

2016

IMPORT/EXPORT GUIDELINES OF FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY AUTHORITY OF THE GAMBIA

FSQA/GL 1 (2016)

In accordance to the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2011, the FSQA has requirements as to the importation, exportation of products released in markets of The Gambia. All importers and exporters of food or feed should therefore observe these requirements.

IMPORT GUIDELINES

PREREQUISITE FOR IMPORTATION

- As in *Part IX Section 32 of the Food Safety and Quality Act*, all food business operator including importers must register with the Food Safety and Quality Authority.
- Prior to the importation of the intended product, the importer or distributor must have the appropriate storage facility to hold the product. In cases where the intended product needs constant supply of electricity (perishable products like meat, chicken, offal, eggs, dairy products etc.), the import or distributor must have alternate source of power supply other than NAWEC to maintain product integrity, safety and quality.
- Importers of food or feed will arrange for an inspection of the premises and facilities by FSQA. Based on the result of the inspection, FSQA will approve the issuance of a license / permit to operate a food or feed business under specified conditions.
- Prior to importing any food or feed product into The Gambia the importer should enquire to FSQA existing legislation, regulation, laws of the particular food or feed been intended to import.

NOTIFICATION PRIOR TO IMPORTATION OF CONSIGNMENT

- For each consignment, licensed/registered importers must submit to FSQA an Import Declaration form at least 21 days before arrival of foods or feed.
- The importer must declare the following information about the food or feed to be imported:
 - ❖ Date and point of entry
 - ❖ Mode of transport
 - ❖ Comprehensive description of the commodity (product description, amount, means of preservation, country of origin and/or dispatch, identifying marks such as lot identifier or seal identification etc.)
 - ❖ Manufacturer and/or producer including establishment registration number
 - ❖ Destination and
 - ❖ Other information deem relevant

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

On arrival of the consignment, the following document must be presented

- If product of animal origin: veterinary certificates from Competent Authority of exporting country and laboratory analysis.
- If product of plant origin: Certificate of origin- Certificate issued from Competent Authority of the exporting country, phytosanitary Certificate, fumigation certificate and laboratory analysis.

LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

Pre-packaged foods should be labelled with clear instruction and the writing must be legible to enable the next person in the food chain to read, handle, display, store, and use the product safely. There are useful guides applicable in this respect, for example the codex general standard for labelling of pre-packaged foods (GAMS CODEX STAN 1-1985. Thus, Part X section 42 (1) of the Food Safety and Quality Act states:

- 1) “A food business operator shall not use labels and methods for labelling food that:
 - a) Has a tendency to mislead the purchaser to a material degree...”
- 2) “The labels shall be in English language although additional labels in any other language may be used”

RECOGNISED POINTS OF ENTRY

Consignments to be imported into The Gambia must enter through one of the following points/border post:

- Seaport
- Airport and
- Land borders/posts (Tanjai, Amdalai, Farafenni, Soma, Bansang, Basse, and Jebero)

FITNESS OF A CONSIGNMENT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

- Food or feed imported must not pose risk to human and animal health.
- Food or feed imported into the country should be free from microbiological, chemical and physical hazards. In instances where limits are established for additives, they must conform to international set limits and standards.

STORAGE OF CONSIGNMENT

- The importer must have designated storage spaces for consignment and must support the storage condition of the product.
- Must comply with FSQA guideline for stores and warehouses.

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION AND TESTING OF IMPORTED FOOD OR FEED

The nature and frequency of inspection, sampling and testing of imported foods and feed will be based on the risk to human and safety presented by the product, its origin and history of conformance to requirements and other relevant information. Controls are design to account for factors such as:

- the risk to human health posed by the product or its packaging;
- the likelihood of non-compliance with requirements;
- the target consumer group;
- the extent and nature of any further processing of the product;
- the food or feed inspection and certification system in the exporting country and existence of any equivalence, mutual recognition agreements or other trade agreements; and,
- The history of conformity of producer, process, manufacturer, exporter, importer and distributors.

CHARGE FEES FOR INSPECTION OF CONSIGNMENT

- Charges for inspection of consignments is 30 GMD per metric ton (D30/mt)

ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION OF A CONSIGNMENT

- If a consignment meets all the above mention it will allowed into the country but subjected to a recall if found to pose a risk to human and animals health.
- If it fails to comply with this guideline the consignment will be rejected unless it can be proven otherwise.

