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Required Report - public distribution

**Date:** 12/12/2017

**GAIN Report Number:**

## Egypt

### Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Narrative

### FAIRS Egypt Country Report

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**Report Highlights:**

The new food safety agency in Egypt is now a reality after the Egyptian parliament approved law number 1/2017 establishing the National Food Safety Authority (NFSA) on January 2nd, 2017. The purpose of the NFSA is to unify the Egyptian food safety system through both structural and legislative reforms. The multiplicity of food control authorities has hampered Egypt's food safety system with duplication and inefficiencies in the implementation of food safety laws and measures. When it becomes operational, NFSA will likely foster the adoption of science-based rules helping to facilitate trade.

**Disclaimer**

This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural service in Cairo, Egypt, for U.S. exporters of food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, it is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers prior to shipping. Foreign importers are normally best equipped to research import requirements with local authorities. FINAL IMPORT 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.

## **Section I General Food Laws**

### **Egyptian National Food Safety Authority**

On January 2, 2017, the Egyptian Parliament approved law number 1/2017 establishing the Egyptian National Food Safety Authority (NFSA). The law was published in the Official Gazette on January 10, 2017. Since that time, two Prime Ministerial Decrees were issued, 683/2017 and 1733/2017, setting up a Board of Trustees and Board of Directors for the new agency. According to the new law, the NFSA will begin its work by January 10, 2018.

The new law requires that the NFSA assume all responsibilities to regulate the handling of foodstuffs from all other ministries, public institutions, government agencies and municipalities. The approval of this law ends the patchwork of food-related regulation that has created confusion and inefficiencies for importers and exporters working in the Egyptian market for years. While the new agency is only now being set up, Article three of the law lists NFSA's functions and powers as follows:

- Set mandatory food safety criteria, in accordance with the applicable international criteria, provided that these criteria are not in contradiction with the national requirements. The NFSA board of directors shall issue a decree specifying such criteria.
- Control food handling in accordance with the relevant food safety laws and decrees and in accordance with special programs to ensure that mandatory standard conditions and specifications are fulfilled during all stages of food handling.
- Set procedures and conditions for issuing certificates necessary for exportation of locally produced food, control the issuance of these certificates, and check the extent of their compliance with the aforesaid rules and conditions.
- License, inspect and control food handling and the workers in this field, to make sure that provisions of relevant laws and decrees are fulfilled.
- Contract governmental accredited laboratories that are capable to run required analytical tests effectively and efficiently. The NFSA might contract other private accredited laboratories in case of unavailability of accredited governmental laboratories.
- Control food imported or produced locally, prohibit handling of food unfit for human consumption, and combat fraud and deception in this regard.
- Set the necessary measures and procedures for emergencies that threaten food imported or produced locally with exposure to hazards or risks, as well as procedures for crisis management and warning, withdrawal and recalling systems.
- Set the necessary procedures for risk assessment, analysis, use, management, communication and awareness including setting inspection priorities, while taking into account the methods of risk assessment, analysis and management followed by the relevant international organizations.
- Develop mandatory systems that ensure food safety, develop a system for traceability and require food producers, manufacturers and other food handlers to implement these systems especially Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), and to take measures necessary to recall a product.
- Propose and give opinion on relevant draft laws and regulatory decrees concerning food safety and food handling regulation.
- Set plans necessary for identifying existing unlicensed food production units, propose appropriate solutions to address their problems and improve their status to integrate them in the legitimate system.
- Raise community awareness about food safety, and issue pamphlets and other publications on

objectives of the NFSA including the provision of necessary food safety information and data, in coordination with different media channels in this regard.

- Develop protocols and rules for food advertising, and the mandatory labelling criteria.
- Cooperate and coordinate with international and national bodies and organizations concerned with food safety and human health and with bodies responsible for developing relevant criteria in a manner that contributes to achieving the goals of the NFSA. Participate in national and international conferences and organizing them when necessary.
- Regulate approval or rejection of special foods, genetically-modified foods, or foods containing components that are genetically modified or irradiated where they relate to food safety, and set rules regulating the use of food additives, treatment catalysts and other ingredients of which food is composed and which affect its safety according to Codex Commission criteria and standards adopted by international bodies.
- Conduct studies and research related to food safety, and collect relevant scientific and technical data.

Until the NFSA fully assumes its responsibilities in 2018, the entities in charge of overseeing food safety will continue to function as they previously have. More details on those agencies can be found in the [2016 Egypt FAIRS Country Report](#). These entities include:

#### Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)

- The General Organization of Export and Import Control (GOEIC )
- The Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality (EOS)

#### Ministry of Health (MOH)

- Food Safety and Control Administration
- National nutrition Institute
- Central Health Laboratories

#### Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR)

- The Regional Center for Food and Feed (RCFF)
- The General Organization for Veterinary Services (GOVS)
- The Central Administration for Plant Quarantine (CAPQ)
- The Reference Laboratory for Safety Analysis of Food of Animal Origin

### **The General Organization for Export and Import Control**

Decree 770/2005 centralized the process for inspection and certification of food items under the General Organization for Export and Import Control (GOEIC). Additionally, GOEIC became the sole authority responsible for processing customs documents, as well as issuing the final results of inspections through a certificate of conformity. Decree 770/2005 also allowed for the creation of modern customs centers at the major ports, operating with state-of-the-art information technology systems. Known as data warehouses, these systems facilitate communication between customs, inspection agencies, port authorities, shipping lines, and freight forwarders.

Following a number of delayed or rejected cargoes in late 2016, the Prime Minister issued Decree 2992/2016 making GOEIC the only authorized government body to inspect corn, soybeans, and wheat at ports of origin. That decision was effective January 1, 2017 and has greatly facilitated customs clearance for shipments of grain and oilseeds. More details on this decision can be found in the [2016](#)

[Egypt FAIRS Country Report](#). FAS Cairo is unclear on how the role of GOEIC may change under the NFSA.

