

GENERAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS GCC

Contents

Introduction	2
Pre-embarkation.....	3
Health certificate	3
Specific country requirements:	4
KSA.....	4
OMAN.....	4
QATAR.....	5
KUWAIT	5
UAE.....	6
BAHREIN	6
Post -embarkation	7
UAE.....	7
OMAN.....	7
BAHREIN	8
KSA.....	9
KUWAIT	10
QATAR.....	11
GCC Labeling Requirements:	11
Shelf life	13
Packaging and Container Regulations.....	14
Food Additives Regulations:	14
KUWAIT	16
BAHREIN	16
OMAN.....	17
UAE.....	17
QATAR.....	17
KSA.....	18
Pesticides and Other Contaminants:.....	18
KUWAIT	18
BAHREIN	18
UAE.....	18
OMAN.....	18

KSA.....	19
QATAR.....	20

Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), six countries that include the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia. The Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) in Dubai covers Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and UAE (also known as the GCC-5).

Food Import Procedures: In 2007, the GCC Food Safety Committee developed a “Guide for Food Import Procedures for the GCC Countries.” This guide was meant to unify the applied procedures for clearing food consignments, as well as to unify the required import certificates for different types of foods. The intent was to help facilitate the movement of food products within the GCC once customs unification is fully implemented. In 2008, the GCC member countries decided to postpone the application of the guide to ensure that it complies with the guidelines of international organizations such as Codex Alimentarius, World Animal Health Organization and International Plant Protection Consortium. The guide is still being reviewed by members of the GCC.

The shelf life and labeling that were updated in 2007 are being reviewed by GSO member countries. These standards earlier replaced old versions that were issued in the nineties and were disputed among GCC member countries as well as other foreign countries. The current standards bring the GCC into closer compliance with the guidelines of Codex Alimentarius and, for the most part, offer more flexible requirements for importing foods from foreign markets.

The GSO has created subcommittees to follow-up on other issues related to food.

1. Bio-technology and organic food subcommittee that is chaired and hosted by the UAE
2. Labeling subcommittee that is chaired and hosted by Oman.
3. Additives subcommittee that is chaired and hosted by Saudi Arabia

The GSO also, when the need arises, forms working groups to address specific issues. For instance, a working group has developed two Halal standards. The first standard outlines general Halal requirements while the second standard outlines requirements for approving foreign centers, certifications and Halal labeling.

Pre-embarkation

All consignments of imported food must be covered by appropriate documentation and certification. The authenticity and accuracy of official certification and certification by officially-recognized bodies will be periodically verified and audited by the countries of the GCC.

Based on the WTO notifications that have been reviewed thus far, the committee is working to harmonize existing standards with the guidelines of the Codex Alimentarius and other international food regulatory organizations. However, in some cases, differences still exist between some of the proposed new standards and existing international guidelines

All consignments must be accompanied by an original health certificate issued by the competent authority in the country of origin or an officially recognized body. The health certificate should attest to compliance with the food safety regulations and technical requirements of the GCC countries and, where relevant, animal and plant health requirements.

Documentation issued or approved by the relevant competent authority or officially recognized bodies in the country of origin must include:

- Commercial invoice
- Bill of entry or airway bill.
- Packing list
- Health certificate of the consignment issued by government or local authority of the original countries .
- Halal certificate (for meat/poultry), issued by Islamic organization recognized by the governments of the GCC.
- Certificate of origin.

Health certificate

The Health Certificate is required for all exports to the GCC of all kinds of meats, (including poultry and seafood), meat products, livestock, vegetables, fruits, and human blood, attesting to the fact that they are free from pests and/or disease. Health attestations should be declared in the relevant section of the standard forms of health certificates by the competent authority in the country of origin / country of dispatch.

يعتبر المنتج صالح للاستهلاك
الأدمي وذلك وفقاً للوائح

The product is fit for human consumption, in accordance with the hygiene requirements of the GCC.

وفقا للمتطلبات الخليجية في منشأه خاضعة للرقابة من قبل الجهة الرقابية و الجهة المخولة رسمياً، بحيث تطبق.

The product(s) was handled in accordance with the GCC requirements, at an establishment that has been subjected to inspections by the competent authority and/or officially recognized body and implements a food safety management system based on HACCP principles or an equivalent system.

Specific country requirements:

KSA

Saudi Customs accepts the original commercial invoice and country of origin certificate attested by a local chamber of commerce and industry located in a city or area where the foodstuffs are purchased and shipped. Certificates number three to five listed above must be attested by any of the Saudi missions located in the States. Certificates required:

- **Food Manufacturer's Ingredients Certificate:** This certificate should include a description of the exported food products (contents and percentage of each ingredient), chemical data, microbiological standards, storage, and life of product (date of manufacture and date of expiration). When products contain any animal fats, the certificate must confirm the kind of animal from which it is taken, or state that no pork meat or its artificial flavor nor its animal fat is being used. This certificate must be obtained from a local health department and must be signed.
- **Consumer Protection Certificate:** This certificate confirms the healthiness of the various ingredients of the exported food products to Saudi Arabia, and their safety and fitness for human consumption. The certificate must be obtained from an office of the Exporting country Department of Agriculture and must be signed.
- **Price List:** The price list should be issued by the exporter on his letterhead, and should indicate that the prices of the exported products to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the standard local market prices.

