

Specifications for the import of animal-Based Dairy Products GCC

Range of dairy products: yogurt, fresh cheese curds, processed cheese, butter, dry milk products and variety cheeses

No permit is required but a health certificate from a government official responsible for dairy inspection within the exporting country must state that the dairy product was manufactured on government-approved and registered premises and is subject to regular audits or inspections. It certifies that the product at the time of shipment contains no harmful level of contaminants, including dioxins, and is fit for human consumption. It certifies that milk and milk-based product(s) have undergone a recognized pasteurization process with the aim of avoiding public health hazards arising from pathogenic organisms associated with milk. It also certifies that the product can be freely sold for human consumption in the exporting country. Other information included on the health certificate includes a trader reference number, generic product name, product description, approval of manufacturer/packer, manufacturer's address, packer's address, consignor, consignee, country of manufacture, type of packing, net weight, quantity, production codes, place of dispatch, date of dispatch, destination, and expiry date.

Health certificates for dairy products must contain the following declarations:

1. The milk/dairy products described above have been processed from raw milk/powdered milk obtained from animals free from contagious diseases and fit for human consumption.
2. All dairy products have been processed and packaged in an approved establishment under official health control.
3. On the basis of a national follow-up control scheme, the dairy product complies with the importing country of origin or international standards regarding residues of chemical contaminants, such as dioxin, pesticides, veterinary drugs etc., and no harmful colorants or preservative agents (according to CODEX Alimentarius) were added to these products.
4. Complies with the importing country or international standards for bacteria count
5. In case of heat treatment: done in a way to obtain the destruction of pathogens
6. With regard to radioactivity: contains no harmful radioactivity, or not more than the accepted level, for the milk and milk products
7. The declaration must be signed and stamped by an official inspector.

In May 2011 the GCC drafted import requirements for a manual whereby the milk and milk products health requirements are as follows:

- The milk or milk product is fit for human consumption, in accordance with the hygiene requirements of the GCC.
- The milk or milk product has been derived from healthy animals that are subject to the official veterinary service inspections and are compliant with GCC requirements.
- The milk or milk product was handled in accordance with the GCC requirements, at an establishment that has been subjected to inspections by the Competent Authority and implements a food safety management system based on HACCP principles or an equivalent system.
- Good veterinary practice has been applied in use of veterinary medicines (including growth hormones) and agriculture chemicals in live animals and any residues in milk or milk product comply with GCC requirements

Veterinary Certificate

An exporting country government veterinary inspector's declaration is required, stating that the exporting country is free of foot-and-mouth disease, anthrax, rinderpest and all the other diseases on the "Office International des Epizooties" (OIE) list A, to which the bovine species is susceptible. In addition, it must state that milk is derived from cows in which BSE has not been officially identified at the time of collection and that bovine herds are subject to official control and official brucellosis and tuberculin testing. It further states that bovine herds were not fed with protein derived from animal ruminant and the exporting country is free of enzootic bovine leucosis.

Certificate of Radioactivity Measurement

A competent exporting country radiation protection institute certifies that the products detailed on the certificate contain total radiocaesium concentrations within officially established levels and are fit for human consumption. Other information provided on the certificate includes product description, quantity, manufacturer, consignor, order number, destination, official stamp and the signature of a competent official. Radiation and dioxin free requirements apply to dairy products imported from Europe, Japan and former Soviet Republics.

In addition to the general requirements and the general labeling requirements for the GCC please refer to:

- **GSO Standard No. 1016:1998 on microbiological criteria for food** (See GSO link below)
- **GSO Standard No. 150:2007 on expiration periods of food products**

This standard is concerned with limits of radioactivity levels (gamma rays, cesium 134, 137) permitted in foodstuffs, drinking water and animal feeding stuffs.

- **GSO Standard No. 988:1998 on the limits of radioactivity levels permitted in food stuffs part-1**

This code applies to the production, processing and handling of milk and milk products as defined in the General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms (Gulf Standard GSO/CAC 206. Where milk products are referred to in the code it is understood that this term also includes composite milk products. The scope of this code does not extend to the production of raw drinking milk. This code applies to products in international trade. It may also serve as a basis for national legislation.

- **GSO Standard No. 2214:2011 on the code of hygienic practice for milk and milk products**

This standard concerns ultra-high temperature milk (UHT) and flavored milk (long life).

- **GSO Standard No. 1347:2002 on UHT milk**

This standard concerns pasteurized cow milk and standardized pasteurized milk.

- **GSO Standard No. 984:1998 for pasteurized milk**

This standard concerns labneh, labneh heat-treated after fermentation and labneh-in-oil

- **GSO Standard No. 816:2010 for labneh**

This standard concerns flavored fermented laban (milk) and flavored fermented laban (milk) heat treated after fermentation.

- **GSO Standard No. 1375:2012 on flavored laban**

This Standard applies to all products intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the definition of whey cheeses in Section 2 of this standard. Subject to the provisions of this standard, Codex standards for individual varieties of whey cheeses may contain provisions which are more specific than those in this standard.

- **GSO Standard No.1980:2009 on halloumi cheese**
- **GSO Standard No.831:1997 for domiati and feta cheese**
- **GSO Standard No.284:2009 whey cheeses**

This Standard concerns cream cheese intended for direct consumption or for further processing, in conformity with the items of this standard, and does not apply to high fat ripened hard cheese.

- **GSO Standard No.1994:2009 for kashkaval cheese**
- **GSO Standard No.182:1994 processed cheese with vegetable oils**
- **GSO Standard No.832:2010 for cream cheese**

This standard concerns ghee (*samn*) prepared from milk and/or fat-enriched with milk products of various agricultural animals (cow, buffalo, sheep, goat, camel).

- **GSO Standard No. 333:2012 for ghee**

The technical regulations and standards of the GCC countries will be used as the primary basis for certification of food shipments by exporting countries. Where deemed appropriate by the GCC, e.g., where current GCC technical regulations and standards are not comprehensive in terms of specific requirements for certain imported foods, the GCC may defer to Codex, OIE (World Organization for

Animal Health)and IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) standards, guidelines and recommendations as the basis for certification (and other assurances).

Note: The link below permits the access to GSO standards; those standards are not free and can be purchased online.

Useful Links

Gulf standard Organization (GSO); includes food standards; can purchase standards online.

<http://www.gso.org.sa/>

Codex alimentarius standards: Many GCC standards math the codex standards GCC being member of the WTO.

http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/standard_list.do?lang=en