### **Directive Facilitating the Clearance of Wheat Shipments**

The Central Administration for Plant Quarantine issued Directive 48 on October 31, 2017, altering the process for importation and release of imported wheat shipments. The directive was designed to expedite the release of wheat shipments through speeding the inspection procedure, while ensuring that wheat shipments meet the Egyptian standard for wheat.

Directive 48 allows importers to request a customs certificate prior to shipment arrival at port, thereby facilitating customs clearance on arrival. The directive also allows wheat shipments to be inspected at anchor, rather than at the port, provided that the shipment weight is not less than 25,000MT. During these initial inspections, samples may be drawn and delivered to GOEIC, CAPQ, and the MOH for analysis and clearance approval. Furthermore, the importer, or their agent, may attend the initial inspection and sampling.

The directive also clarifies the standards for wheat noting acceptance for international standards for ergot contamination (0.05%), management of dead insects, radiation inspections, and contamination with narcotic and non-narcotic poppy seeds.

### **Major Trade Barriers with the US**

- On February 7, 2015, the Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS), at the Ministry of Trade and Industry, amended the standards for meat and variety meats. The new standard establishes a zero tolerance level for the use of synthetic hormones.

If synthetic hormones are detected, the shipment will be rejected and the importer has to re-export the shipment to another destination or back to the supplier. A zero tolerance level for the use of synthetic hormones is not in line with international standards. *Codex Alimentarius* has developed science-based MRLs for veterinary drugs, including synthetic hormones that ensure the wholesomeness of beef and beef products.

- Egypt also requires that beef come from cattle that are less than 48 months old for deboned meat, and less than 30 months of age for bone-in meat. These standards are not in line with the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) guidelines.
- Live cattle, calves for slaughtering and calves for fattening are subject to a 21-day pre-shipment quarantine and 28-day quarantine on arrival. In addition, there is a compulsory inspection by General Organization for Veterinary Services (GOVS) for each consignment, covering the entire pre-shipment quarantine period in the country of origin.
- MALR, Ministerial Decree 448/2012 banned the import of heat-treated feather meal. Egypt cites avian influenza (AI) contamination and nutritional value concerns as a justification for the ban. Although Egypt has notified the WTO, its notification omits references to it having similar concerns with its own domestic feather meal production. This ban contradicts OIE findings and is inconsistent with Egypt's WTO obligations.
- Egypt is one of world's largest seed potato importers, but it does not import varieties of U.S. seed potatoes due to phytosanitary concerns regarding *Ralstonia* (brown rot) and ring rot. The U.S. seed certification process, however, ensures that seed potatoes are free from the aforementioned viruses as well as other diseases. Egypt has conducted a pest risk assessment and two field inspection visits to the United States. Nonetheless, Egypt has not agreed to sign an

import protocol for U.S. seed potatoes.

- An import ban was placed on poultry parts in 2003. In 2006, Egypt relaxed the ban after an outbreak of avian influenza, but limited imports to whole birds. The basis for the exclusion of poultry parts and offal is sometimes noted as concerns with halal slaughter.

## **Section II: Food Additive Regulations**

On May 31, 2015, the Minister of Health issued Decree 204/2015 regarding food additives that are accepted for use by the food industry. A positive list of food colors that are allowed in food products according to the decree are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Approved Food Colorings

Riboflavin 5-Phosphate, sodium	Allura Red AC	Caramel I : Plain caramel	beta-Carotenes, vegetables	Carotenoic acid, ethyl ester, beta-apo-8
Riboflavin 5-phosphate	Indigotine (Indigo Carmine)	Caramel II: Sulphite caramel II	beta-Carotenes, Blakestea trisporn	Lutein: xanthophylls
Riboflavin from <i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	Brilliant blue FCF	Caramel III: Ammonia caramel	Annato extracts, bixin –based	Canthaxanthin
Tartrazine	Chlorophylls, copper complexes	Caramel IV: Sulfite Ammonia Caramel	Paprika extracts (Paprika, Paprika Oleoresins)	Beet root (beet red)
Quinoline yellow	Carmoisine: Azorubine	Brilliant black PN	Lycopene; (gamma carotene)	Anthocyanins
Sunset yellow	Chlorophyllin, copper complexes, potassium and sodium salts	Brown HT: chocolate brown HT	Lycopene: Blakestea trisporn	Grape skin extract
Carmines	Copper complexes of chlorophylls and Chlorophyllins	Beta-Carotenes, synthetic	Carotenal, beta-apo-8	Calcium Carbonate
Titanium dioxide	Iron oxide, red	Iron oxide, black	Iron oxide, yellow	

Ministerial Decree 204/2015 issued by the MOH lists all concentrations levels of acceptable food colors. Exporters should check with the MOH to verify the acceptability of any food coloring since food colors are always reviewed and updated according to *Codex Alimentarius* standards. There are no

exceptions to the regulations governing food colorings. The scientific name of the color ingredient and the percentage of concentration must be indicated on the Certificate of Analysis. Egyptian authorities will not allow a product to be imported if it contains an unauthorized color, even if the use of the color is acceptable in another country.

The Egyptian MOH issued Decree 73/2001, which mandated that colors used on the inner and outer package should not be harmful to human health and should be fixed. If the color could be easily altered, its use is not permitted.

### **Preservatives**

All preservatives must be identified along with the allowed concentration expressed as a percentage as calculated on an acid basis. Ministerial Decree 204/2015 issued by MOH lists all acceptable preservatives and concentrations levels.

### **Flavorings**

The Ministry of Health does not maintain a list of approved flavorings; however, all flavorings accepted under *Codex Alimentarius* also are approved for use in Egypt. Ministerial Decree 204/2015, issued by MOH, lists the concentration levels of all acceptable flavorings.