OMAN

Regulatory enforcement of food products is divided between the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the various municipalities within the Sultanate of Oman. MAF is responsible for inspection of live animals and plants, red meats, poultry meat, agricultural materials, timber, grains, fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and other unprocessed agricultural products at all points of entry into the country. The Health Quarantine Department within MOH is responsible for inspection of imported semi- and fully processed food products, including sugar. Local government or "municipalities" may post officials at ports of entry, but their role in inspection of imported foods is very

marginal. The municipalities are primarily involved in the regulation of food through the inspection of products available in local wholesale and retail markets.

QATAR

Most food products are imported via trucks from the United Arab Emirates. They enter the country at Abu Samra, which borders Saudi Arabia. Increasing quantities of products are imported through the seaport in the capital city, Doha. Small quantities of products, mainly fresh fruits and vegetables and chilled meat products, are imported via Doha International Airport. Fresh products are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival and most other food products within two to three days. Laboratory analysis, however, may delay clearance of some products for up to ten days.

The following documents are required for imported foods:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate from the country of origin
- Halal slaughter certificate (for poultry and meat products)
- Certificate of origin
- Radiation free certificate (for European products only)
- Spices must be accompanied by a certificate stating that it is free of pesticides and herbicides.

The invoice, Halal slaughter, health, and country of origin certificates must be notarized by the Qatari Embassy or consulate in the exporting country. In the absence of a Qatari diplomatic mission, any embassy or consulate of another GCC country can do the job. Rejected consignments for health/quality reasons must be returned to the country of origin or destroyed within maximum of two weeks. Rejected consignments for non-compliance may be re-exported (but not to another GCC country) or destroyed, normally within two weeks of arrival. This grace period can be extended if extenuating circumstances exist. Health certificates are required for all food products.

KUWAIT

The following documents are required for food imports:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate
- Halal slaughter certificate (for meat and meat products) /1
- Certificate of Origin

1/ Halal slaughter certificates accompanying meat and poultry shipments are required to be notarized by the Kuwaiti Embassy in the country or origin. If not available, notarization from any of GCC or other Arab countries' Embassies will suffice.

A consignment rejected because it is unfit for human consumption must be re-exported (but not to another GCC country), or destroyed by local authorities, normally within one month from arrival.

UAE

All imported food products must be accompanied by:

- An original health certificate issued by the appropriate government agency in the United States, attesting to the product's fitness for human consumption. 1\ - For meat and animal products, a Halal slaughter certificate issued by a UAE-approved U.S. Islamic Center and notarized by the UAE Embassy/Consulate. The U.A.E. requires Halal certificates for meat and animal products originating only from the United States, Brazil and China. 2\ - Commercial Invoice - Bill of Entry or Airway Bill - Packing list - Country of Origin Certificate.

The Halal certificate and the accompanying health certificate are the only documents that UAE food control authorities require to be legalized by the UAE Embassy/Consulate. Since 1998 the UAE Customs Authority has levied a commercial invoice legalization fee (equivalent to 1 percent of the consignment value) on all imported products. The fee can be paid at the UAE Embassy/Consulate in the United States or in the UAE upon arrival. Products will not be released from Customs until the fee is paid. This is separate from the 5 percent import duty and legalization for Halal and health certificates.

BAHREIN

Bahrain Embassy or one of its consulates in the United States must notarize the certificate of origin.

Another Arab embassy or consulate may be used if a Bahraini government mission is not located near the exporter. If no other Arab government mission is located near the exporter, a statement from the local American chamber of commerce will suffice. Halal slaughter certificates are also required to be notarized by the Bahraini or any other Arab Embassy/Consulate. However, officials do accept non-notarized Halal certificates if issued by well known/reputed Halal center. Health certificates are not required to be notarized. The following documents are required for food imports:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate from the country of origin
- Halal slaughter certificate (for meat, poultry and their products)
- Certified certificate of origin (see below)

Post -embarkation

In January 2003, the "GCC Unified Customs Law and Single Customs Tariff" (UCL) was released. The UCL established a unified customs tariff of five percent on nearly all processed food products. Under the UCL, live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, some seafood, grains, flour, tea, sugar, spices and seeds for planting are exempt from tariffs. It also established a single entry point policy. In other words, a product entering any GCC member market would pay the appropriate duty only at point of entry and would then be permitted duty free transit among GCC member countries. In practice, this policy is employed only with unopened containers transshipped between GCC markets. Partial shipments tend to be subject to the five percent import duty again in the country of destination. However, it is expected that all goods, even partial shipments from opened containers, will eventually receive single-entry treatment once customs procedures are fully unified within the next few years.

