

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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South Africa - Republic of

Post: Pretoria

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations: Trans-Fats

Report Categories:

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and
Standards - Narrative

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Report Highlights:

In February 2011, The Ministry of Health announced new regulations under the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics, and Disinfectants Act of 1972, which concern the presence of trans-fats in foods. The new regulation goes into effect six-months after the notification. According to regulation, a maximum trans-fat content of two grams per 100 grams, per serving, is allowed in the final product. This regulation is expected to enter into force in August, 2011. FAS/Pretoria learned that this regulation has negatively affected the sourcing of some U.S. consumer-oriented products during a recent EMP funded South African retail food sector assessment.

Executive Summary:

As part of a recent EMP project to conduct a retail food sector assessment in South Africa, FAS/Pretoria met with several food retailers, importers, and food processors. During several of these meetings, importers and food retailers complained of the difficulty in complying with a recently implemented regulation concerning trans-fats in all products destined for human consumption. One importer noted they had to discontinue carrying certain items from the U.S. as it was no longer compliant under the trans-fat regulation.

The regulation the Foodstuffs, Cosmetics, and Disinfectants Act of 1972, announced on February 17 2011 by the Ministry of Health, governs the presence of trans-fats in foods destined for human consumption and went into effect in late 2011. The regulation sets a maximum allowable level for trans-fats in foods and has reportedly affected the imports of some consumer-oriented foods and food ingredients from the United States. Additionally, the regulation requires products be tested to determine the level of trans-fats in food products.

According to regulation, a maximum trans-fat content of two grams per 100 grams, is allowed in the final product. Products containing trans-fat levels above this may not enter, or be sold in South Africa. The regulation also stipulates the requirements for labeling a product “trans-fat free”. In order to be labeled “trans-fat free,” the product must contain less than one gram of trans-fat per 100 grams. While most U.S. food manufacturers have reduced or eliminated the presence of trans-fats in their products, this regulation is more stringent than U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requirements that require manufacturers to include the level of trans-fats within the nutritional labeling.

This regulation was previously documented in FAS/Pretoria’s [FY2012 Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Reporting \(FAIRS\) Report](#).