For more information on food additives, U.S. exporters can contact:

#### **Ministry of Health (MOH)**

Dr Dalal Mounir El Sayed – Director of Central Labs, Ministry of Health

Tel: +20 (2) 2794-1507, +20 (2) 2794-0526

Fax: +20 (2) 2795-3966

Website: <http://www.mohp.gov.eg>

#### **National Nutrition Institute (NNI)**

Dr Afaf Abdel Fatah Tawfik – Director of the National Nutrition Institute

Tel: +20 (2) 25324315- 2364-6413 / 3522

Fax: +20 (2) 2364-7476

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## **Section III: Pesticide and Other Contaminants**

### **Pesticide Laws and Regulations**

Ministerial Decree 2188/2011 established the Agricultural Pesticide Committee (APC) which sits within the Ministry for Agriculture and Land Reclamation and is the authority responsible for registering agricultural pesticides based on two major criteria: efficacy against agricultural pests, and safety to public health and the environment.

Ministerial Decree 1018/2013 explained the role of the APC as being the only Egyptian authority accountable for the assessment, evaluation and registration of agricultural pesticides, up to the point of retail sale.

#### Mission of the Agricultural Pesticide Committee:

- A. The APC is responsible for tailoring, administering and managing the National Registration Scheme and decrees for agricultural pesticides. These set out the regulatory framework for the management of pesticides production, import, export, and use in Egypt.
- B. The APC administers the legislation scheme in partnership with state and territorial governments and with the active involvement of other Egyptian government agencies.
- C. The APC serves as a national focal point that cooperates with international pesticide regulatory authorities for effective use and global safety of plant protection products.

The committee administers Ministerial Decree 974/2017, signed by the Minister of Agriculture on June 24, 2017. The 53-article decree regulates the registration of substances that claim to have agricultural pest control use, as well as other substances such as formulants, adjuvants, impurities or contaminants that may be contained in the pest control product.

#### Updated Pesticide Registration Process (Ministerial Decree 974/2017)

1. The stakeholder should submit an application to APC for the registration of any agricultural pesticide after payment of the prescribed fees along with the primary technical data sheet.
2. The APC Rapporteur examines the application form and reviews the current situation of pesticide in the approved data recorded by the US EPA, European Union (EU), Canada, Australia and Japan.
3. In the case of consistency of the registration requirements on the pesticide in question, the applicant should submit the primary technical data sheet along with the proposed experimentation program for testing the efficacy of the pesticide against the target pest.

Then, the complete program should be reviewed by the committee's secretariat, followed by the main committee. After the approval, four copies should be distributed to: secretariat of the committee; experimentation administrator; Central Agricultural Pesticide Laboratory (CAPL) and the stakeholder.

1. In the case of committee approval on the experimentation program, the stakeholder should pay costs scheduled for experimentation and analysis. After fees are paid, the experimental procedure begins.
2. In the case of imported samples, the concerned stakeholder has to submit an application form to the APC's Secretariat for customs clearance, free of charge, of all the necessary samples that will be used in analyzing and experimentation of the pesticide in question, and in the appropriate quantities.
3. The stakeholder must provide samples of experimentation to the Administrator of the Institute or the respective laboratory, who assure that they are already required for experimentation, then, he sign and stamp two samples and send them to the Central Laboratory of Pesticides to ensure conformity of chemical and physical specifications of which the pesticide registration will be examined.
4. In the case of non-conformity, the stakeholder may submit a grievance to the CAPL for re-analyzing the other sample.
5. In the case of non-conformity with the second sample, the experimentation program will not continue, and the stakeholder must reimburse the experimentation fees.
6. In case of matching the samples submitted for experimentation with chemical and physical specifications, the experimentation administrator will send the samples to the agricultural research stations for testing them on the target pests, according to a protocol designed for this



purpose and issued from the committee.

7. According to Ministerial Decree 974/ 2017, which regulates the management and use of agricultural pesticides, the pesticide should be subjected to two similar and consecutive agricultural seasons. Attractants, however, are subjected to one agricultural season only.
8. The experimentation administrator displays the results obtained to the Institute Council or the competent laboratory to be discussed and make recommendations. These recommendations are presented to the committee for issuing decisions.
9. The stakeholder provides the complete file of the pesticide under registration, and the APC Secretariat will prepare it for submission to two specialist reviewers selected by the Chairman or his deputy for technical review of the pesticide file. In the case of a difference between opinions of the two reviewers, a third one should be appointed.
10. When the pesticide passes all the experimentation stages and approval of the recommendations committee, a certificate of biological assessment approval should be issued.
11. The reviewers submit their recommendations to the committee for approval, then a pesticide registration certificate will be issued in triplicate copies:
12. The registration certificate of the technical grade or formulated pesticide is valid for a period of six years from its issuing date. Re-evaluation of the formulated pesticide should be performed at the beginning of the third year from the date of the registration certificate issuing.
13. After issuing of the registration certificate, the stakeholder may apply for getting the pesticide label (two-year) after payment of the prescribed fees.
14. The locally formulated pesticides pass through the same steps. This locally formulated will not be registered unless after registration of its technical grade for six years, and will not be re-registered unless one of its formulated preparations has been already registered.
15. The concerned person can submit an application to the committee to import the pesticide provided it is registered, and one of its recommendations is valid, and the concerned person must hold a license for trading in agricultural pesticides.

### **Adherence to International Undertakings with Direct Implications for Pesticides**

According to Article 28 of Ministerial Decree 1018/2013, maximum residue limits (MRL) of the *Codex Alimentarius*, the EU, or values set by U.S. Environment Protection Agency (EPA) shall apply to the agricultural crops and products in the corresponding order. In the absence of MRLs for a certain crop or product, MRLs of the closest crops or products shall be applied in corresponding order. The Agricultural Pesticide Committee is working closely with other government regulatory agencies around the world (i.e. the U.S. EPA, the EU) to keep pace by using and contributing to the development of the most up-to-date risk assessment tools and methods.

