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New Import Requirements for Processed Products - COMEX 019

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

FAIRS Subject Report

Livestock and Products

Policy and Program Announcements

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

Ecuador's Foreign Trade Committee's COMEX Resolution 019 (September 10, 2014) stipulates that processed food product imports receive prior Ministry of Agriculture authorization. Previously only Ministry of Health authorization was required. However, the Ministry of Agriculture's AGROCALDAD (Ecuador's sanitary/phyto-sanitary authority) has assured FAS Quito that this measure will not disrupt trade. With full implementation details still pending, importers of U.S. products may receive inconsistent information.

General Information:

Exports of U.S. food and agricultural products to Ecuador are confronting a number of potentially trade disruptive measures. Ecuador's Foreign Trade Committee's [COMEX Resolution 019 \(September 10, 2014\)](#) stipulates that processed food product imports require prior Ministry of Agriculture authorization starting October 9, 2014. Previously only Ministry of Health authorization had been required.

The Ministry of Agriculture's AGROCALIDAD (Ecuador's sanitary/phyto-sanitary authority) requires that even low-risk processed food product imports be accompanied by a sanitary/phyto-sanitary (SPS) health certificate. The list of affected products includes poultry, pork, and dairy products.

Government of Ecuador's Assurances

Ecuador's authorities assure FAS Quito that imports of U.S.-origin processed food products will not be impeded, delayed, or diverted by COMEX Resolution 019. In order to obtain the corresponding import permit, importers must submit manufacturing plant documentation (i.e., technical production specifications or general plant information) or what is referred to in Spanish as a "*ficha técnica*." A plant audit/certification is currently not required given that both the United States and Ecuador are in the process of negotiating a mechanism for facilitating the trade in animal products.

Complying with COMEX 019, Specific Documentation

FAS Quito understands that for the AGROCALIDAD documentary review of U.S. production plants, importers are required to submit, in addition to previously requested documentation and relevant authorizations, the following:

- (i) A summary of the industrial manufacturing process
- (ii) A letter indicating:
 - a. Listing the government agencies (Local/State/Federal) that have authorized the plant to operate
 - b. The plant's quality certifications (i.e., ISO, good manufacturing practices, and or the like)
 - c. An updated list of products that the plant processes and exports
 - d. A list of countries to which the plant exports product.

AGROCALIDAD reserves the right to conduct its documentary review within a period of five-working days. AGROCALIDAD's Animal Health Directorate is the lead agency handling COMEX 019 processed food product compliance measures. FAS Quito has been informed that all import related questions on these matters are to be directed to the Office of the Chief Veterinarian (Dr. Julio Vargas) or by email to cuarentena.pecuaria@agrocalidad.gob.ec.