

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Israel

**Post:** Tel Aviv

### Tel Aviv Tid Bits

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

The following developments in Israel's Agriculture and Food Sectors are summarized in this report:

- Israel to update Its Animal Welfare Law
- Improvement in Chemical Residues in Animal Products for 2014
- Ministry of Agriculture's Annual Survey on Organic Products not too Enlightening

**Israel to update Its Animal Welfare Law:** The Ministry of Agriculture is promoting a series of amendments to the Animal Welfare Law, all related to the manner in which the law is implemented and enforced. The amendments would impose on animal owners, or those holding animals in their possession, the duty to prevent the abuse of the animals, to provide them with the sustenance they require, and to maintain their health. The owner has the obligation to provide the animals in their possession with proper medical treatment and to attend to all of their needs. The violation of this provision will be deemed a criminal offense if any suffering is caused to the animals. With the approval of the bill, those found to have actively abused animals or whose negligence resulted in abuse taking place will be subject to prosecution. In addition, the amendment of the law will allow the imposition of criminal liability on a corporation holding or responsible for an animal in case said provision is violated. Post estimates the new amendments will come into effect in the first half of 2016.

**Improvement in Chemical Residues in Animal Products for 2014** - A 2014 survey, revealed an improvement in excessive residue amounts detected in chicken and turkey meat, as well as in beef and fish. In addition, the excessive residue amounts detected in eggs and in cow milk have improved. However, an increase in excessive residue amounts was detected in pork and small ruminant meat when compared with last year's results. The Veterinary Services at the Ministry of Agriculture regularly supervises the existence of chemical residues in animal products by conducting a daily national sample survey each year. The survey tests for the existence of residues of veterinary medications, pesticides and environmental pollutants in animal products. The goal of the survey is to ensure that the food sold to the public in Israel does not contain forbidden substances, and/or amounts of allowed substances that may have a deleterious effect on Israeli consumers. The survey also detects trends of improper or illegal use of medications or pesticides collect data used for risk assessment, and to warn against excessive residue levels, thus allowing corrective actions to be taken. The survey is conducted annually since 1991, and its execution is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health.

**Ministry of Agriculture's Annual Survey on Organic Products not too Enlightening-** The production of fresh and processed organic plant products is regulated by the Israeli Ministry of Agriculture (MOA). Consumers interested in purchasing organic products must ensure that a unified label for organic products from the MOA is affixed to the products, as it certifies that the product meets Israeli organic standards. To avoid fraudulent claims, the Ministry of Agriculture conducts an annual survey to ensure the reliability of the branded products for consumption. The products inspected include fresh and processed products such as fruit, vegetables, breads, breakfast cereals, and powdered drinks. In 2014, the survey saw an increase in the number of forbidden substance or excessive residues in organic products. According to the survey, 8.8 percent of the samples did not meet the criteria for organic as these exceeded the amount allowed for residues or exhibited residues of forbidden substances. The findings are a significant increase from 2013, when only 3.8 percent of the products did not meet the criteria for organic. The MOA did not specify if any measures would be taken to reverse this trend. It is worthy to point out that the number of certified organic operations increased from 593 in 2013 to 642 in 2014, an increase of eight percent. The largest increase was recorded among organic product importers, 24 importers in 2013 compared to 38 in 2014. The import business continues to grow due to Israel's mass affluent consumer base that perceives organic products as a healthier alternative.