The Central Public Health Labs of the MOH, the Central Laboratory for Pesticides, and the Central Laboratory of Residue Analysis of Pesticides and Heavy Metals in Food of MALR are responsible for examining and testing for pesticide MRLs of fresh fruit and produce, ensuring that MRLs do not exceed limits. For more information on pesticide import requirements and registration, as well as information on approved pesticides and allowed MRLs, U.S. exporters can contact:

### **Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR)**

The Agriculture Pesticide Committee (APC)

Contact: Prof Mohamed Abdel Meguid Chairman of APC

Tel: +20 (2) 37480576  
Email: [Chairman@apc.gov.eg](mailto:Chairman@apc.gov.eg)  
Website: <http://www.apc.gov.eg/en/default.aspx>

## **Contaminants**

### **Aflatoxins:**

For aflatoxins, Egypt follows the European Union maximum limits for total aflatoxins and aflatoxin B1, which are set in the European Commission Regulation 1881/2006, “Setting Maximum Levels for Certain Contaminants in Foodstuffs.”

The maximum allowable total aflatoxin levels and B1 levels for selected products are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Selected Aflatoxin MRL

Food item	ug/KG	ug/KG
	Maximum allowable Aflatoxins	Maximum allowable B1 Level
Corn	10	5
Raw Pistachio	10	8
Processed and Roasted Pistachio	12	15
Almonds	10	8
Peanuts	4	2

## **Section IV: Packaging and Container Regulations**

According to Ministerial Decree 73/2001 for packaging materials, issued by the MOH, Egypt has no special packaging or container size requirements, regulations, or preferences. There are no restrictions or limitations on the use of any packaging materials like PVC. Articles impacted by the solid waste management (law 4/1994) do not have any significant impact on imported food products.

## **Section V: Labeling Requirements**

### **General Requirements**

Labelling guidelines are found in Egyptian standard 1546/2011 and are applicable to all imports of food products. In addition to the foreign language, all information must also be written in Arabic.

Any contradiction between the English and Arabic dates may lead to product rejection. Labels can be printed on the package or be of a permanent adhesive type. Products cannot show more than one date of manufacture or expiration on the package. For example, goods have been rejected if the inside package has a different date than the outside carton. Information on the label cannot be erased, scratched, or altered in any way. Requirements are more restrictive for meat and poultry products.

### **All labels must include the following information:**

- a. Name and address of manufacturer

- b. Brand or trademark, if appropriate
- c. Country of origin
- d. Type of product and grade
- e. Name and address of importer
- f. Production and expiration dates. (These dates may be mentioned separately on the top of the package. They can be applied by laser, imposed, or printed. In such cases, there is no need to repeat them on the label.)
- g. Product ingredients.
- h. Storage instructions or temperature for all products - storage temperature must be placed with the refrigeration statement on the boxes to fully clarify the type of product being handled. (Examples: "KEEP FROZEN - STORE AT OR BELOW \_\_\_\_degrees C.; KEEP CHILLED (OR REFRIGERATE) - STORE BETWEEN \_\_\_\_degrees C. and \_\_\_\_degrees C.")
- i. Net weight
- j. Gross weight and total number of the packages per case or carton
- k. If the product contains preservatives, the percentage of each preservative should be indicated
- l. If the product is meat or poultry, the following statement must appear: "slaughtered according to the Islamic ritual" or "Halal slaughtered"

**The following items are exempted from labeling**

- a. Small items whose greater surface is 10 cm square or less.
- b. Milk and beverage packs whose quantity is 200 milliliters or less.
- c. Wrapped dried sweets (candy, jelly candy, toffee and fun size chocolates sold by weight, not by bar as these are considered unpacked products.

**Requirements for Frozen Beef**

The Minister of Trade and Industry issued Decree 120/2006 which states that frozen beef must be packed in sealed bags according to sanitary standards. A printed label must be inserted inside the poly bag with the following information in Arabic language:

- a. Country of origin
- b. Producer's name
- c. Name of the slaughterhouse
- d. Date of slaughter
- e. Importer's name and address
- f. Name of the entity that supervised the slaughtering process according to Islamic rules.
- g. Type of meat and percentage of fat content. (Fat content of red meat for processing must be no more than 20 percent.)
  - 1. Percentage fat content is only required on the carton label and may be added by the importer after arrival in Egypt, but before release by Egyptian authorities.
  - 2. Percentage fat content labeling is not required for offal.

**Halal Labeling**

Halal certified products must be labeled with a statement indicating that the product has been slaughtered in accordance to Islamic principles. The exporter must obtain a Halal certificate or "Certificate of Islamic Slaughter" from a member of an Islamic center or Islamic organization, certifying that the animals were slaughtered according to Islamic religious requirements. This certificate must accompany all shipments of products labeled "Halal." The certificate must be endorsed by the

Commercial Office of the Egyptian Embassy (or consulate) in the country of origin.

### **Expiration Period**

The Minister of Trade and Industry issued Decree 859/2012 adding a new article to Ministerial Decree No. 770/ 2005 Concerning the Executive Regulation to Implement Import and Export Law No.118/1975, as well as Inspection and Control Procedures of Imported and Exported Goods.

The new article states that in order to release food commodities, with the exception of grains and oilseeds, the expiration period left for human consumption starts from the day the shipment arrives in Egyptian ports or when customs issues the clearance certificate. The product must arrive at the port of entry with the following shelf life or otherwise the consignment will be rejected:

- a. Products with shelf life of six months or more must arrive at Egyptian ports with at least three months of remaining shelf life.
- b. Products with shelf life of more than three months but less than six months must arrive at Egyptian ports with at least one month of remaining shelf life.
- c. Products with shelf life of more than sixteen days to three months shelf life must arrive at Egyptian ports with at least one week of remaining shelf life.
- d. Products with at least fifteen days shelf life must arrive at Egyptian ports with at least three days of remaining shelf life.

The expiration period for frozen beef livers, kidneys, and hearts is seven months from the date of production. The expiration period for frozen boneless beef is twelve months from the date of production. The expiration date for whole frozen poultry, leg quarters, drumsticks, and thighs is 12 months from the date of production.

### **Other Specific Labeling Requirements**

Egypt is a net importer of agricultural commodities including wheat, soybeans, and yellow corn for feed. The government maintains a general import policy of allowing imports of agricultural commodities as long as the imported product is approved and consumed in the countries of origin.