CLEARANCE FOR RELEASE OF CONSIGNMENT

- If and when a consignment is accepted it will be issued a clearance note to enter the country by FSQA

ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRACEABILITY PLAN FOR RECALL OF IMPORTED GOODS IF/WHEN THE NEED ARISE

A traceability Program must be established to correlate each of the imported products with its producers, as well as a link between distributors and the final destination of the products. This is to facilitate the search and posterior recall in the event of a no conformity. In the planning and

developing a traceability program, importers are advised to refer to the traceability guideline developed by the Authority. You can download the guideline online at www.fsqa.gm.

RECALL CONSIGNMENTS FOLLOWING IMPORTATION IF/WHEN THE NEED ARISE

Food or feed business operators should ensure effective procedures are in place to deal with any food safety hazard and to enable the complete and rapid recall of any implicated lot of food or feed from the market. Where a product has been withdrawn because of an immediate health hazard, other products which are produced under similar conditions, and which may present a similar hazard to public health, should be evaluated for safety and may need to be withdrawn.

A food or feed business operator shall establish the traceability of food, feed, food producing animals and any other substance intended to be incorporated into a food or feed at all stages of production, processing and distribution.

PART X SECTION 38 (4)

“Where a food or feed business operator considers or has reason to believe that a food or feed which he or she has placed on the market may be injurious to human health, he or she shall –

- a) Immediately inform the Authority
- b) Inform the Authority on the steps taken to prevent any risk to the final consumer”
- c) Not prevent or discourage any person from cooperating with the Authority, where this may prevent, reduce or eliminate a risk from the food or feed.

Recalled products should be held under supervision until they are destroyed, used for purposes other than human consumption, determined to be safe for human consumption, or reprocessed in a manner to ensure their safety. For more information on a recall plan, refer to the FSQA guideline on recall and can be downloaded online at www.fsqa.gm.

EXPORT GUIDELINES

PREREQUISITE FOR EXPORT

- As in *Part IX Section 32 of the Food Safety and Quality Act*, all food business operators including exporters must register with the Food Safety and Quality Authority.
- Exporters will contact the Food Safety and Quality Authority to arrange for inspection of premises and production facilities.

- Exporters are required to submit detail plans of the layout of their premises/establishment including a full HACCP plan with all the necessary pre-requisites [where deemed necessary].
- FSQA shall undertake an inspection, and recommendations will be given to the exporter where necessary. If everything is in order, the **establishment** will be approved for export.

NOTIFICATION PRIOR TO EXPORTATION OF CONSIGNMENT

- Once ready to export, Exporters must pick **Export Inspection Request Form** at the FSQA Head Office at Kou East or download online at www.fsqa.gm
- The Completed Registration Form shall be returned to the Director of Food Control at FSQA in a minimum period of 24 hours before date of export.

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS TO PROVIDE PRIOR TO MAKING INSPECTION REQUESTS

FOOD OF PLANT ORIGIN

- If it's a food of plant origin a certificate of origin should be provided from Gambia Chamber of Commerce Trade and Industry (GCCCI)
- Phytosanitary certificate from Plant Protection Services (PPS)

FOOD OF ANIMAL ORIGIN

- A catch certificate from the Department of Fisheries

CHARGE FEES FOR INSPECTION OF CONSIGNMENT

- Charges for inspection of consignments is 1000 GMD for 20 ft. container, 1500 GMD for 40 ft. container and 750 GMD for < 20 ft. container.

INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION

- The FSQA shall arrange for Inspection, Sampling and Testing in collaboration with the Exporter as deemed necessary for the consignment.
- If a consignment is found satisfactory upon inspection and the tests results, the Authority shall issue an Export Consignment Certificates (Export Certificate and Export Permit) to the exporter, without which the product will not be allowed leave the country.

ON POINT OF EXIT

- Consignments to be exported must leave The Gambia through one of the following points/border post:
 - ❖ Seaport
 - ❖ Airport and
 - ❖ Land borders/posts (Tanjai, Amdalai, Farafenni, Soma, Bansang, Basse, and Jebero)
- Exporter should present all relevant documents; Export Consignment Certificates and Test Report (not mandatory) to the Customs Division of the GRA at the point of exit

The food safety and quality authority aims at protecting consumers adequately from illness or injury caused by food or feed and provide assurance that food or feed is suitable for human consumption. Therefore, importers, exporters, industries, and manufacturers should ensure that they provide food or feed which is safe and suitable for consumption; ensure that consumers have clear and easily-understood information by way of proper labelling and other appropriate means; and maintain confidence in internationally traded food or feed.

Recommended international standards are available and The Gambia Standards Bureau has developed standards in foods that are considered to be of high priority in The Gambia. All food business operators are advised to get these standards and put them into good use.