UAE

Food shipments are usually offloaded, inspected by health officials and cleared through customs within few hours of arrival at port. Dubai ports are the primary entry points for food products. Every food shipment is subject to visual inspection upon arrival to ensure compliance with label and shelf life regulations by health inspectors who, jointly with customs officials ensure that documents are in order. Shipments are subject to random laboratory analysis. Baby foods and edible oils are subject to 100 percent sampling. Other food products are sampled in accordance with the sampling policy manual, which sets out the frequency of sampling based on food type, brand, and country of origin. A consignment undergoing laboratory analysis is stored under a bonded warehouse selected by the importer, within the same emirate of product entry. Laboratory results are generally known within 5-10 days. New-to-market food products are subject to thorough laboratory analyses. Following the initial shipment, repeated shipments will be subject to random sampling as are other food products available in the market. A product will be rejected if found unfit for human consumption or non-compliant with labeling requirements. In either case, the product would be destroyed by the local municipality or re-exported to the country of origin within 30 days, at the importers discretion. Products not conforming to label requirements may be re-exported to a third country (non-GCC). Fines may be imposed, depending on the severity of the violation.

OMAN

The Port of Sultan Qaboos in Muscat is Oman's main port. In recent years, the port has invested in infrastructure expansion and modernization, particularly at the container terminal. Port inspection services (foods and customs) are improving with the average time required to clear food consignments to 1-2 hours.

The Port of Salalah is undergoing a major expansion and development program. This port facilitates Oman's trade with Yemen and other East African countries. The Port of Sohar, the country's third largest port, is also undergoing a rapid expansion and hopes to capitalize on its proximity to other GCC markets.

The MAF issues import permits for agricultural products under its jurisdiction - live animals and plants, red meat, poultry meat, agricultural materials, timber, grains and other unprocessed agricultural products.

No appeal process exists for food products rejected as unfit for human consumption. Rejected consignments must be destroyed or re-exported. Products rejected for minor labeling infractions may be allowed entry upon appeal. New-to-market and ethnic food products are normally allowed entry on a one-time basis, despite minor labeling infractions.

P/E date related infractions (i.e., missing production and expiry dates, dates printed in the wrong order and dates printed on stickers rather than original labels) normally result in rejection of the product.

Disputed products may be stored at the port of entry or under bond outside the port until a final resolution is reached.

Arabic language labeling is required. However, the Ministry of Commerce will allow the importer to add Arabic language stickers to the label to permit the sale of the product.

BAHREIN

Nearly all of Bahrain's food imports enter the country via the Salman and Khalifa ports. Both ports are located in the capital, Manama. Both ports have state of the art facilities and equipment. Imports from Saudi Arabia, a major supplier of food products to Bahrain, usually arrive via the 25-mile long King Fahad causeway, which links Bahrain to its neighbor. Bahrain International Airport also receives a considerable amount of food products, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables, chilled meats and deli products.

Fresh products are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival and all other food products within as little as two days to a week, depending on the type of laboratory analysis required.

A consignment rejected for being unfit for human consumption must be re-exported (but not to another GCC country) or destroyed, normally within two to three months of arrival. Products denied entry due to labeling infractions may later be cleared upon appeal, provided the infraction was minor. New to market and ethnic food products with minor labeling infractions have been cleared for import on a one-time basis. Serious labeling infractions will result in rejection of a shipment with no real chance of successful appeal. Major labeling infractions include: label tampering, missing or incorrectly printed expiry date or date printed on the sticker rather than original label/packageing.

Bahrain performs 100 percent inspection on new-to-market products, high risk products and products that failed a previous inspection. All other products are subject to random sampling, including period laboratory analysis.

KSA

The majority of Saudi food imports enter the country via Jeddah port on the Red Sea or Dammam port on the Arabian Gulf. About 70 percent of all foodstuffs enter Jeddah port. Imports from Jordan, Syria, and nearby countries enter the Kingdom by truck. King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah also receive significant quantities of food items, particularly fresh fruits, vegetables and chilled meat. Fresh and chilled products are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival.

