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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Food Safety  
and Inspection  
Service

FSIS-30

# Importing Meat S and Poultry

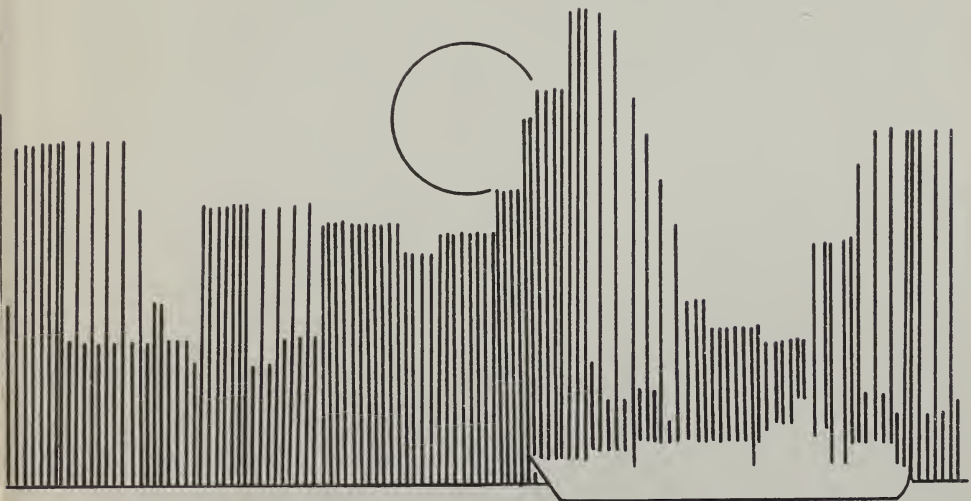
## A Guide for Importers and Brokers

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# **Importing Meat and Poultry**

## **A Guide for Importers and Brokers**

Federal law prohibits the importation of meat and poultry products for distribution in commerce as human food if the products are adulterated or mislabeled and if they do not meet all inspection standards applied to domestic products. Imported products may also be subject to restrictions because of livestock and poultry diseases in their countries of origin. This brochure provides information about requirements that must be met before imported meat or poultry products may enter U.S. commerce.

### **FSIS and FDA Responsibilities**

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for ensuring that domestic and imported meat and poultry products distributed in U.S. commerce as human food are wholesome, unadulterated, and properly marked, labeled, and packaged. This authority is based on the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act.

FSIS responsibility includes meat and meat products from cattle, sheep, swine, goats, and horses, mules, and other equines. FSIS is also responsible for poultry and poultry products from chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and guineas. This responsibility includes processed meat products containing more than 3 percent raw meat and poultry products containing 2 percent or more cooked poultry meat.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for inspecting all other food products, both imported and domestic. FDA responsibility includes products with amounts of raw red meat or cooked poultry too small to be under FSIS jurisdiction. FDA jurisdiction also includes the inspection of fish and fish products as well as food products derived from species such as deer, rabbits, buffalo, pheasants, and other wild game.

For further information about importing these items, contact a local FDA office. FDA offices are located in major U.S. cities and are listed in telephone directories under "United States Government." The headquarters office is the Import Operations Unit, FDA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857; telephone (301) 443-6553.

## **Country Eligibility and Plant Certification**

To enforce the requirements relating to imported meat and poultry products, FSIS reviews the inspection programs of foreign countries. In addition, it reinspects imported meat and poultry products at U.S. ports of entry to ensure that they have been produced under controls at least equal to those of USDA.

Imported meat and poultry products offered for entry into U.S. commerce must come only from countries that FSIS has found to be eligible to export to the United States. The products must also come from plants in eligible countries that have been certified by foreign inspection officials as meeting all USDA requirements. See appendixes A and B for a list of eligible countries. For further information, contact the Foreign Programs Division, FSIS, USDA, Room 4346 South Building, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 447-7610.

Shipments of meat and poultry products presented to FSIS for port-of-entry inspection must also meet the requirements of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the U.S. Customs Service.

