

**Required Report:** Required - Public Distribution

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**Report Name:** Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards  
Export Certificate Report

**Country:** Nicaragua

**Post:** Managua

**Report Category:** FAIRS Export Certificate Report

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**Report Highlights:**

This report lists Nicaraguan import requirements for export certification and import permits for agrochemicals, veterinary products, feedstuffs and food products for human consumption. There were no significant changes on the export certificates in 2019. The last change reported in 2018 is that 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 "Export Certificate" for most food products under its jurisdiction.

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

**Disclaimer:** This report was prepared by the office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Managua, Nicaragua for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in 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 product is subject to the importing country's rules and regulations as interpreted by border officials at the time of the product entry.**

The Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) and the Ministry of Health (MINSa) in Nicaragua require registration of imported products prior to issuing import permits. IPSA is responsible for the inspection of agricultural products at ports and borders and the registration of animal feeds, agrochemicals and seeds, while MINSa regulates processed food registration. As a first import requirement, every importer must request an import permit from IPSA or MINSa prior to the importation of any shipment (Please refer to attachments to see format of import permits). Importers must provide a copy of the commercial invoice, certificate of origin, and a Health or Phytosanitary certificate attached to the permits.

The following certificates are requested when the products (except for plants and animals) have been registered at 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. For more information about the product registration process, please refer to the FAIRS Country Narrative Report.

Product (s)	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Agrochemicals, Veterinary Products	Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import Permit  Certificate of Origin  Certificate of Qualitative-	Certificates must be issued by a competent government authority	Traceability	IPSA

	Quantitative Analysis			
	Copy of the Commercial Invoice			
Feedstuffs	Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import permits  Certificate of Origin  Sanitary Certificate  Copy of the Commercial Invoice	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority, except for the certificate of chemical analysis.	Traceability	IPSA
Plant Products and Sub-Products	Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import permit  Certificate of Origin  Phytosanitary Certificate  Certificate of Chemical Treatment (when applicable).	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	Traceability	IPSA

	Copy of the Commercial Invoice			
Animal Products and Sub-Products	<p>Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import permit</p> <p>Sanitary Certificate</p> <p>Certificate of Origin</p> <p>Copy of the Commercial Invoice</p>	Certificate must be issued by a competent government authority	Traceability	IPSA
Processed Food	<p>Sanitary- Import Permit</p> <p>Certificate of origin</p> <p>Sanitary or Phytosanitary certificate</p> <p>Copy of the Commercial Invoice</p>	Certificates must be issued by a competent government authority	Traceability	<p>The sanitary import permit is requested at the Ministry Health (MINSA).</p> <p>The other certificates are required by IPSA at the port or border of entry.</p>

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

### **Sanitary and Phytosanitary Import Permit:**

The sanitary and phytosanitary import permit is the official document that authorizes the import of any product into Nicaragua. For processed foods, importers must request the import permit from MINSA and from IPSA for agricultural products. IPSA or MINSA will review the application to ensure the product is eligible to enter the Nicaraguan market and that it complies with all of the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements established by Nicaragua. 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. All other certificates, including the certificate of origin, phytosanitary certificate, sanitary certificate, commercial invoice, etc., don't have an expiration date.

### **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 and description of the merchandise, origin and date of the certificate. The Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Protection and Health (IPSA) requests certificates of origin issued by chambers of commerce. In addition, the importer must present the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (DR-CAFTA) certificate of origin to Customs authorities to benefit from free trade preferences, if applicable.

### **Phytosanitary Certificate:**

A Phytosanitary certificate is used to attest that consignments meet phytosanitary import requirements and is undertaken by a National Plant Protection Organization (NPPO). A phytosanitary certificate for export or re-export can be issued only by a public officer who is technically qualified and duly authorized by an NPPO. In the United States, the USDA/ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Protection and Quarantine maintains the export program for the U.S. exports and foreign-origin agricultural commodities.

### **Sanitary Certificate:**

IPSA requires sanitary or health certificates for animals and animal sub-products. USDA/APHIS is the head of veterinary services, which would provide these certificates. Please refer to APHIS' import and [export matrix](#) for a list of plant or animal export protocols already negotiated between USDA and the Ministry of Agriculture (MAGFOR).

### **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 true value of goods when assessing customs duties. Governments that use the commercial invoice to control imports will often specify its form, content, and number of copies, language to be used, and other characteristics.

**Certificate of Free Sale:**

The certificate of free sale, which states 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, is requested by MINSA for product registration. U.S. Exporters request certificates of free sale from U.S. chambers of commerce, State governments and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The following link is a list of contact points :

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/certificate-free-sale-point-contact-list> 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. Attachment of FDA’s new certificates are included at the end of this report.

**Certificate of Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis:**

IPSA requires a certificate of quantitative and qualitative analysis for agrochemicals and veterinary products. The certificate provides information about active components of the product and is issued by the manufacturer. Please refer to the FAIRS Narrative report for more information.

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

A competent government authority from the exporting country has to issue all required certificates and the products (agrochemicals, animal feeds, food products, etc.) must be first registered in Nicaragua. Please refer to the FAIRS narrative report to see registration requirements for different products.

The certificate of free sale required by MINSA for product registration must state that the product is of “free sale” in the country of origin and that the product is apt for human consumption. IPSA requires specific attestations when an animal or plant health outbreaks are developed in the exporting country. In such cases, IPSA will provide importers with a detailed outline of the attestation for the export/SPS certificates.

**Section IV. Government Certificate’s 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 an SPS certificate, 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. Food samples for showcasing are allowed one entry without registration but they must be accompanied by a certificate of free sale.

SPS technical officers review the supporting documents (original import permit, original SPS certificate or certificate of origin and a copy of the commercial invoice) 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. MAGFOR 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 confiscated for destruction or re-exported, depending on its condition, as determined by government authorities.

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

Currently, there are no additional import requirements that apply or are associated with plant, animal or processed food products being certified in conformance with Nicaragua's laws.

## **Appendix I. Electronic Copy or Outline of Each Export Certificate**

1. Technical Norm 11 005-08 Import requirements for plant products and Plant- Sub-products
2. Sanitary-Phytosanitary Import Permit
3. Sanitary certificate
4. CAFTA-DR certificate of origin
5. Certificate of origin issued by a Chamber of Commerce
6. Commercial Invoice
7. Phytosanitary certificate
8. FDA Export Certificates

### **Attachments:**

[NTON 11 005-08.doc](#)

[Sanitary Phytosanitary Import Permit.pdf](#)

[Sanitary Certificate.pdf](#)

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

[Certificate of Origin issued by a Chamber of Commerce.pdf](#)

[Commercial Invoice.pdf](#)

[Phytosanitary Certificate.pdf](#)

[FDA New Certificates.pdf](#)