Customs Clearance

Foodstuff shipments must be accompanied by commercial invoice, health certificates and other documents. An importer translates the commercial invoice into Arabic language if needed (per Saudi customs requirements) and hands it to his customs clearing agent along with the other required documents in order to start customs clearing process. Containers can be cleared in less than ten days provided all required documents are in order and imported products meet Saudi Arabian/Gulf specifications. Lab officials pull samples from full consignments and testing is done fairly. If there is any dispute about test results or products are rejected by one of SFDA laboratories at a port of entry, importers can appeal for re-test to the Director General of the Quality Control and Inspections Department of the Ministry. If an appeal is accepted, the Director General orders a sample (s) sent and re-tested by another SFDA's laboratory located in a different port (city). If the second test authenticates the initial results, the exporter is ordered to re-export or destroy the product

SFDA Inspectors at Border Inspection Posts (BIPs)

Imported foods are generally inspected independently by SFDA inspectors at a Saudi port of entry without any interference from the SFDA headquarters in Riyadh. If imported consignment is in compliance with pertinent Saudi or GCC standards and regulations, it is cleared. Otherwise, it is rejected. The domestic importer has no access to SFDA internal report during the process. SFDA informs the importer its final decision whether it to clear the product for sale in Saudi Arabia or reject it due to lack of compliance with established standards or regulations. Reject products have to re-exported or destroyed domestically under SFDA's supervision.

SFDA's mandatory a four stage verification process at BIPs involves the following:

1. Required documents verification
2. Identity check
3. Physical examination

4. Laboratory test

Failure to comply with pertinent Saudi or GCC standards and regulations at any of the above stage may result in a rejection of the imported food product. If a product is rejected by one of SFDA's BIPs for alleged lack of adherence to established specifications at any of the above four stages, the domestic importer has the right to appeal the decision in writing to the Executive Department of the Imported Food Control (EDIFC) at the SFDA headquarters and ask for reconsideration of the inspection results. In such cases, EDIFC forwards appeal to SFDA's especial committee that studies shipment documentation and the BIP test results to verify compliance with established rules and regulations. If the BIP action was found to be in compliance with the rules and regulations pertain to the rejected product, then EDIFC considers the BIP findings and decision as final. If, for any reason, there was a misjudgment by the BIP inspectors, EDIFC repeals the decision and inform the importer to clear the consignment cleared from Customs.

KUWAIT

Shuwaikh port in Kuwait City and Shuaiba port, about 25 miles south of the city, are the primary ports for the importation of food products. Both ports have state-of-the-art equipment. Many fresh and chilled products are imported via Kuwait International Airport, located a short distance from Kuwait City. Fresh produce originating from nearby Middle Eastern countries is imported in refrigerated trucks via land entry points on the Saudi Arabia border.

While it can require as little as 2-3 days to clear a consignment through customs, health clearance can take 7-10 days, due to laboratory testing and for some products it may take two to four weeks. Kuwait employs a rigorous sampling regime that requires frequent testing and a "test and hold" clearance procedure pending the results of tests. Fresh products, however, are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival. Once customs clearance is obtained, an importer may elect to store a consignment under bond, pending health clearance.

The following documents are required for food imports:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate
- Halal slaughter certificate (for meat and meat products) /1
- Certificate of Origin

QATAR

Most food products are imported via trucks from the United Arab Emirates. They enter the country at Abu Samra, which borders Saudi Arabia. Increasing quantities of products are imported through the seaport in the capital city, Doha. Small quantities of products, mainly fresh fruits and vegetables and chilled meat products, are imported via Doha International Airport. Fresh products are usually cleared within 24 hours of arrival and most other food products within two to three days. Laboratory analysis, however, may delay clearance of some products for up to ten days. The following documents are required for imported foods:

- Commercial invoice
- Packing list
- Bill of Lading
- Health certificate from the country of origin
- Halal slaughter certificate (for poultry and meat products)
- Certificate of origin
- Radiation free certificate (for European products only)
- Spices must be accompanied by a certificate stating that it is free of pesticides and herbicides. The invoice, Halal slaughter, health, and country of origin certificates must be notarized by the Qatari Embassy or consulate in the exporting country. In the absence of a Qatari diplomatic mission, any embassy or consulate of another GCC country can do the job. Rejected consignments for health/quality reasons must be returned to the country of origin or destroyed within maximum of two weeks. Rejected consignments for non-compliance may be re-exported (but not to another GCC country) or destroyed, normally within two weeks of arrival. This grace period can be extended if extenuating circumstances exist. Health certificates are required for all food products.

Products denied entry due to labeling infractions may later be cleared upon appeal to the Food Control Section of PHD/NHA, provided the infraction was minor. Labeling infractions deemed serious will result in rejection of a shipment with little chance of a successful appeal. Serious labeling infractions include label tampering, missing or incorrectly printed production/expiry dates and dates printed on stickers rather than the original label/packaging.

GCC Labeling Requirements:

GCC Countries have adopted the Gulf standard GSO 9/2007 and GSO 150/2007(see standards)

<http://www.gso.org.sa/standards/public/standardsList.seam> respectively for labeling and shelf life as its domestic standards. It is inspired by the CODEX ALIMENTARIUS.

Its main requirements are as follows:

1. Product description
2. Ingredients; (note that in most GCC countries Alcohol is not permitted in any food stuff as well as pork items).
3. Country of origin.
4. Net weight.
5. Lot identification.
6. Production and expiry date.

Production/expiry dates must be engraved, embossed, printed or stamped directly onto the original label or primary packaging at the time of production, using indelible ink.