## **APHIS Requirements**

APHIS administers laws designed to prevent the introduction of animal and plant diseases into the United States. APHIS regulations contain specific processing procedures that are required before meat or poultry products may be imported from countries with certain diseases. For example, APHIS regulations prohibit the importation of fresh, chilled, and frozen meat from countries infected with foot-and-mouth disease. On the other hand, meat products that have been commercially heat processed in a manner approved by APHIS may be imported from the same countries because the heat destroys the disease-causing virus. APHIS regulations also stipulate the way in which fresh, chilled, or frozen products must be transported in order to be permitted entry.

APHIS requires that foreign inspection officials of certain countries certify compliance with its import restrictions. Importers of meat or poultry products must give a copy of the foreign inspection certificate to an APHIS representative, who determines whether any disease restrictions apply.

Appendixes A and B identify countries subject to APHIS restrictions. APHIS quarantine inspection offices at ports of entry can provide specific information about restrictions. The offices are listed in local telephone directories under



“United States Government, Agriculture Department.” The headquarters office is the Import-Export Animals and Products Staff, Veterinary Services, APHIS, USDA, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782; telephone (301) 436-8499.

## **U.S. Customs Requirements**

Importers of any merchandise into the United States must file a Customs entry form with the appropriate District Director of Customs within five working days after a shipment arrives at a U.S. port of entry. The form used for meat and poultry products presented to FSIS for inspection is called a consumption-entry form.

Customs also requires a bond that usually covers the value of the shipment plus applicable duties and fees. The shipment remains under bond, subject to recall by Customs, until FSIS notifies Customs about the results of port-of-entry inspection. Customs releases the bond after all Federal requirements have been met. If any APHIS, Customs, or FSIS requirement is not met, the importer may be forced to forfeit the bond.

For more information about Customs requirements, contact a Customs district office. Customs offices are located in major U.S. cities and are listed in telephone directories under “United States Government, Treasury Department.” The headquarters office is the Commissioner of Customs, U.S. Customs Service, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20229.

## **Who Is Allowed To Import Meat and Poultry Products**

Anyone may import meat or poultry products into the United States; no USDA license is required. However, persons who act as agents for importers are called custom brokers and must be licensed by the U.S. Customs Service.

A traveler returning to the United States may bring in 50 pounds or less of meat or poultry products without FSIS inspection, provided the products are for his or her personal consumption, meet APHIS requirements, and are part of the traveler’s baggage. No special documentation is required, but the items must be declared to Customs.

Shipments from uncertified plants intended for marketing analyses or other experimental purposes to the United States must be authorized by APHIS and

FSIS in advance. To obtain this authorization, contact APHIS' Import-Export Animals and Products Staff and the FSIS Foreign Programs Division.

## **FSIS Requirements**

Once APHIS and Customs requirements have been met, a shipment of meat or poultry products is transferred for inspection to an FSIS import inspection establishment, an FSIS-approved warehouse, or other approved location. To facilitate the scheduling of inspection, importers are requested to submit the documents listed below in advance.

**Required documents.** The following two documents must be submitted to FSIS before inspection:

- A foreign meat or poultry inspection certificate, completed by inspection officials of the country of origin.
- An Import Inspection Application and Report, FSIS Form MP 410, completed in part by importers or their agents.

**Obtaining label approval.** Importers must obtain advance FSIS approval of the labels of immediate containers of meat and poultry products from FSIS' Standards and Labeling Division (SLD) in Washington DC. Examples of labels requiring SLD approval are those on printed wrappers, bags, and artificial casings. Approval should be obtained before products are prepared for export to the United States. SLD sends copies of approved labels to FSIS offices at the ports listed by importers as possible ports of entry so that inspectors can check to see that actual product labels conform to those approved.

Shipping container labels do not require prior approval by SLD but are approved by import inspectors. It is recommended that importers ask the import inspection office at the port of entry to review shipping containers before their use. If they do not meet U.S. requirements, the containers may have to be relabeled before they are released into commerce.

For additional information about approval of immediate container labels, contact the Standards and Labeling Division, Meat and Poultry Technical Services, FSIS, USDA, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 447-6042.

**THE AIIS.** Information from Form MP 410—such as the type of product (product code) and the plant and country of origin—is entered into an FSIS centralized computer system called the Automated Import Information System (AIIS). The

AIIS scans its memory bank to determine if the plant is certified to the United States and if the products being shipped are permitted entry.

