

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: ROK Extends Grace Period for New Pet Food Import Health Requirements

Country: Korea - Republic of

Post: Seoul

Report Category: Livestock and Products, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, MISC-Commodity

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Report Highlights:

On December 12, 2025, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) amended the Notice of Import Health Requirements for Pet Food to allow an additional two years' grace period to comply with new import health requirements (IHRs) for pet food. Under the original IHRs published January 14, 2025, pet food products that have been exported to the ROK within the last year could continue to use their existing health certificates with no facility approval until December 31, 2025. The amendment now extends this grace period until December 31, 2027. However, pet food containing ruminant ingredients should comply with the new IHRs.

Amended Notice of Import Health Requirements for Pet Food

On December 12, 2025, the Republic of Korea (ROK) Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) amended the Notice of Import Health Requirements for Pet Food to allow an additional two years' grace period to comply with new pet food import health requirements (IHRs). Under the original IHRs published January 14, 2025, pet food products exported to the ROK within the last year could continue to use their existing health certificates and a pet food manufacturing facility approval by Korea was not required until December 31, 2025. The amendment now extends this grace period until December 31, 2027.

During the grace period, pet food that can meet the certification statements on the existing health certificate can continue to be exported to Korea. Also, pet food manufacturing facilities registered in the exporting country can continue to export pet food products to Korea without a facility approval. However, this two-year grace period does not apply to pet food containing ruminant ingredients or pet food manufacturing facilities that wish to export pet food products containing ruminant ingredients.

The ROK notified the proposed amendment to the WTO on November 3, 2025, as G/SPS/N/KOR/832, with a 30-day comment period. According to MAFRA, the reason for the amendment is to ensure smooth operation of the new IHRs and allow additional time to approve manufacturing establishments, while facilitating continued trade in pet food products already present in the Korean market.

The ROK confirmed through the WTO comment process that new facility registrations are permitted during the transitional period and urged interested exporters to complete their manufacturing facility registration within the grace period to ensure stable trade. During that time, exports based on existing quarantine certificates are allowed in accordance with Article 4 of the Addendum to the Import Health Requirements, provided that the facility is registered with the exporting country's government.

Under the new IHRs, pet food manufacturing facilities must undergo inspection by the exporting country's government to assure compliance with Korea's requirements. The competent authority of the exporting country will work with the Korean government veterinary quarantine authority to notify inspection results and obtain approval of pet food manufacturing facilities through on-site inspections or other methods. For the United States, the competent authority is the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Korea's competent authority is the Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency (APQA) of MAFRA.

An unofficial English translation of the notice provided by MAFRA is attached to this report. For more information on the original IHR publication, please refer to FAS Seoul's report on [Korea's New Import Health Requirements for Pet Food](#).

Support for U.S. Exporters

Pet food without ruminant ingredients: Both products already in the market and new-to-market products, or those that have not been imported into Korea, are required to have a health certificate that meets the certification statements on the existing health certificate.

Pet food containing ruminant ingredients: To export such products to Korea, a new health certificate that complies with the new IHRs is required. The United States has been working with Korea to agree on the new health certificate. Updates on the development of the new health certificate will be provided in GAIN.

Interested companies may begin the process to have their products and facilities registered by contacting the USDA Korea offices at AgSeoul@usda.gov.

Attachments:

[Import Health Requirements for Pet Food revised 251212 \(English translation\).pdf](#)