



NOTICE TO IMPORTERS

Food Safety
and
Inspection
Service

Telephone:
(202-720-9904)

E-Mail:
permits@fsis.
usda.gov

Fax:
(202-720-6050)

Dear Importer:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is issuing this notice to importers of food products containing a small amount of meat or poultry ingredients that can enter the United States without a veterinary permit (VS Form 16-6A) issued by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

FSIS recognizes that APHIS issues veterinary permits for many, but not all, imported food products containing a small amount of meat, poultry or processed egg product ingredients. The need for a permit is based on the contents of the food product and on the animal health restrictions, if any, APHIS places on the country from which the food product is being imported. To that end, FSIS is advising importers of food products not required to have an APHIS permit for entry into the United States that the meat, poultry, or processed egg product ingredients used in the formulation of these products must originate from an approved source in order to qualify for FSIS import eligibility.

FSIS regulates domestic and imported meat, poultry, and processed egg products under statutory authority of the Federal Meat Inspection Act (FMIA), the Poultry Products Inspection Act (PPIA), and the Egg Products Inspection Act (EPIA), respectively. Under these statutes, the meat, poultry, or processed egg products used in FSIS regulated products are required to be prepared under FSIS inspection or under a foreign inspection system determined equivalent by FSIS. Although FSIS regulations allow exemptions from FSIS inspection for certain foods containing small amounts of meat, poultry or processed egg product ingredients, these ingredients must be obtained from an approved source, i.e., prepared under FSIS inspection or in a certified establishment operating under a foreign inspection system determined equivalent by FSIS. A list of countries eligible to export meat, poultry, or egg products is published at the following FSIS website:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Countries_Products_Eligible_for_Export.pdf.

APHIS regulates imports of animal products under the statutory authority of the Animal Health Protection Act (AHPA) and issues veterinary permits for imported meat, poultry, and processed egg products, when applicable. The issuance of APHIS permits is one means by which FSIS becomes aware of the importation of food products containing a small amount of meat, poultry, and processed egg product ingredients. In that regard, FSIS and APHIS are working together to ensure that veterinary permits are issued only for food products that meet the import requirements of both USDA agencies. Further information regarding the enforcement actions taken by FSIS and APHIS can be found at the following FSIS website:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/Notice_of_Enforcement_Regarding_Imported_Food_Products.pdf

FSIS monitors imported food products at U.S. ports of entry and in-commerce to ensure that the food products contain eligible meat, poultry, and processed egg product ingredients. Accordingly, upon request by FSIS, importers will be required to provide documentary evidence to support the origin of imported food products and the origin of the meat, poultry, and processed egg product ingredients used in the product formulation. If supporting documentation is insufficient for FSIS to make a determination of eligibility, the importer will need to provide additional evidence of the product / ingredient source. Imported food products without sufficient documentation will be detained by FSIS pending receipt of adequate source evidence.

Supporting documentation can take various forms, but at a minimum, FSIS will need information that (1) identifies the proportion/percentage of the meat or poultry product ingredients in the product formulation of the finished food product, (2) identifies the country of origin of these ingredients, (3) identifies the establishment (name and address and establishment number) where the ingredients were prepared, (4) provides assurance that no other meat or poultry, product ingredient is incorporated into the finished product, (5) evidences that the product labeling does not represent the finished product as a meat or poultry product, and (6) identifies the establishment (name, address and country of origin) where the finished product was prepared.

In the upcoming months, FSIS will provide additional information regarding importing food products containing a small amount of processed egg product ingredients.

For further information regarding the matter discussed in this Notice, please contact FSIS at permits@fsis.usda.gov, facsimile number 202-720-6050, or telephone number 202-720-9904.

For information regarding the issuance of APHIS permits, please contact APHIS at telephone number 301-734-3277.

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