- Day/month/year for products with a shelf-life of three (3) months or less

- Month/year for products with a shelf-life longer than three (3) months. The last day of the month is considered the expiry date.

-The word "Production" or the letter "P" must precede the production date.

-The expiry date must be preceded by one of the following statements: "Expiration (date)"; "Fit for.....from the date of production"; "Use by (date);" "Use before (date);" "Sell by (date);" "Valid until (date) from the date of production;" or the letter "E."

-Exporters who list the first day of the month following the expiry date have run into issues when trying to clear shipments.

- The month may be printed in numbers or letters. For example, both 3/08 and March 08 are acceptable formats.

- Production and expiry dates are not required for bulk cartons of fresh fruit and vegetables

7. The name and address of the manufacturer, producer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor shall be declared on the label;

8. Special storage and preparation instructions, if any.

9. Optional: Nutritional information, unless a nutrient claim is declared on the label.

In general:

- **Labelling on each item must be as follows:**

- (1) Difficult to remove or alter

- (2) Clear and easy to read

- (3) The label must show and specify source of fat, enzyme, gelatin, rennet and or any animal products contain.

- **Labelling must not be as follows:**

- (1) False, misleading or deceiving

- (2) Indicate that it is another food stuff
- (3) With covered, altered or obliterated data
- (4) Easy to remove from the container

(More specific requirements per country are described under topic general labeling requirements).

- Bi-Bilingual labels are required, provided one of the languages is Arabic (e.g. Arabic/English). Arabic language stickers are permitted in lieu of the original Arabic or bilingual label provided the sticker complies with all labeling requirements and is applied by the manufacturer.
 - Does not conceal required information on the original label.
 - Does not contradict information on the original label.
 - Is extremely difficult to remove.

Arabic stickers and labels should be legible and show, at least, the following information:

1. Product description;
2. Ingredients;
3. Country of origin; and
4. Net weight

Products intended for institutional use, may be exempt from the Arabic labeling requirement, but the “mechanism” is designed to eventually provide greater clarity on this point. Exporters should work closely with their importers to ensure that their products will meet the needs of retailers.

Shelf life

The GSO revised and simplified its shelf-life standard in 2007. The new/revised GSO 150/2007 (Expiration Periods of Food Products), fully enforced since November 1, 2008 in the UAE, provided less restrictive shelf life requirements for food products. Except for the food items which include perishable products and baby foods, food exporters will be allowed to ship products with the manufacturer’s recommended shelf life.

The following products are exempt from expiration dating - salt, white sugar, dried legumes, dried vegetables, spices and other condiments, tea, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables and vinegar. However, importers tend to prefer to have such products labeled with production and expiry dates, as consumers often are not aware of this exemption.

Small packages, where the area largest surface area is less than 10 square centimeters, may be exempted from the requirements stipulated.

In all cases, dates on stickers are not allowed:

- All food items must show production and expiry dates.

- The hand-written dates are Not accepted.
- Dates must Not easily erased.
- Dates must be written as: dd/mm/yy for products less than six months shelf life, for more than six months shelf life could be written as mm/yy.
- Dates must be printed, imposed or ink jetted.
- Double dated are not permitted dates can not be changed or added once it arrived to the ports.
- Dates must be in Arabic or in English or both if possible.

Any of the following terms may be used to express the date of expiry but with the necessity to mention the date of production.

- Date of expiry
- Good for use until
- Valid for from the date of production
- Use before
- Sold up to
- In case the production date and expiry date are written in month and year only, the validity period shall be calculated up to the end of the expiry month.
- The date mentioned on the items must be the same on the master cartons

Packaging and Container Regulations:

There are no special packaging or container size requirements for food products.

GS 839/1999, adopted as UAE Standard #839/2000, addresses "General Requirements for Food Packages – Part I. The standard stresses the need to use suitable materials that protect the integrity of the food, its wholesomeness and characteristics. GSO 1683/2008 Food Packages Part II was issued to address general requirements for plastic packaging.

Food Additives Regulations:

GENERAL

The Gulf Cooperation countries have established the following major gulf-wide standards that regulate additives used in foodstuffs. The GCC countries are currently updating food additive regulations. This new project will consolidate all Codex standards addressing all types of food additives (colors, sweeteners, emulsifiers, etc.) into one GSO standard. Each standard contains a positive additive list.

An eight-page Gulf Standard No. 23/1998 entitled —[Coloring Matter Used in Food Stuff](#). Shown below lists coloring matter permitted in foodstuffs.

- **Definitions**

- Natural coloring matter: A material extracted, isolated, or otherwise derived with or without intermediates-from vegetables, animals, minerals or any other sources, which when added to a foodstuff is capable (alone or through reaction with another substance) of imparting a distinguishing color thereto.
- Synthetic coloring matter: A material produced by synthesis of any similar artificial method and which when added to the foodstuff is capable (alone or through reaction with another substance) of imparting a distinguishing color thereto.
- Lake: A salt prepared by reaction of one of the water soluble pigments with the basic radical aluminum or calcium.

