Background and FAQs on Product Registration Requirements for Costa Rica

Background and General Information on Registration Requirements

This document provides links to key export information, as well as questions and answers on the registration requirements necessary to ship processed and retail-ready red meat products to Costa Rica. For more details and the contact information for the Embassy in San Jose, please review the following USDA Foreign Agricultural Services (FAS) reports:

FAS FAIRS Export Certificate Report (12/14/15)

- ✓ **Page 3: Export Certificate Matrix**
- ✓ **Page 4: Certificate of Free Sale (COFS) information**

FAS Costa Rica Exporter Guide (12/3/15)

- ✓ **Page 8 – 12: Product registration details**
- ✓ **Page 9: COFS details**

- All products (including non-processed meat) imported for retail sale must be registered with the Ministry of Health prior to importation. The registration is valid for five years. Bulk products for further processing or products imported in bulk that will undergo re-packaging before retail sale only require the sanitary export certificate (e.g. 9060-5).

- Please see the linked Exporter Guide above for details on product registration. The Ministry of Health accepts the FSIS Export Certificate (FSIS Form 9060-5) as equivalent to the COFS. Unfortunately, this process is not well known either by exporters or importers, or even by some officials at the Ministry of Health. We recommend working closely with your importer to verify that your registration paperwork is correct to minimize delays in the process. If a 9060-5 is not used, a COFS administered by a state authority can be used.

FAQs

Q: Do case ready, non-processed (fresh meat products w/ no added ingredients) that are exported in case ready packaging require registration?

A: In general, only products that are packaged and destined for direct sale to the consumer have to be registered; products that will be sold through hotels, restaurant and institutional markets, do not have to be registered. So even if no ingredients are added, any retail-ready products imported into Costa Rica must be registered prior to importation.

Q: Can the COFS be issued by a non-government agency? Some countries do not allow COFS administered by Chambers of Commerce; some do.

A: Costa Rica accepts COFS from institutions such as Chambers of Commerce and State Departments of Agriculture. However, it is best to communicate with the importer to make sure that a non-government agency document will be accepted before submitting it to the Ministry of Health.

Q: If a 9060-5 is used as the "COFS," does it still have to be apostilled?

A: Yes, the document has to be apostilled.

Q: What makes the translated documents "official"? Do they need an apostille as well?

A: The "official" character is given by the translation of the documents by an official translator approved by the Costa Rican Ministry of Foreign Relations. This part of the process is normally done by the importer in Costa Rica once all the required documentation is available. The Ministry of Foreign Relations has a list of all the official translators.

(2/17/16)