The AIIS also prints out a list of examinations and tests to be performed on each shipment. These inspection assignments are based on each plant's record of compliance with USDA requirements. Products from plants with no compliance history or with poor compliance histories are inspected more intensively than those from plants with good compliance records.

**The inspection process.** When a shipment arrives at an FSIS inspection site, inspectors first check for proper certification by foreign inspection officials. Importers are responsible for seeing that the products they want to import are eligible for entry into the United States and have been properly certified. Inspection may be refused if irregularities are found. Certificates containing errors in the description of the kind of products in a shipment, the species of livestock, and the identification marks on the products or on containers are unacceptable.

After checking for proper certification, inspectors examine each lot for general condition and approved labeling. Next, they follow the AIIS inspection assignments.

There are many types of inspection that may be assigned. Basic categories are net weight and condition-of-container inspection, product examination, incubation of canned goods, label examination, and laboratory analysis for additives, product composition, and residues. A certain number of cans or boxes are randomly selected, opened, and examined by FSIS inspectors.

Import inspection may also involve sending product samples to FSIS laboratories for analysis. Shipments are generally released before test results are received, except when a plant has had previous violations or when a problem is suspected. Shipments are also held when incubation testing is required.

**Inspected and passed products.** After inspection, FSIS informs Customs, the importer, and other interested parties whether the shipment passed inspection or was refused entry. If passed, each container is stamped "U. S. Insp. & Passed," and the shipment is released for distribution in commerce. At that point, imported products are treated as domestic products.

**Refused-entry products.** Only about one-half of 1 percent of meat and poultry products presented for inspection are refused entry. The most common reasons for refusing entry are off-condition odor, feel, or appearance; violation of USDA standards of composition; and contamination by dirt or other matter.

Shipments that are refused entry must be either removed from the United States, destroyed for human food, or, with FSIS and FDA approval, converted to animal food. FSIS maintains security over refused-entry shipments to ensure their proper disposition.

If a shipment is refused entry at an inland inspection location and is to be exported, it must be transported to an approved port under USDA seal. Products refused entry at a port must be exported from the same port, unless special permission is obtained from FSIS for movement to other ports. In these cases, shipments must also be transported under USDA seals. Ownership may not be changed, except when title is transferred to a foreign consignee or a U.S. processor of inedible products.

FSIS inspectors must witness the disposition of refused-entry shipments, including their loading on vessels for exportation. All associated charges are reimbursable by the importer.

Each refused-entry shipment must be disposed of within 45 days after FSIS notifies the importer of the refusal. The Administrator of FSIS may grant an extension under extreme circumstances, such as dockworkers' strikes or vessel delays. If a shipment is not properly disposed of within 45 days, FSIS takes action to see that it is.

**Preventing delays.** Importers can prevent most delays in the importation process if they follow required procedures and if their foreign suppliers have good compliance histories. The following are the most common causes of delays:

- Labels have not been approved by FSIS.
- Approved labels are not on file at the port of entry.
- Product labels do not conform to approved labels. For example, labels are not printed in English, or net weights are not given in pounds and ounces.
- The correct product code is not entered on the Import Inspection Application and Report, Form MP 410. Product codes are given in *Product Codes Used in the Meat and Poultry Inspection Import Information System*, listed in appendix C.
- Shipment is from a plant with a poor history of compliance with USDA requirements. Importers should ask suppliers about their compliance histories.
- FSIS has not been notified that a shipment is being imported for marketing analyses or other testing.

**Appendix A**  
**Eligible Foreign Countries with Certified Plants (Active)**  
**December 1984\***

**M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;**  
**R—Product import restrictions by APHIS**

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Argentina	X		X	Servicio de Inspeccion de Productos Animales Servicio Nacional de Sanidad Animal (SENASA) Secretaria de Estado de Agricultura y Ganaderia Pasco Colon 922 1305 Buenos Aires, Argentina
Australia	X			Export Inspection Service Department of Primary Industry Canberra, A. C. T. 2600, Australia
Belgium	X		X	Administration de l'Hygiene Publique Inspection d'Hygiene, de l'Hygiene Alimentaire et de Nuisances Cit� administrative de L'Etat Quartier Vesale 1010 Bruxelles, Belgium
Brazil	X		X	Divisao de Inspecao de Carnes e Derivados (DICAR/SIPA/SNAD/MA) Annexo do Edificio Ministerioda Agricultura 4-o andar-Sala 420-Ala Lesta Esplanada dos Ministerios Brasilia, Brazil
Canada	X	X		Meat Hygiene Division Food Production and Inspection Branch Agriculture Canada Halldon House, 2255 Carling Avenue Ottawa, Ontario KIA 0Y9, Canada
Costa Rica	X		X	Depto. de Inspeccion de Carne Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganaderia San Jose, Costa Rica
Czechoslovakia	X		X	State Veterinary Administration Ministry of Agriculture and Food Tesnov 17 110 01 Praha 1, Czechoslovakia

