

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Philippine Department of Agriculture Implements New Rules and Regulations Governing the Importation of Various Agricultural Products

Country: Philippines

Post: Manila

Report Category: FAIRS Subject Report, Trade Policy Monitoring, WTO Notifications

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Report Highlights:

On November 14, 2025, Philippine Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. signed Department Circular No. 14, establishing the new rules and regulations for the importation of all agricultural products regulated by the Philippine Department of Agriculture. These products include plants and plant products, live animals, meat products, seafood, feed and feed ingredients, fertilizers, and pesticides. The updated guidelines introduce stricter measures regarding the suspension of import clearances and detention of shipments, which may disrupt agricultural trade. The signing of Department Circular No. 14 followed the Philippines' notification to the World Trade Organization (WTO) on October 13, 2025 and preceded the December 12, 2025 deadline for WTO member comments.

Background

Signed on November 14, 2025, [Department Circular No. 14](#) (DC 14) sets the new rules and regulations governing the importation of agricultural products under the jurisdiction of the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA), including plants and plant products, live animals, meat products, seafood, feed and feed ingredients, fertilizers, and pesticides. DC 14 introduces stricter measures, including expanded grounds for suspending sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSIC). Some of these grounds are not directly related to sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) risks and could impose undue restrictions on agricultural trade, including legitimate commercial shipments.

The Circular notes that recent legislative developments such as the enactment of Customs Modernization and Tariff Act of 2016 or Republic Act (RA) No. 10863, prompted amendments to existing importation regulatory regime. Prior to DC 14, the Philippine DA implemented Administrative Circular No. 6 of 2022 (AC 6), which outlined the rules and regulations for the importation of agricultural products.

The signing of DC 14 occurred before the deadline for WTO member countries to submit comments, which was set for December 12, 2025. The Philippines notified the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee of the proposed importation rules on October 13, 2025 and provided a 60-day period for comments (see [G/SPS/N/PHL/533](#)). The published version of DC 14 contains the same substantive provisions as the notified document.

Documentary Requirements to Apply for SPSIC

DC 14 continues to require licensed or registered importers to obtain an SPSIC prior to importation. The list of documentary requirements under Section 10 of DC 14 is largely unchanged from those in AC 6:

- a. Notarized Application Form to Import;
- b. Pro-forma invoice from the Supplier;
- c. Non-Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) Certification or GMO Transformation Event Certification from the supplier/responsible officer/accredited laboratories at the country of origin/importer, when applicable;
- d. License to Operate/Certificate of Product Registration/License to Import;
- e. Location from Port of Entry to Final Destination/DA Registered Storage Facilities – Name and Address (Final Destination indicated in the Inward Foreign Manifest must be the same as the Final Destination reflected in the Electronic Request for Inspection upon arrival of the imported goods);
- f. Research Proposal/Material Transfer Agreement/Trial Protocol, if the product to be imported shall be used for research and laboratory testing purposes;
- g. Other commodity-specific requirements, such as but not limited to, Import Commodity Clearances, including clearances from other concerned agencies; and
- h. Other documents may be deemed necessary by the concerned DA Border Agency. The DA's Border Agencies are the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Applications for SPSIC and submission of supporting documents must be filed electronically through the DA Trade System, also known as InterCommerce. Detailed procedures are provided in Section 11 of DC 14. Separate documentary requirements and procedures apply to importers of fertilizers and pesticides, as outlined in Sections 20 to 22 of DC 14.

“Must Ship Out By” Date and Validity of SPSIC

DC 14 maintains the “Must Ship Out By” dates previously established under AC 6, with the addition of a new item for seeds used as planting materials (**Table 1**). The “Must Ship Out By” date is reckoned from the date of SPSIC issuance and serves as the validity period of the SPSIC, unless revoked earlier for valid reasons.

Table 1. “Must Ship Out By” Date by Product

Product/Commodity	“Must Ship Out By” Date/ Validity Period
Live, fresh, chilled fish	30 days
Frozen fish and other fish and fishery/aquatic products	45 days
Fresh and chilled fruits and vegetables	20 days
Fertilizers, pesticides, and other agricultural chemicals	60 days
Live animals	60 days
Animal products and by-products; meat and meat by-products; other products of animal origin, such as embryos and semen; eggs; unpasteurized milk, honey	90 days
Animal feeds and feed ingredients; feed additives and supplements, and other feed products; animal feed premixes and drinking water medications	60 days
Other plant products, planting materials, and plants	60 days
Seeds as planting materials	180 days
All other products not specified immediately above	60 days

Source: Section 12 of DC 14

Section 13 emphasizes that consignment be loaded at the port of embarkation in the country of origin on or before the last day of the “Must Ship Out By” date of the corresponding SPSIC. DC 14 provides due consideration to uncontrollable situations such as force majeure, congestion in ports, public rallies and demonstrations and other valid reasons. Otherwise, confiscation procedure will be implemented in accordance with existing policies and guidelines of the Philippine Bureau of Customs.

