

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

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## Greece

**Post:** Rome

### **FAIRS Export Certificate Report**

**Report Categories:**

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and  
Standards - Certification

**Approved By:**

Christine Sloop

**Prepared By:**

Dimosthenis Faniadis

**Report Highlights:**

Greece as a member of the European Union follows the EU directives and regulations. The export certification requirements for most products destined for the EU market have been harmonized and can be found in the FAIRS reports prepared by the Offices of Agricultural Affairs in the individual EU Member States: <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/>. For non-harmonized products, the competent Greek authority should be consulted as many issues are addressed on a case-by-case basis.

## **General Information:**

DISCLAIMER: This report was prepared by USDA's Office of Agricultural Affairs/Foreign Agricultural Service in Rome, Italy (covering Greece) for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was 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 approval of any product is subject to the importing country's rules and regulations as interpreted by border officials at the time of product entry.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

SECTION I: LIST OF ALL EXPORT CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY GOVERNMENT

SECTION II: PURPOSE OF SPECIFIC EXPORT CERTIFICATES

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## **General Overview**

All EU Member countries accept the "Community Acquis", i.e. the entire body of EU laws and obligations associated with the treaties and international agreements to which the EU is a party. EU Member States share a customs union, a single market in which goods can move freely, a common trade policy and a common agricultural and fisheries policy. According to a European Commission memo published in December 2012, approximately 98 percent of food legislation is harmonized at the EU level. The EU food legislation has been translated into the 24 official languages in use in the EU-28 (including Italian) and is published in the Official Journal. The Eurlex website <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm> provides free access to European Union laws. This report should be read with the EU FAIRS Export Certificate report prepared by the FAS Office in the U.S. Mission to the European Commission (USEU) which can be found at the USEU Brussels website at <http://www.usda-eu.org/reports/> and the Greek FAIRS narrative report, which can be found at <http://italy.usembassy.gov/agtrade.html>.

It is important to note that when EU-wide legislation is incomplete or absent, the laws of the Member States apply, often resulting in different rules in different Member States. National measures still exist, for example, for certain food contact materials, the addition of nutrients to food and food supplements, maximum levels for vitamins and minerals, and for official control fees. Imported products must meet Greek national requirements in cases where EU regulatory harmonization is not yet complete. The competent Greek authority needs to be consulted on a case-by-case basis to address requirements for non-harmonized products.

## **Section I. List of All Export Certificates Required By the Government:**

Greece as a member of the European Union follows the EU's directives and regulations: <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/> EU food legislation is translated into the 24 official languages in use in the EU-28 (including Greek) and is published in the Official Journal. The Eurlex website <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en> provides free access to European Union laws. Greek language certificates can be found in the links below:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32008R0376&from=EN>  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R1045&from=EN>  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EL/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0884&from=EN>  
<http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/el/component/content/article/512-greek-content/eisagoges-ejogoges/trofima-zoikh-proeleush/1995-elegxos-ygeiinh-eisagoges>  
[http://www.opekepe.gr/faq\\_category.asp?id=25](http://www.opekepe.gr/faq_category.asp?id=25)

In the cases in which the EU law may be incomplete or absent, the Greek law applies. The competent Greek authority needs to be consulted on a case-by-case basis to address requirements for non-harmonized products. The Greek authorities to be consulted if there is a certificate needed are the following: [Customs Office](#) and [OPEKEPE](#) (Greek Payment Authority of Common Agricultural Policy Aid Schemes). A list of the Designated Points of Imports (DPIs) in Greece can be found here: [List of Greek DPIs](#).

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

European Union (EU) legislation calls for many health and supervisory requirements that are meant to guarantee that imports meet the standards of production in Member States. Unfortunately for exporters, the EU's rules on certification for imports are complicated and some minor differences across Member States continue to exist. One main principle of the single market concept is to ensure that all food products, whether produced in the EU or imported from a third country, can move freely throughout the EU if they comply with uniform requirements. In reality, certain directives allow Member States to make exceptions (i.e., in cases where a country can identify unique concerns about a product intended for import). Free movement can only be guaranteed when all aspects are covered by harmonized legislation (i.e. a foodstuff may comply with the general labeling directive but may carry a health claim for which harmonized rules do not yet exist).

This report outlines the applicable legislation regarding the export of U.S. food products to Greece, particularly those rules that differ from EU legislation or regulation. While most certification requirements are developed at EU level, the Greek inspection services are responsible for enforcement of both the EU and national requirements. In this aspect, Greek authorities implement EU rules (directives and regulations) for food and agriculture through country specific laws and decrees.