Egyptian law does not require labeling of biotech crops or products with biotech content. In addition, there is no approval needed for importing biotech products.

## **Section VI: Other Specific Standards**

Import regulations require that every component of a product be inspected – regardless of the compliance history of the product, country of origin, exporter, shipper or the importer. No import can be put up for direct sale without first proving that it conforms to established Egyptian standards. If no domestic standard exists, then it must be defined using the standards of one of its affiliated international organizations, such as ISO, IEC and *Codex Alimentarius*.

Egyptian standardization commenced in 1957 with the formation of the Egyptian Organization for Standards (EOS), which is affiliated with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIT). Since its inception, EOS has established approximately 8,500 standards, of which 543 are Egyptian technical regulations or mandatory standards.

Nearly 80 percent of its mandatory standards are based on standards issued by international organizations. In the absence of an Egyptian standard, Ministerial Decree 180/1996 allows importers to choose a relevant standard from seven international systems including: ISO, European, American, Japanese, British, German – and for food, *Codex Alimentarius*.

While EOS issues regulations and standards for the local market, verification of compliance is performed by other governmental bodies. The General Organization for Export and Import Control is responsible for testing imported products. Additional agencies that verify consistency with technical regulations and standards include MOH and MALR.

The Central Public Health Labs of MOH are responsible for testing the chemical and physical composition food additives and colors to ensure that they meet the required standards. The Reference Laboratory for Safety Analysis of Food of Animal Origin of MALR is responsible for monitoring that agricultural products meet the quality attributes specified by the relevant standards.

## **Section VII: Facility and Product Registration**

### **Facility Registration:**

Decree 43/2016, implemented in early 2016, requires that exporters of specific retail products register with GOEIC prior to shipment. The measure only applies to a specific list of products packaged for the retail market. Most U.S. food exporters are able to meet the registration requirements; however, exporters are encouraged to work closely with their Egyptian importers in order to successfully register. Details on the decree are available in this [GAIN Report](#).

For beef and poultry plants, the General Organization for Veterinary Services (GOVS) of MALR requires that U.S. plants that wish to export to Egypt be inspected and approved. All approved slaughter facilities are subject to re-examination every three years to renew their eligibility to export to Egypt. The examinations evaluate both food safety and halal practices. Beef plant audits in the United States are implemented by veterinarians from GOVS in cooperation with the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). To date, around 57 beef slaughter facilities have been audited and approved for export to Egypt.

### **Product Registration**

#### *Special Dietary Foods*

The National Nutrition Institute (NNI) and MOH's Drug Planning and Policy Center are responsible for the registration and approval of all nutritional supplements and dietary foods. Special dietary foods are foods whose composition is different from "normal" food. In practice, this involves calorie modified foods, baby and infant foods, energy foods, special health foods including diabetic and weight control foods, vitamin and mineral supplements, medicinal herbs, and bottled water. Also, any food making a nutritional claim falls under the NNI's purview.

The registration process for special dietary foods involves two technical committees:

1. An NNI internal Technical Review Committee (TRC) comprised of NNI researchers that includes biochemists, food technologists, pharmacists, medical doctors, and nutritionists.

2. A Higher Committee for Nutrition, used as an advisory committee to the NNI and are responsible for the final approval of all special dietary foods.

The Higher Committee for Nutrition is comprised of representatives from MOH (Undersecretary for Health), universities (pharmacy, food technology), directors of research institutes (e.g., Food Technology Research Institute), and the vice-president of the Egyptian Academy of Sciences.

To register a product, the interested party must submit an application form that includes product name, manufacturer, country of origin, importer (if imported product), ingredients and specifications, the manufacturing process, a certificate of analysis, health certificate, and a certificate of free sale.

Samples are submitted and analyzed to ensure the product meets the nutritional claims, and to test for the presence of heavy metals, pesticide residues, and microbial contaminants. Labels are reviewed and claims verified. The results are forwarded to the NNI-TRC for review.

The recommendations of the NNI-TRC are forwarded to the Higher Committee for Nutrition's review. A consensus is reached for approval. If the application for approval is denied, the applicant can resubmit the product for consideration with corrections made to accommodate the reason for non-approval.

Once the product is registered and all other import requirements are fulfilled, there are no licensing requirements.

### **Documents Required for the Registration of Nutritional Products**

- a. Application for registration of nutritional product from NNI signed and stamped NNI officials.
- b. Certificate of analysis and declaration of composition signed by officials from the manufacturing firm (it is advised to include a company logo-stamp alongside signatures).
- c. Six original outer labels to be placed in a file for reference.
- d. A copy of the trade and tax card of the applicant.
- e. A copy of tax registration.
- f. A copy of the applicant import card.
- g. Eight to ten product samples with Arabic labels.
- h. Contract between manufacturing company and importer, which contains all product names. The contract must be approved by a representative chamber of commerce and legalized by the Egyptian embassy in the country of the origin.
- i. Certificate of free sale that includes the product name legalized by the Egyptian embassy at the country of origin (must contain the statement "product is freely sold in the country of origin").
- j. Good manufacturing practices (GMP) certificate from the manufacturing company legalized (stamped) by a relevant chamber of commerce and the Egyptian embassy at the country of the origin.
- k. Halal certificate (if applicable).

It is advisable for exporting firms to include any state-issued certificates of wholesomeness or health, as possible, in order to expedite registration approval.

If the product contains gelatin, the applicant must disclose the source of the gelatin. Importers must apply for an import license, and the approval process may take between one to six months. If a similar dietary product is available in the local market, the application will not be approved.

## **Section VIII: Other Certification and Testing Requirements**

See [FAIRS Certificate Report](#) for full listing of required certificates.

### **General Requirements**

The certification requirements for imported food products differ according to the product. For example, veterinary certificates are required for meat, poultry, fish and dairy products. If the product is further processed in another country during transit, the appropriate certification may be executed in the country where the additional processing is done

A number of certificates are required for all imported food products:

- Certificate of Origin
- Export Certificate (FDA Certificate of Free Sale, Sanitary, Phytosanitary – varies by product)
- Islamic Halal Certificate (if applicable)

The above certificates should be signed by the country of origin's chamber of commerce and notarized by the Egyptian embassy or consulate in the country of origin. Importers must present one set of all documents to GOEIC.