- **Requirements**

The following shall be met in the coloring matter:

- It shall be completely free from pork products or their derivatives.
- It shall not react with food components or its containers.
- It shall be capable of dissolving or dispersing in the foodstuff in case it is used without solvents.
- Loss of weight on drying shall not exceed 0.2% in case of Beta-Carotene, Beta- Apo-8-Carotenal, Beta-Apo-8-Carotenoic acid and Canthaxanthin.
- Residue on ignition shall not exceed 0.2% in case of Beta-Carotene, Beta-Apo-8-Carotenal, Beta-Apo-8-Carotenoic acid and Canthaxanthin.
- The dye content in coloring matter determined spectrophotometrically shall not be less than 96% in case of Beta-Carotene, Beta-Apo-8-Carotenal, Beta- Apo-8-Carotenoic acid and Canthaxanthin when tested according to GS mentioned in 2.2.
- Carrot oil shall contain no more than 25 ppm of hexan.
- Lake may be used in coloring foodstuffs products.
- No diluents or solvents shall be used with the coloring matter except the following materials: Water, glucose, lactose, sucrose, dextrose, starch, sorbitol, glycerol, edible fats and oils, bee wax, citric acid, tartaric acid, lactic acid, pectin, beef gelatin, sodium carbonate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium chloride, sodium sulphate, (sodium, potassium or ammonium) alginate, sodium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide propylene-glycol, ethyl acetates, acetic acid, and (glyceryl-mono, di, and triacetate) Polysorbat 80.

- The toxic mineral elements shall not exceed the following: Arsenic 3 ppm ;Lead 10 ppm;Heavy metals 40 ppm ;
- No coloring matter shall be added to the following food products: No processed (meat - birds - fish) processed (meat - birds - fish) (except what's mentioned in Table 3) - fresh fruits and vegetables - mineral water, milk ,without flavor (pasteurized - powdered - sterilized - fermented) - cream without flavor - olive oil - egg and egg products - flour - starch, bread - sugars - cocoa and row chocolate - coffee - tea - spices - foods for infants and children, honey except the following cases:
 - Official ink used for stamping the slaughtered animals with distinguishing marks.
 - Synthetic coloring of the fully ripe citrus fruits.
- No natural or synthetic coloring matter shall be added to food products except those mentioned in **Tables 1 and 2 in general, and coloring matter which are mentioned in Table 3 are permitted for use in certain foodstuffs only.**
- Synthetic coloring matter shall fulfill the characteristics specified in Table 4.

In June 2011, the GCC Standards Committee decided not to implement the ban on E102 and E122. In 2010, Saudi Arabia banned the use of Red 2G in foodstuffs.

Note that SFDA and GSO have removed E128 from allowable coloring matters used. As such, E128 is not allowed for use as a coloring matter in foodstuffs.

KUWAIT

In general, local regulations governing the use of food additives are based on Codex Alimentarius standards. According to trade contacts. Color additives are regulated under KS 214/1999 **(GS 23/1998)**. Under this standard, the common name and index number of all food color additives contained in a product must be noted on the product label. European "E" numbers are permitted. Other food additives such as preservatives, flavorings, antioxidants, emulsifiers and others are regulated under KS 147/1994, which is identical to the Codex Alimentarius standard. Sweeteners allowed for use in food products are listed in KS 1176/1999 **(GS 995/1998)**.

BAHREIN

Bahrain's Minister of Commerce & Industry issued Decree No. 22, dated June 21, 2005, that approved the Codex Standards **CXS 192:1995 as the** "General Standard on Food Additives and Class Names and the International Numbering System for Food Additives", **and CXS 107:1998** as the "General Standard for Labeling of Food Additives When Sold as Such." The common name and index number of all food color additives contained in a product must be noted on the product label. European "E" numbers are accepted.

OMAN

In general, Oman accepts any food or coloring additive approved by the Codex Alimentarius, even those additives that are not listed in GS 23/1998. Under GS 23/1998, the common name and index number of color additives contained in a product must be noted on the label. European "E" numbers are permitted. (See Appendix A for a list of approved color additives)

UAE

UAE Standard 23/2000 (GS 23/1998): Regulates the use of food coloring additives.

2. UAE Standard 356/1995 (GS 356/94): Regulates the use of food preservatives.
3. UAE Standard 357/1995 (GS 357/94): Regulates the use of antioxidants.
4. UAE Standard 381/1995 (GS 381/94): Regulates the use of emulsifiers, stabilizers and thickeners.
5. UAE Standard 707/1997 (GS 707/96): Regulates the use of flavors.
6. GSO 995/1998 Sweeteners permitted for use in food products

UAE officials are referring increasingly to the Codex Alimentarius and other internationally recognized bodies to determine permitted food additives, particularly for those not listed in relevant Gulf standards. Nevertheless, the Lebanese exporter is encouraged to work closely with his importer to ensure the product meets UAE food additive requirements. UAE health authorities look closely at the addition of food coloring, preservatives, antioxidants and non-nutritive sweeteners when reviewing new-to-market products. The Food Control Section of the respective Municipality should be contacted for further details.