For more info on additional harmonized regulations adopted by the Greek authorities please visit: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/farmer-menu-2/imports-export/importsodfeed-menu>

In Greece, food safety is the primary responsibility of the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food in cooperation with the General Chemical State Laboratory of Greece and the Ministry of Citizen

Protection. Occasionally, the Greek Ministry for Development and Commerce may play a role. The Hellenic Food Control Agency (EFET) is responsible for enforcing the regulations and collecting samples from selling points to check compliance with food legislation, both to ensure food safety and protect consumer health in accordance with EU Directive 89/397.

### **Responsible Greek Authorities for Approval of Certificates - Food and Animal Products:**

#### **Ministry of Rural Development and Food**

Directorate of Plant Production  
Phytosanitary and Plant Protection Division  
150, Sygrou Avenue  
17671 Athens-Kallithea, Greece  
Phone: +30 210 9287232; +30 210 9287233  
Fax: +30.210.9287234  
Website: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/>  
E-mail: [syg059@minagric.gr](mailto:syg059@minagric.gr); [syg042@minagric.gr](mailto:syg042@minagric.gr)

#### **Veterinary Products:**

#### **Ministry of Rural Development and Food**

Directorate General of Veterinary Services  
Animal Health Directorate  
6, Kapnokoptiriou str.  
10176 Athens, Greece  
Phone: +30 210 88 36 030  
Fax: +30 210 82 52 673  
Website: <http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/en/>  
E-mail: [syg059@minagric.gr](mailto:syg059@minagric.gr)

#### **General Customs and Excise Department**

10, Kar. Serbias  
GR-10184 Athens  
Greece  
Tel: +30 210 3375 000; 210 3375 714; 210 3375 715  
Fax: +30 210 3375 034  
E-mail: [gdcustom@otenet.gr](mailto:gdcustom@otenet.gr)  
Website: <http://www.e-oikonomia.gr>

#### **Payment and Control Agency for Guidance and Guarantee Community Aid (OPEKEPE)**

241, Acharnon  
GR-10446 Athens  
Greece  
Tel: +30 210 212 49 03  
Fax: +30 210 867 0503  
Website: <http://www.opekepe.gr>

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

At the EU level, [Regulation \(EC\) 178/2002](#) sets out general principles and objectives in food law. In Greece, the EU Regulations (EC) [852/2004](#) and [853/2004](#) are being applied through the National Law [KYA 15523/2006](#) published in August 2006, which outlines the basic Greek food and feed regulations based in the Regulation (EC) 178/2002. This law sets out each organization's responsibility for applying the EU Regulations and the coordination mechanisms between the different public administrations with responsibilities in official food control.

Greece has some specific labeling and ingredient rules for select food products (i.e. [re-frozen meat products](#), [prepared fishery products](#), and [allergen foods](#)) which are described in detail in the Greek Food Code (hereafter referred to as the Food Code) published by the General Chemical State Laboratory (GCSL). There is no electronic version of the Food Code. However, a hard copy can be obtained in Greek from the GCSL.

#### **General Chemical State Laboratory**

Directorate of Foods

16, A. Tsoha Str,

11521, Ambelokipi, Athens

Greece

Tel.: +30 210 6479 221

Fax: +30 210 6468 272

Email: [alcohol\\_food@gcsl.gr](mailto:alcohol_food@gcsl.gr)

Website: [http://www.gcsl.gr/index.asp?a\\_id=136](http://www.gcsl.gr/index.asp?a_id=136)

GCSL is the Greek agency responsible for the documentary inspection upon arrival, labeling and product ingredient review, and the analysis of laboratory tests to grant import approvals for foodstuffs in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and the individual Port Authorities. It is essential for U.S. exporters to work with a Greek agent who has a suitable background and is able to manage customs procedures involving more than two authorities.

In order to have a more harmonized Member State application of EU legislation, Commission Decision 2007/275/EC lists the animals and animal products that are subject to veterinary checks. Products subject to veterinary checks typically need to be accompanied by a veterinary certificate, issued by the competent authority in the United States. This regulation also provides clarification on which composite products are subject to veterinary checks. Composite products are defined as foodstuffs intended for human consumption that contain processed products of animal origin and ingredients of plant origin. Composite products include a wide variety of products, including cheesecakes, high protein food supplements, pizza, and lasagnas.

