235 art. 5) is that: "(t)he certificate must be issued before the consignment to which it relates leaves the control of the competent authority of the country of dispatch." This means that the health certificate must be issued and signed before the shipment leaves the United States. Although this is an EU-wide requirement, FAS/The Hague notes that errors in certificate dates have led to detained shipments in the past in the Netherlands.

## *Seal Number*

To conduct an identity check of a shipment, the Dutch NVWA requires the seal number of the container to be on the health certificate. A seal number on the Bill of Lading is not sufficient as these can easily be re-issued by private companies. If a seal number is not present on the health certificate, a physical check is necessary to verify the identity of the shipment. If there is a broken seal, the port official will conduct an open-container check to verify the health marks, count the boxes, verify the weight, and/or open the boxes to ensure that the product in the container matches what is listed on the export documentation.

## *Customs Procedures and E-Certification*

### *Customs Procedures*

In May 2023, the EC released a [proposal](#) to reform the "Union Customs Code" (UCC). The UCC lists all the customs procedures applicable to the trade in goods with third countries. All traders involved in customs transactions have to provide EU customs authorities with product specifications and logistical data on goods before they are imported into the EU. The reform aims to simplify and rationalize customs reporting requirements for traders, for example by reducing the time needed to complete import processes and by providing one single EU interface and facilitating data re-use. More information about the proposal can be found on the [Commission's website](#), and the FAS GAIN Report – [EU FAIRS Annual Country Report Annual](#), published on November 13, 2023.

### *E-Certification*

U.S. regulatory agencies and the NVWA continue to promote the use of e-certification for both exports and imports. Some advantages of e-certification are that the document check can be performed at an earlier stage, issues can be identified and rectified, and the paper certificates will not get lost. Ultimately, e-certificates will cut down on the administrative burden and save costs.

TRACES (the acronym for TRADE CONTROL and EXPERT SYSTEM) is the EC's online platform for sanitary and phytosanitary certification required for the importation of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin and plants into the EU, intra-EU trade, and EU exports of animals and certain animal products. The EC's Official Controls Regulation (OCR - [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/625](#)) provides the legal basis for the general EU acceptance of electronic certificates using the EU's Integrated Management System for Official Controls (IMSOC). Currently, more than 42,000 users from roughly 85 countries worldwide are using TRACES. U.S. competent authorities utilize electronic systems for e-

certification, but these are not currently connected with the TRACES system. Certification of U.S. products to the EU is currently paper based, except for almonds and organic products.

The EC indicates that TRACES NT (the additional acronym is for New Technology), introduced on October 11, 2021, has enhanced traditional sanitary and phytosanitary certification practices by enabling both EU and non-EU authorities to digitally stamp official documents and certificates, thus, making the use of paper certification for participating third countries obsolete. For more information see the [TRACES website of the EC](#).

## **APPENDIX I Electronic Copy, scanned copy, or Outline of Each Export Certificate**

Please see the [EU FAIRS Export Certificate Report](#).

### **Attachments:**

No Attachments