

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA
PANAMANIAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

PRESS RELEASE

“Translation into the English language of the general Phytosanitary Requirements for the import of plant foods, fresh or chilled, for human consumption and/or transformation originating from all countries”

THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF FOOD IMPORTS REGULATIONS,
In the use of its legal powers,

WHEREAS, Decree Law 11 of February 22nd, 2006 creates the Panamanian Food Safety Authority, as the rector of the State that ensures compliance and enforcement of laws and regulations on the safety introduction of food into the national territory, strictly based on scientific and technical criteria.

WHEREAS, the Panamanian Food Safety Authority main objective is the protection of human health, animal and plant wealth of the country, through the application of sanitary and Phytosanitary measures applicable to the introduction of food into the country.

WHEREAS, Article 38, paragraph 1 of Decree Law 11 of February 22nd, 2006 states that it is the role of the National Directorate of Food Imports Regulations, to implement sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, to be met by foods for their introduction into the national territory, as well as to establish the sanitary and/or phytosanitary inspection or verification measures, for the introduction of food into the national territory.

WHEREAS, the Panamanian Food Safety Authority has considered pertinent to issue a translation into the English language of a general Phytosanitary Requirement for the import of plant foods, fresh or chilled, for human consumption and/or transformation originating from all countries.

WHEREAS, In cases of the existence of quarantine pests for the Republic of Panama, the country, place, and production site must have been recognized as a quarantine free area, by the Panamanian Food Safety Authority or otherwise it must acknowledge the statement endorsed by the National Directorate of Plant Health of the Ministry of Agricultural Development, based on Article 77 of Decree Law 11 of February 22, 2006.

WHEREAS, failure on the application of good agricultural and management practices for these foods can cause the onset or prevalence of biological contaminants, chemical or physical, affecting the health of consumers and it is the responsibility of the Panamanian Food Safety Authority to verify that these do not exceed the appropriate levels of public health protection.

After the above considerations,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Article 1: To issue a translation into the English language of a general Phytosanitary Requirement for the import of plant foods, fresh or chilled, for human consumption and/ or transformation originating from all countries.

Article 2: The importer is required to notify the Panamanian Food Safety Authority, electronically, through the Import Notification Form, with a minimum of 48 hours prior to the arrival of the product to the point of entry.

Article 3: The import of plant foods, fresh or chilled, for human consumption and/or transformation originating from all countries, should be endorsed by a phytosanitary certificate issued by the Phytosanitary Protection National Organization (PPNO) of the originating country, in which compliance of the following requirements is certified:

3. The fresh or chilled plant food, for human consumption and/or transformation originating from all countries:

3.1 Has been grown and packed at the originating country.

3.2 Comes from production areas and locations subject to inspection by the Phytosanitary Protection National Organization (PPNO) of the originating country, during the period of active growth, harvesting and packaging of food.

3.3 The official health certificate must include an additional statement, which certifies that:

3.3.1 The shipment of fresh or chilled plant foods was inspected and found quarantine pest free for the Republic of Panama.

3.3.2 In cases reporting existence of quarantine pests for the Republic of Panama, at the country of origin, the Phytosanitary Certificate from the Phytosanitary Protection National Organization (PPNO) must state that the foods come from areas, places or production sites, recognized and approved by the Panamanian Food Safety Authority as free from the quarantine pests in question.

Article 4: The shipment should come free of live insects of any kind, as well as free of other biological contaminants, chemical and physical, including soils (ground).

Article 5: The production, harvesting and packaging of these foods, intended for human consumption, was conducted within the framework of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).

Article 6: The packaging used must be tampering resistant and identified with the code of the country of origin, packing plant number and batch code.

Article 7: The materials used for packaging and/or buffering should not contain vegetable fibers or other pest host material.

Article 8: Prior to shipment, the containers must be inspected and disinfected internally.

Article 9: The containers must be pre-sealed (strapped) and sealed, so that these seals can only be removed by the Panamanian Food Safety Authority, upon arrival to the country.

Article 10: Upon arrival of the shipment to the point of entry into the country, departure should be supported with the following documentation:

- a) Import notification form.
- b) Phytosanitary Certificate issued by the originating country of the product.
- c) Copy of the product's commercial invoice
- e) Pre-customs or customs declaration.

Article 11: Upon entry of food into the country, according to the type of plant food, fresh or chilled, the Panamanian Food Safety Authority shall carry out sampling for analysis of entomology and nematology, and reserves the right to take further samples, at that time or at any point in the food chain, in order to perform other analysis for microbiological, mycotoxins, organoleptic, physical-chemical, and toxic waste characteristics.

Note: The cost of these tests shall be covered by the applicant.

Article 12: These phytosanitary requirements are specific for the import of fresh or chilled plant foods, for human consumption and/or processing originating from all countries; however, it is not exempt from compliance with national standards for marketing in the country.

Article 13: The present resolution shall take effect upon its signature and should be published immediately in the Official Gazette.

LEGAL BASIS: Decree Law 11 of February 22, 2006
Law 23 of July 15, 1997
Law No. 47 of from July 9, 1996

BE IT HEREBY COMMUNICATED, AND EXECUTED.

HUMBERTO A. BERMÚDEZ R.
National Director of Food Import Regulations

EMILIO CASTILLO VÁSQUEZ
Secretary General

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