QATAR

Most local regulations governing the use of food additives are based on Codex Alimentarius standards. Food coloring additives are regulated under QS 23/2000. This standard requires the common name and index number of all coloring additives contained in a product be noted on the product label. European "E" numbers are acceptable.

Qatar enforces a number of other standards governing the use of additives in a variety of food products. For example, QS 19/2001 regulates additives used in vegetable oils and fats while QS 356, 357, 381, 577, 578 and 1018 regulate other food additives. These regulations mimic Codex Alimentarius standards for food additives.

The General Organization for Standards and Metrology at MOEC, see Appendix I, can be contacted for copies of food additive or other standards. The standards are mostly in Arabic. Some standards are available in English, but not all.

KSA

An eight-page Gulf Standard No. 23/1998 entitled —Coloring Matter Used in Food Stuff. || Shown below lists coloring matter permitted in foodstuffs.

Pesticides and Other Contaminants:

KUWAIT

Local regulations governing pesticide and other contaminant residue levels are based on Codex Alimentarius standards. Specifically, KS 514/1994 regulates pesticide and other contaminant residues in food products. MRL-s for pesticides in agricultural and food products are determined in KS Part I 720/1995 (GS 382/1994) and Part II. KS 721/1995 (GS 383/94).

BAHREIN

Bahrain's Minister of Commerce & Industry issued Decree No. 22, dated June 21, 2005, that approved Codex Standards CXS 193:1995 for "General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food" and CXS 229:1993 for "Analysis of Pesticide Residues and Recommended Methods" as national standards.

UAE

UAE Standard 382/95 (GS 382/94) Part I establishes limits of pesticide residues in agricultural and food products. UAE Standard 383/95 (GS 383/94) is Part II discusses the same concern. UAE.S/GSO 02/2007 addresses the maximum residue limits for veterinary drugs in foods. The UAE and GSO have also issued several standards addressing acceptable limits of aflatoxin and other toxics, radiation and irradiation in food products. In the absence of a GSO or UAE standard, the UAE recognizes the Codex Alimentarius standard governing pesticide and other contaminant residue levels. Chemical contamination is a growing concern of UAE authorities and efforts are underway to update local guidelines and improve testing procedures. Food products meeting U.S. residue standards will most likely meet future UAE standards. It is very rare that U.S. origin products are rejected due to pesticide or other contaminant residue.

The UAE Ministry for Environment and Water is responsible for registering all types of agricultural chemicals that are permitted whether they are locally produced or imported. A permit must be issued to any importer prior to placing orders to buy any type of agricultural chemicals.

OMAN

Oman follows GSO 382/1994 for "Maximum Limits of Pesticide Residues in Agricultural and Food Products - Part I" and GSO 383/1994 for "Maximum Limits of Pesticide Residues in Agricultural and

Food Products - Part II". Codex Alimentarius standards are used as guidelines. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries monitors for residues.

Oman will recognize a non-listed color or color additive if approved under Codex or other International Standard.

KSA

The Kingdom and other members of the Gulf Cooperation have developed positive pesticide and other contaminants lists. Per SASO (Saudi Arabian Standards Organization) the lists have international context as they were mainly adapted from CODEX Alimentarius standards. The following are the major Gulf/Saudi standards enforced in the Kingdom:

Gulf Standard No. 382/1994—Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Agricultural Food Products- Part 1|| established the maximum limits for ten pesticide residues in foods and agricultural commodities or animal feed: Malathion, Bromophos, Diquat, Fenchlorfos, Pyrethrins, Quinterozene, Parathion, Orthophenyl Phenol, Methidathion and Fentin.

Gulf Standard No. 422/1994—Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Agricultural Food Products- Part 2|| establishes the maximum limits for nine pesticide residues in agricultural and food products intended for human consumption. The residues are: dimethoate, chlorfenvinphos, crufomate, diazinon, dioxathion, diphenyl, diphenylamine, ethoxyquin and folpet.

Gulf Standard No. 357/1994—Antioxidants Permitted for use in Foodstuffs|| lists antioxidants and antioxidants synergists permitted for use in food products. Refer to appendix II for permitted antioxidants.

Gulf Standard No. 841/1997 regulates the maximum limits aflatoxins permitted in foods and animal feeds.