\* Country eligibility, import restrictions, and the addresses of foreign inspection officials may change periodically. To obtain up-to-date information, contact the Foreign Programs Division, FSIS.



M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;  
R—Product import restrictions by APHIS

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Denmark				Meat Inspection Division Veterinary Directorate Frederiksgade 21 DK-1265 Copenhagen K., Denmark
El Salvador	X		X	Inspeccion de Productos de Origen Animal (IPOA) Centro de Desarrollo Ganadero Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganaderia Soyapango, El Salvador
England-Wales	X		X	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Tolworth Tower, Surbiton Surrey KT6 7DX, England
Finland	X			Division of Food Hygiene Ministry of Agriculture & Forestry Vuorikatu 16 00100 Helsinki 10, Finland
France	X	X	X	Service Veterinaire d'Hygiene Alimentaire Direction de la Qualite Ministere de l'Agriculture 175 Rue du Chevaleret 75646 Paris, France
Germany (Federal Republic of)	X		X	Der Bundesminister fuer Jugend, Familie and Gesundheit, Postfach 20 04 90 5300 Bonn 2, Federal Republic of Germany
Guatemala	X		X	Direccion General de Servicios Pecuarios Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganaderia y Alimentacion, Av. Reforma 8-60, Zona 9 Guatemala City, Guatemala
Honduras	X		X	Servicio de Inspeccion Oficial de Carne Secretaria de Recursos Naturales Bulevar Mira Flores Tegucigalpa, D. C., Honduras

**M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;  
R—Product import restrictions by APHIS**

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Hong Kong		X	X	Urban Services Department Central Government Offices West Wing, 12th Floor 11, Ice House Street, Hong Kong
Hungary	X		X	Department of Animal Health and Food Hygiene Ministry of Agriculture and Food Budapest, Hungary
Iceland	X			Ministry of Agriculture Post Box 110 Reykjavik, Iceland
Ireland (Eire)	X			Veterinary Services Department of Agriculture Agriculture House Dublin 2, Ireland
Israel		X	X	Veterinary Services and Animal Health Ministry of Agriculture P.O.B. 12, Beit—Dagan 50200 Israel
Italy	X		X	Direzione Generale Per L'Igiene Degli Alimenti e la Nutrizione, Ministerio della Sanita Palazzo Italia Rome, Italy
Netherlands	X		X	Veterinaire Dienst Ministerie Van Landbouw en Visserij Bezuidenhoutseweg 73, Postbust 20401 2500 EK 'S-Gravenhage, The Netherlands
New Zealand	X			Meat Division Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Dalmuir House, 114 The Terrace Wellington, New Zealand
Nicaragua	X		X	Servicio Inspeccion de Carnes Ministerio de Desarrollo Agropecuario y Reforma Agraria, Gobierno de Reconstruccion Nacional Managua, Nicaragua

**M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;  
R—Product import restrictions by APHIS**

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Panama	X		X	Control de Alimentos y Vigilancia Veterinaria Ministerio de Salud Apartado Postal 2048 Panama 1, Panama
Poland	X		X	Sluzba Veterynaryjna Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Gospodarki Zywnosciowej, Wspolna 30 71 Warsaw, Poland
Romania	X		X	Veterinary & Health Directorate Food Industry and Water Bucharest, Romania
Sweden	X			Food Production Division The National Food Administration Box 622 S-751 26 Uppsala, Sweden
Switzerland	X		X	Bundesamt fuer Veterinaerwesen Schwarzenburg Strasse 161 3097 Liebefeld-Berne, Switzerland
Taiwan	X		X	Bureau of Commodity Inspection and Quarantine Ministry of Economic Affairs 5, Hsu Chow Road Taipei, Taiwan
Uruguay	X		X	Direccion General de los Servicios Veterinarios Ministerio de Agricultura y Pesca Montevideo, Uruguay
Yugoslavia	X		X	Federal Veterinary Service Federal Committee for Agriculture Novi Beograd, Yugoslavia