### **Meat and Poultry Products**

Under Ministerial Decree 1647/1997, in order to import meat and live animals, an importer must submit a request to GOVS indicating:

- The number and type of animals or meat being imported
- Country of origin
- Shipping port
- Expected date of arrival
- Means of transportation

The General Organization for Veterinary Services examines the request according to the epidemiological status of the country of origin. If the epidemiological status permits importation, the importer is issued a permit. The permit is valid for one month. The importer can renew the approval if importation does not occur within one month. No fees are charged for the import permit.

Under Decree 465/1997, the importation of poultry and meat products must meet the following requirements:

- a. Products must be shipped directly from the country of origin to Egypt.
- b. Products must be packaged in appropriate bags as required by the Egyptian standards. Labels must be inserted *inside* the package as well as on the outside carton (see Labeling Section).

Release by the veterinary authorities depends heavily on the import license. If there is any discrepancy between the import license and the shipping documents, the product will be rejected. Exporters and importers should be completely familiar with all of the information required for the pre-approval license check with GOVS for additional information and instructions.

### **Product Sampling**

All product samples should be representative of the consignment and should be drawn during the unloading process. A committee, known as the Physical Examination Committee, is formed to withdraw random samples every time a shipment arrives in port. One representative sample (specified in size) is drawn from each consignment and all inspection agencies involved will conduct their inspections and testing on it. Tests may be conducted by three different laboratories.

Batch numbers are required for all food products in order to facilitate product sample withdrawal. Each batch will be considered as a different item for sample withdrawal purposes. Samples will be drawn from each batch having different production and expiration dates. Products with different dates are considered to be different items and should be identified as such on the release certificate.

Cleanliness must be assured when samples are taken to avoid contamination. Also, the committee is supposed to take the necessary steps to assure the soundness of the product samples while they are being transported to the laboratory for analysis.

According to Decree 232/1996 issued by MOH, the following provisions are to be taken into consideration when samples are withdrawn:

- a. The consignment should be treated as a single shipment
- b. The samples should be divided according to batch sizes and type of product
- c. The samples should be distributed among the laboratories so as to avoid repetition
- d. All label information should be presented on the "Sample Analysis Form"
- e. If a consignment is imported from various origins or product sources, each should have a distinctive and confidential number

### **Pre-shipment Testing Requirements**

The Prime Minister of Egypt issued Decree 2292 on November 13, 2016, for the new inspection system for wheat, corn and soybeans. According to the decree, importers of the three agricultural commodities are to notify GOEIC of the quantities they wish to import in each shipment. GOEIC then specifies the international inspecting company that is to inspect the shipments at the shipping and arrival ports. Accordingly, CAPQ's role is more limited, with regards to the importation of the three commodities. The six-member interagency committees that previously inspected shipments at origin are no longer required.

## **Section IX: Import Procedures**

The initial import procedure entails the assignment of a shipping agent (separate from the vessel shipping agent); arrival of the consignment at port and a comparison of the invoice and bill of lading with the ship's manifest; issuance of a title transfer document to the importer; the unloading of the consignment; the purchase and completion of the "Importation Form" and registration of the consignment with Egyptian Customs, and initial tariff classification of the product.

Egyptian companies often rely on customs brokers, or their own staff to check on shipments and to clear products through customs. In general, the following documents must be presented to the customs office in order for a shipment to be released:

- Bill of Lading



- Commercial Invoice
- Certificate of Origin (countersigned by the Chamber of Commerce and notarized by the Egyptian Embassy or Consulate in the country of origin)
- Export/Health Certificate (FDA Certificate of Free Sale, Sanitary, Phytosanitary – varies by product)
- Packing List
- Certificate of Insurance
- Import Permit (issued to Egyptian importer)
- Payment Guarantee (Form 11) from a local bank advising that payment has been transferred to the supplier.

The following documents may be required, depending on product:

- A letter from the bank indicating that all administration fees have been paid. If this letter is not submitted, all administrative expenses must be paid at the port
- Radiation Certificate

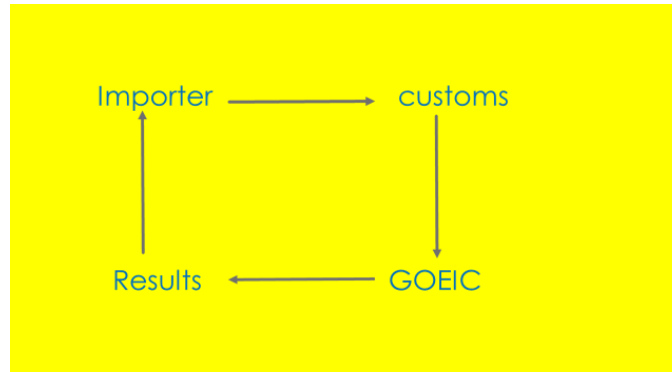
The time required for importation ranges from 11-12 days. Egypt has five major ports: Damietta, Alexandria, Port Said (east), Port Said (west), and Sokhna (Suez).

In case of a rejection, according to Article 117, Chapter 4 of Decree 770/2005, the exporter or importer may appeal the final inspection results no later than one week from the date of rejection. The concerned party shall file an appeal to the Appeal Committee Secretariat. The appeal shall be accompanied by a nominal deposit, which shall be reimbursed if the appeal is accepted.

The committee shall decide whether to accept the results of the final inspection, or to amend the results, or annul them. They can also authorize a re-inspection of the consignment, or allow for treatment. If the former is applied, then the committee shall name a specialized inspection laboratory to re-inspect the consignment and allow the complainant the chance to attend the inspection procedures. The committee's results shall be deemed final and may not be contested.