Additionally, Section 16 maintains that each SPSIC is valid for a single shipment only and is not transferable to any other person.

U.S. exporters or trade associations can contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) office in Manila (AgManila@usda.gov) should they experience issues with

the procedures or requirements impacting the entry of U.S. food and agricultural products into the Philippines.

Automatic Approval of SPSIC

Consistent with [Administrative Order No. 20 of 2024](#), DC 14 includes a provision regarding the automatic approval of SPSIC applications. Section 19 states that all SPSIC not acted upon by the concerned DA Border Agency within seven working days from receipt of application will be approved. However, applications with incomplete requirements will be rejected.

Suspension or Revocation of SPSIC

An SPSIC may be suspended or revoked at any time on the grounds listed under Section 24 of DC 14, including those not directly related to SPS risks, food safety, or protection of human, animal, and plant health or life. Compared to AC 6, the grounds for SPSIC suspension or revocation have been expanded, as follows:

- a. Providing false information/tampering/falsification/inconsistencies in the application form or in any of the accompanying documents to the application;
- b. Misdeclaration of consignment;
- c. Unutilized SPSIC within its validity period;
- d. Violation of relevant SPS and biosafety rules and regulations or any conditions imposed in the SPSIC;
- e. Refusal to allow the inspection of the consignment at the physical containment facility or intermediate destination of the product;
- f. Suspension or revocation of legal authority to commercially sell/trade/consume/distribute the product in the country of origin;
- g. Emergency cases/situations, such as outbreak of diseases/presence of pests/danger/occurrence of contamination, or other reports/cases important to public health and safety as determined by the DA Regulatory Agencies. The DA Regulatory Agencies include BAI, BFAR, BPI, Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards, Bureau of Soils and Water Management, National Dairy Authority, National Meat Inspection Service, Philippine Coconut Authority, and Sugar Regulatory Administration;
- h. New technical information becomes available to the concerned DA Regulatory Agency indicating that the product, if allowed for its intended use will result in risks to human, animal, or plant health or life and the environment;
- i. Discovery of a violation of the importer/broker/shipper by the concerned DA Border Agency;
- j. Any act or violation of existing laws, rules or regulation; and
- k. Commingling of different types of commodity (e.g., fishery products with meat), or with different tariff rates (e.g., chicken leg quarters and mechanically deboned meat) in a shipment/consignment.

The DA's identified new grounds for SPSIC revocation or suspension, such as commingling, do not appear to identify specific SPS concerns or indicate which SPS-related objectives the new grounds are designed to achieve, according to comments submitted by stakeholders. Section 1 of DC 14 further indicates commingling as a possible cause for derogatory or adverse findings. However, the absence of a

clear definition for commingling as it relates to food safety or the protection of animal, plant, or human health could cause undue restrictions and result in trade disruptions.

Authority of the Philippine DA in Emergency Situations

Section 26 of DC 14 authorizes the DA to exercise specific powers during emergency situations, as determined by competent authorities under the [Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act](#) (RA No. 12022) and [Amended Rice Tariffication Act](#) (RA No. 12078). DC 14 particularly references Section 8 and 9 of RA 12022, which address agricultural hoarding and profiteering.

During emergency situations, the DA can exercise its authority to:

- a. Suspend the issuance of the SPSIC;
- b. Cancel/revoke all relevant SPSIC issued;
- c. Suspend all relevant shipments;
- d. Confiscate all relevant shipments and dispose of the shipments; and/or
- e. Institute extra/additional measures necessary to ensure the safety of human, animal and plant life.

Other Key Provisions

DC 14 also includes provisions and procedures affecting the entry of imported agricultural products, such as review and inspection at the port of entry (Article VI), transport of consignments to authorized storage facilities (Article VII), inspection at storage facilities (Article VIII), and violations or prohibited acts that may result in seizure, recall, confiscation, or refusal of entry (Article IX). Actions on non-compliant shipments are addressed in Article X.

Effectivity of DC 14

According to Section 86, DC 14 took effect 15 days after completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation and its filing with the National Administrative Register of the University of the Philippines Law Center. DC 14 was published in a newspaper, particularly [Manila Standard](#) on December 29, 2025.

U.S. exporters or trade associations can contact FAS Manila (AgManila@usda.gov) with questions on DC 14 implementation.

Attachments:

[Philippine DA's Department Circular No. 14 of 2025.pdf](#)