**Appendix B**  
**Eligible Foreign Countries with No Certified Plants (Inactive)**  
**December 1984\***

**M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;**  
**R—Product import restrictions by APHIS**

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Austria	X		X	Federal Ministry of Health and Environmental Protection, Strubenring 1 Vienna 1010, Austria
Belize	X		X	Department of Agriculture P.O. Box 181 Belize City, Belize
Bulgaria	X		X	Ministry of Agriculture Bofia Blvd., Potev No. 55 Sofia, Bulgaria
Colombia	X		X	Animal Health Service Colombian Agriculture Institute Calle 27 #8-43, Piso 8 Bogota, Colombia
Japan	X		X	Ministry of Public Health and Welfare 1, 2-Chome, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo, Japan
Luxembourg	X		X	Inspection General Veterinaire 89, Rue D'Anvers Luxembourg
Northern Ireland	X		X	Ministry of Agriculture Dundonald House Upper Newtownards Rd. Belfast 4, Northern Ireland

\* Country eligibility, import restrictions, and the addresses of foreign inspection officials may change periodically. To obtain up-to-date information, contact the Foreign Programs Division, FSIS.

**M—Meat products; P—Poultry products;  
R—Product import restrictions by APHIS**

Country	M	P	R	Chief of Meat Inspection
				Contact Point
Norway	X		X	Veterinary Services Ministry of Agriculture P.O. Box 8007 Dep. Oslo 1, Norway
Paraguay	X		X	Division de Inspeccion e Industria Animal Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganaderia Asuncion, Paraguay
Scotland	X		X	Scottish Home and Health Department York Bldg., Queen Street Edinburgh, Scotland
Spain	X		X	Direccion General de Veterinaria de Salud Public y Sanidad Ambiental, Ministerio de Sanidad y Seguridad Social Pasco del Prado 18-20 Madrid, Spain
Venezuela	X		X	Direccion General de Desarrollo Ganadero Ministerio de Agricultura y Cria Caracas, Venezuela

## Appendix C Related Publications

The Meat and Poultry Products Inspection Regulations (Parts 327 and 381, Subpart T) contain provisions relating to imported products. The regulations are issued annually in Title 9, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Parts 200 to End, and are also available on a subscription basis. Annual editions and subscriptions are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone (202) 783-3238.

Part 27 of the *Meat and Poultry Inspection Manual and Compilation of Meat and Poultry Inspection Issuances* contains further provisions relating to imported products. The publication is available on a subscription basis and is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone (202) 783-3238.

Title 9, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 94, contains information on APHIS requirements relating to imported meat and poultry products. Single, free copies are available from the Veterinary Services Staff, APHIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782; telephone (301) 436-8499.

Part 12 of the Customs Duties Regulations (Title 19, *Code of Federal Regulations*) contains provisions relating to the importation of restricted merchandise, including meat and poultry products. Parts 141 and 142 contain regulations relating to the importation of merchandise in general. The regulations are for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone, (202) 783-3238.

*Importing into the United States*, by the U.S. Treasury Department, gives general information on Customs requirements and other laws applying to imports. The booklet is also for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402; telephone (202) 783-3238.

*Exporting Meat and Poultry to the United States: A Guide to Country Eligibility* describes requirements foreign countries must meet to establish their eligibility to export meat and poultry products to the United States. Single, free copies are available from the Foreign Programs Division, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4346, South Building, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 447-7610.

*Foreign Plants Certified to Export Meat to the United States* lists plants in eligible countries that have been certified as meeting all USDA requirements. Single, free copies are available from the Printing and Distribution Office, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 0151, South Building, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 447-4661.

*Product Codes Used in the Meat and Poultry Inspection Import Information System* is used by FSIS import inspectors to identify classes of meat and poultry products offered for inspection. Single, free copies are available from the Foreign Programs Division, FSIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 4346, South Building, Washington, DC 20250; telephone (202) 447-7610.