The Board Chairman of the General Organization for Exhibitions and International Fairs (GOEIF) may allow exhibitors at exhibitions and fairs, to directly sell goods imported for display at exhibition sites identified by the GOEIF. The sale shall be supervised by GOEIC and by Customs, provided that import procedures, except for the certificate of origin and the bill of lading from the country of origin, are completed.

Figure 1: Import Control Procedure



The final results of the inspection shall be issued after no more than 10 days except for canned food, bottled water, and for goods subject to dioxin testing, which shall be released after no more than 15 days.

## **Section X: Copyright and/or Trademark Laws**

In June 2002, Egypt passed the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Law 82/2002, which describes a copyright's legal rights and enforcement procedures, expedited trademark registration, and piracy protection. The IPR Law replaced public law 57/1939 on trademarks and information, 132/1949 on patent and industrial drawings, and 354/1954 on copyrights. Yet, Egypt was still not in full compliance with the TRIPs agreement in October 2013, with the biggest problems involving pharmaceutical patents and IPR settlement.

Article 63 of the IPR Law 82/2002 defines trademarks as names that adopt a distinctive form, signatures, words, characters, figures and drawings. The Commercial Registration Department of the Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade is responsible for registering trademarks. Articles 73–84 detail the registration process. Article 73 requires the applicant to submit a trademark request to the department, which is responsible for notifying the applicant within 30 days of issuing the decision. It takes approximately from 9 to 12 months to register a logo or a brand name. Once approved, it is announced in the *Trademark Gazette*.

A number of certificates and documents including the following items must be submitted during the registration process:

- A sample of the logo and brand name.
- A certification of the company's incorporation in its home country.
- A certificate issued by the Commercial Register in Egypt affirming that the proposed name of the company or logo has not been registered in Egypt.

The company must apply for a “Trademark Examination Form” to check whether a similar trademark for the product already exists in the market.

If a foreign company wishes to protect its logo, the company has to supply the General Administration for Trademark with an example of its logo as registered with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The foreign company should employ an agent in Cairo to follow the trademark registration process.

Article 90 provides trademark protection for ten years, starting at registration. After the ten-year period, the trademark's owner has six months to submit a renewal for protection, which can be extended for several different periods. However the new law grants automatic trademark status to internationally known products without registering with the Commercial Registration Department.

## **Appendix I: Government Regulatory Agency Contacts**

### **Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation (MALR)**

The Central Administration of Plant Quarantine (CAPQ)

Contact: Dr. Ahmed Al-Atar

Title: Head of the Central Administration for Plant Quarantine,  
Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation,

Tel: +20 (2) 3335-1625 or +20 (2) 37608575 Fax: +20 (2) 3760-8574

Email: [capqoffice@gmail.com](mailto:capqoffice@gmail.com)

General Organization for Veterinary Services (GOVS)

Contact: Dr. Ibrahim Mahrous

Title: Chairman

Tel: +20 (2) 3748-1750 Fax: +20 (2) 3748-1763

Email: [govs-egypt@govs.gov.eg](mailto:govs-egypt@govs.gov.eg)

<http://www.govs.gov.eg/FrontEnd/en/Default.aspx>

Central Lab of Residue Analysis of Pesticides & Heavy Metals

Contact: Dr. Ashraf Al Marsafy

Title: Director

Tel: +20 (2) 3748-6163 Fax: +20 (2) 3761-1216

Email: [qcap@link.net](mailto:qcap@link.net)

<http://www.qcap-egypt.com/myPage.aspx?id=36>

Regional Center For Food and Feed (RCFF)

Contact: Dr. Ashraf Hashem Gomaa

Title: Director

Tel: +20 (2) 3572-2069 / 572-3906 Fax: +20 (2) 3572-2609

Email: [clff@intouch.com](mailto:clff@intouch.com)

<http://www.rcff.com.eg/>

The Agriculture Pesticide Committee (APC)

Contact: Prof. Mohamed Abdel Meguid

Title: Chairman of APC

Tel: +20 (2) 37480576

Email: [Chairman@apc.gov.eg](mailto:Chairman@apc.gov.eg)

<http://www.apc.gov.eg/en/>

Animal Health Research Institute

Reference Laboratory For Safety Analysis of Food of Animal Origin

Contact: Dr. Momtaz Shahin

Title: Director of Animal Health research Institute

Telephone Numbers: +20 (2) 33374856 - 37489022

Fax: +20 (2) 33350030

Email: [Ahri@arc.sci.eg](mailto:Ahri@arc.sci.eg)

<http://www.ahri.gov.eg/>

**Ministry of Health (MOH)**

Central Labs Administration

Contact: Dr. Dalal Mounir El Sayed

Title: Director

Tel: +20 (2) 27950096 Fax: +20 (2) 2796-2248

Email: [centralhealthlabs@yahoo.com](mailto:centralhealthlabs@yahoo.com)

<http://www.healthlabs.net/>

National Nutrition Institute (NNI)

Contact: Dr. Afaf Abdel Fatah Tawfik

Title: Director of the National Nutrition Institute

Tel: +20 (2) 25324315- 2364-6413 / 3522

Fax: +20 (2) 2364-7476

Email: [nniegypt@nni.org.eg](mailto:nniegypt@nni.org.eg)

[http://www.nni.org.eg/contactus\\_ar.htm](http://www.nni.org.eg/contactus_ar.htm)

### **Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)**

Egyptian Organization for Standardization and Quality Control

Contact: Eng. Ashraf Ismail Afifi

Title: Chairman

Tel: +20 (2) 22845524 +20 (2) 22845528

Fax: +20 (2) 2603-1351

Email [eos@idsc.net.eg](mailto:eos@idsc.net.eg)

<http://www.eos.org.eg/public/en-us/>

General Organization for Export and Import Control (GOEIC)

Contact: Major General Engineer Ismael Gaber

Title: Chairman

Tel: +20 (2) 2266-6847

Fax: +20 (2) 2266-9668

Email: [goeic@goeic.gov.eg](mailto:goeic@goeic.gov.eg)