While the U.S. is eligible to ship hormone-free meat, dairy products, egg products, and fishery products separately, it is often no longer possible to ship the composite products that combine these eligible ingredients. All composite products containing a processed meat product are subject to a veterinary check. Generally speaking, composite products that have more than 50 percent of animal origin products also require a certificate and there are certification requirements concerning the heat treatment for all dairy products. Commission Decision 2007/275/EC also lists certain composite products that are not subject to veterinary checks, provided they are shelf stable and properly packaged and labeled.

Unfilled gelatin capsules, cakes, meat extracts and other shelf stable products are on this list.

Whenever the EU publishes model veterinary certificates for use by eligible third country suppliers, U.S. regulatory agencies will cross-out any statement that refers to health situations that are not relevant to the United States. Certificates for plants and plant products are issued by APHIS inspectors, who attest to the specific requirements of EU legislation with the necessary declarations in the space provided on the phytosanitary certificate.

A link to the required format in the Official Journal of each export certificate is provided (if available) in Appendix 1 of the EU FAIRS Export Certificate report prepared by the FAS Office in the U.S. Mission to the European Commission (USEU) which can be found at <http://www.usda-eu.org/trade-with-the-eu/eu-import-rules/certification/fairs-export-certificate-report/>

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

On December 4, 2013, Greece applied obligatory electronic forms to be submitted to the Customs office, through the platform ICIS net – [Greek Customs](#). Import certificates must be in the official language of Greece, which is Greek.

All products must be accompanied by the proper certification at port of arrival. Import licenses are required for all agricultural commodities, processed food products, and ingredients. Special licenses and phytosanitary certification are required for imports from third countries where certain plant and animal diseases occur. Special import licenses are required for goods, including plant propagation material, textiles, meat products, pet foods and wood products. A number of products are under surveillance according to EU quotas (i.e., beef).

Some products may also take additional certificates, such as the quality certificate which allows for reduced import duties or marketing products under a specific label, as in the case of organic products. There are voluntary certificates that may help reduce the level of import controls. For example, EU legislation does not require that nuts and peanuts be accompanied by an aflatoxin certificate. However, shipments with these certificates are less tested/ controlled upon entry in the EU. See Section I. for links to the export certificates. Each shipment must have the requisite certificates issued before the consignment leaves.

#### **U.S. Competent Authorities**

The U.S. issuing agencies are identified by their acronyms. The following is a list of the issuing agencies with a link to the relevant pages on their websites:

##### **AMS: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA**

European Union Health Certification Program

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/DYGradingEuropeanUnionHealthCertification>

##### **APHIS: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA**

International Animal Export Regulations

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/animals/>

International Animal Products Export Regulations

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/regulations/vs/iregs/products/>

Plant Export Services

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import\\_export/plants/plant\\_exports/index.shtml](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/plant_exports/index.shtml)

**FDA: Food and Drug Administration**

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/ImportsExports/Exporting/default.htm>

**Federal Grain - FGIS: Federal Grain Inspection on Service, GIPSA: Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, USDA**

<http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgismain.html>

**FSIS: Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA**

Export Requirements for the European Union:

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/international-affairs/exporting-products/export-library-requirements-by-country>

**NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

[http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/Export\\_Certification.html](http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/Export_Certification.html)

For additional information on exporting seafood to the EU, please contact [stephane.vrignaud@trade.gov](mailto:stephane.vrignaud@trade.gov)

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

Please note that imports of red meat, meat products, pet food, farmed and wild game meat, all dairy products, seafood, bovine embryos and semen, porcine and equine semen, and animal byproducts to the EU from the United States may originate only from EU approved U.S. establishments. In alignment with [EU requirements](#), Greece requires certificates in some cases of imports of cereals, rice, sugar, dairy, bovine meat, poultry meat, garlic, apples, bananas, canned mushrooms, and sweet potato. In order to clarify if a certificate is required, the exporter should contact the Greek authorities of the Customs Office and OPEKEPE ([http://www.opekepe.gr/faq\\_category.asp?id=25](http://www.opekepe.gr/faq_category.asp?id=25) information available only in Greek).

For further information about Greek import requirements for U.S. exports please contact the Greek specialist in USDA's Office in the U.S. Embassy-Rome:

**Office of Agricultural Affairs,**

**Foreign Agricultural Service,**

American Embassy, Via Veneto 119a

Rome, 00187, Italy

Webpage: <http://athens.usembassy.gov/fas.html>

E-mail: [AgRome@fas.usda.gov](mailto:AgRome@fas.usda.gov)

Tel: +39 06 4674 2396

Fax: +39 06 4788 7008