Gulf Standard No. 988/1998 is concerned with limits of radioactivity levels (gamma rays, cesium 134, 137) permitted in foodstuffs, drinking water and animal feeding stuffs. The limits of radioactivity levels permitted in food products shall not exceed the following limits:

10 becquerel(Bq)* /kg or liter in water

30 becquerel/kg or liter in milk and its products

30 becquerel/kg liter in liter in baby foods

75 becquerel/kg or liter in other food products

300 becquerel/kg in animal feeds

** One Bq is defined as the activity of a quantity of radioactive material in which one nucleus decays per second. The Bq unit in an SI system is therefore equivalent to an inverse second, s^{-1} . The becquerel is named for [Henri Becquerel](#), who shared a Nobel Prize with Pierre and Marie Curie in 1903 for their work in discovering radioactivity. Therefore $1 \text{ Bq} = 1 \text{ s}^{-1}$*

QATAR

Local regulations governing pesticide and other contaminant residue levels are based on Codex Alimentarius standards. Specifically, QS 382/1996 and QS 383/1996 regulate pesticide and other contaminant residues in food products. The pesticide residues list, as is the food additives list, is a positive list, i.e. approved pesticides with tolerance levels are identified.

Pesticides must be registered with the Agricultural Development Department, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture.

The importation of irradiated food products is permitted, but the product's label must clearly indicate that the product has been irradiated. KS 1171/1999 (GS 988/1998) determines the maximum irradiation levels permitted in different food products.

General rules for avoiding rejection of food products at port of entry

You can avoid rejection of consignment in the following:

- The correct shelf life on the product according to the local regulation.
- Labeling according to the local regulation.
- Any product contains any un-permitted additives or preservatives.
- Manufacturer must aware of the biological, microbiological, and chemical standards for the relevant food stuffs.
- Label information should be in Arabic or English or both.
- Production and expired dates must be imposed on the container, or ink jetted.
- Food consignment will be rejected, if 50% of the shelf life elapsed

When consignment of food stuff is rejected due to unfitness for human consumption because of microbial contamination. Consignment must be re-exported to the country of origin or to be destroyed under the supervision of Public Health Section of Municipality.

When a consignment of food stuff is rejected due to label regulation, Or for physical condition, shelf life etc.. The consignment must be re-exported to the country of origin, or to third party country NOT GCC Countries, or to be destroyed by Public Health Section of Municipality

GCC CUSTOMS UNION

Procedures and steps for implementation of the Customs Union of the GCC States

The Supreme Council, in its 23rd Session held in Qatar (21 - 22 December 2002 A.C.), approved the launch of the Customs Union of the GCC States as of 1/1/ 2003 A.C. It also approved the procedures and steps recommended by the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee (the GCC Ministers of Finance and Economy) for the establishment of the Customs Union of the GCC States.

These procedures and steps comprise the following:

I. The date of setting up the Customs Union of the GCC States:

The GCC Customs Union shall be implemented on 1/1/2003 A.C.

II. Principles and Concept of the Customs Union of the GCC States:

1. Customs Union is the territory wherein customs duties "taxes" as well as regulations and procedures restricting trade among the member States are abolished and wherein unified customs duties "taxes" and trade and customs regulations for trade with the non-member States are implemented.
2. The GCC customs union is based on the following principles:
 - a. A Common External Customs Tariff for products imported from outside of the GCC Customs Union
 - b. A Common Customs Law .
 - c. Unified customs regulations and rules applicable in all member States in related fields.
 - d. Unification of the internal customs, financial and administrative regulations and procedures relating to importation, exportation and re-exportation in the GCC States.
 - e. Single entry point where unified customs duties are collected.
 - f. Free movement of goods among the GCC States without customs or non-customs restrictions, while taking into consideration the implementation of the veterinary and agricultural quarantine regulations and the prohibited and restricted goods.
 - g. Treatment of the goods produced in any of the GCC States as national products.

Second: Single Point of Entry into the GCC States:

Third: Unification of the Customs Tariff of the GCC Customs Union toward external world:

Fourth: Common Customs Law of the GCC States

Fifth: Collection of the customs revenues in the GCC customs union

Sixth: Customs functions of the intra-GCC customs offices after formation of the Customs Union

Eighth: Allowing the customs brokers to get engaged in the customs clearance in the GCC States

Ninth: Internal Regulations of the member States governing importation, exportation, re-exportation and transit.

Eleventh: Unified Customs Declaration.

Twelveth: Prequalification of the GCC industrial producers for the exemption of their products from customs duties.

Thirteenth: Application of the specifications and standards under the implementation of the Customs Union and the single point of entry.

Fourteenth: Protection of national industries after the formation of the Customs Union of the GCC States including anti-dumping and countervailing measures and safeguards.

Fifteenth: Procedures for registration of the intra-GCC trade for statistical purposes.

Details of the above can be further read at the external link below.

External links

Emirates standards

<https://www.esma.ae/e-store/Default/ICSStandards.aspx?ID=668>

Federal customs Authority web site(UAE) on GCC customs union:
http://www.customs.ae/uniongccstates_en.aspx