Contact: Ms. Dalia Talaat Shehab El din

Title: General Manager of Agricultural Imports

Office : +20 (2) 22669531

Fax : +20 (2) 22669364

Email: [daliashehabeldin@yahoo.com](mailto:daliashehabeldin@yahoo.com)

### **Ministry of Finance (MOF)**

Egyptian Customs Authority

Contact: Mr. Magdy Abdel Aziz

Title: Chairman

Telephone Number: +20 (2) 234-22152 - +20 (2) 234-22153 - +20 (2) 234-22154

Fax Number: +20 (2) 234-22280 - +20 (2) 234-22281

E-mail: [info@customs.gov.eg](mailto:info@customs.gov.eg)

<http://www.customs.gov.eg/>

### **Ministry of Supply and Internal Trade (MOSIT)**

General Authority for Supply Commodities

Contact Dr. Ahmed Youssef

Title: vice Chairman  
Tel: +20 (2)-27960677  
Fax: +20 (2)-2796011  
Email: [Ahmedgasc@gmail.com](mailto:Ahmedgasc@gmail.com)

## **Appendix II: Laws and Regulations Governing Egypt's Food System**

Law No.1 of 2017 Promulgating National Food Safety Authority Law issued by the Egyptian

Parliament

### **PRESIDENTIAL& PRIME MINISTER DECREES**

- Prime Minister's Decree No.683 of 2017 naming the board of trustees of the National Food Safety Authority
- Prime Minister's Decree No. 2992 of 2016 related to wheat, corn and Soybeans imports
- Egypt's Presidential Decree 184 (2013) increasing import tariffs on some agricultural products including fish, cut flowers, and fresh and dried fruits and nuts
- Presidential decree No. 103 of 2008 reducing maximum tariff rates on some products.
- Presidential decree No. 39 of 2007 reducing maximum tariff rates.
- Presidential Decree No. 106 of 2000 centralizing the process of inspection and certification of imported products under GOEIC.
- Presidential Decree No. 250 of 1999 banning some products from the EU.
- Presidential Decree No. 243 of 1998 reducing maximum tariff rates.
- Presidential Decree No. 619 of 1998 for importation of durable and non-durable goods.

### **MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

- Ministerial Decree No. 974 of 2017 concerning Agricultural Pesticides Registration and Handling
- Ministerial Decree No. 1495 of 2014 regarding the formation of a new national biosafety committee
- Ministerial Decree No. 1660 of 2014 regarding the Phytosanitary Requirements and Specifications for the Importation of Seed Potatoes for Growing Year (2014/2015)
- Ministerial Decree No. 1018 of 2013 concerning Agricultural Pesticides Registration and Handling
- Ministerial Decree No. 448 of 2012 bans the import of heat-treated feather meal.
- Egypt's Ministerial Decree No. 266 of 2011 adopted the European Economic Commission (EEC) Regulation 2377 (1990) that calls for a maximum residue limits (MRL) for veterinary drugs in food products of animal origin.
- Ministerial decree No. 2128 of 2011 which puts restrictions on age, cuts, processed meat and others from BSE controlled risk status countries
- Ministerial Decree No. 2188 of 2011 constituting the Agricultural Pesticide committee
- Law 82 of 2002 for Plant Variety Protection
- Ministerial Decree No. 3007 of 2001 for Plant Quarantine
- Ministerial Decree No. 1073 of 1998 for Leucosis
- Ministerial Decree No. 9 of 1997 for meat importation.
- Ministerial Decree No. 1647 of 1997 for issues related to the importation of meat and live animals.
- Ministerial Decree No. 874 of 1996 forbidding testing, importation, usage of pesticides classified as "B" and "C."
- Ministerial Decree No. 25 of 1982 for product sampling.

### **MINISTRY OF TRADE & INDUSTRY**

- Ministerial Decree No.310 of 2017 regarding the inclusion of the National Research Center Labs as reference labs for sampling imported and exported food products

- Ministerial Decree No.999 of 2017 related to crude vegetable oil standards
- Ministerial Decree No. 24 of 2017 2016 regarding the procedures related to wheat, corn and Soybeans imports according to Prime Minister's Decree No. 2992 of 2016
- Ministerial Decree No. 693 of 2015 regarding production and importing of vegetable oils used for food according to the Egyptian Standard 7985
- Ministerial decree No. 859 of 2012 regarding the shelf life periods for food commodities with the exception of Cereals and legumes
- Ministerial decree No. 2613 of 2008 Parts A&B regarding the general conditions of the shelf life periods for food products (part A) and shelf life periods (Part B)
- Ministerial Decree No. 434 for 2008 for shelf life periods for the food products
- Ministerial decree No. 285 for 2006 for the periods remaining in the established shelf life for the imported food products.
- Ministerial Decree No. 120 for 2006 for new labeling requirements for frozen beef.
- Ministerial Decree No. 130 of 2005 concerning compliance with technical regulations in production according to the standard specifications.
- Ministerial Decree No. 524 of 2000 for Inspection and Samples Withdrawal.
- Ministerial Decree No. 552 of 2000 for inspection certificates.
- Ministerial Decree No. 423 of 1999 amending Ministerial Decree No. 619 of 1998.
- Ministerial Decree No. 163 of 1999 for labeling canned, frozen and packed food products.
- Ministerial Decree Nos. 179, 180, and 181 of 1996 issued by the Ministry of Industry listing Egyptian product specifications and mandatory standards.
- Ministerial Decree No. 107 of 1994 and Egyptian Standard No. 2613 for shelf-life standards.

## **MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

- Ministerial Decree No.204 of 2015 regarding food additives example food colorings, food preservatives and Antioxidants that are accepted for use by the food industry.
- Ministerial Decree No. 73 of 2001 for packaging materials.
- Ministerial Decree No. 53 of 1996 for product sampling and test analysis.
- Ministerial Decree No. 354 of 1996 for product rejection.
- Ministerial Decree Nos. 232 of 1996 and 349 for product sampling.
- Ministerial Decree Nos. 302 of 1986 and 782 of 1984 for product sampling.