

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Trader Notice MH 15/2021

To: All food business operators approved to export meat to the Philippines

Subject: Minimum labelling requirements for meat imports into the Philippines

(This Trader Notice should be read in conjunction with [Trader Notice 28/2014](#))

Background

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and the National Meat Inspection Service (NMIS), agencies in the Philippines' Department of Agriculture, have recently issued joint memorandums reiterating minimum labelling requirements for imported meat to the Philippines.

Labelling Requirements

Under NMIS Memorandum Order No. 07-2021-018, 'an accredited meat importer shall ensure that the shipment of imported meat shall comply with the following minimum labelling requirements:

- 1) Registered trade name of the exporters or brand name of the product;
- 2) Business name and address of the exporter;
- 3) Country of origin;
- 4) Lot identification;
- 5) Product description and list of ingredients;
- 6) Net quantity of contents, in terms of weight, measure or numerical count rounded to the nearest tenth (expressed in METRIC SYSTEM);
- 7) Date of manufacture and packaging.
- 8) **Date of minimum durability ("best before") or expiration date;** and
- 9) Handling and storage instruction.

Imported meat inappropriately labelled based on the requirements shall be seized, subject to confiscation and disposal.'

Please note that the term 'exporter' here refers to an approved/accredited meat establishment where the meat was produced or slaughtered.

Refer to Department of Agriculture (DA) Administrative Order (AO) No. 26 of 2005 and DA AO No. 24 of 2010 for further detail on the application of the labelling requirements and additional definition of terms. These administrative orders are available at the links below.

http://spsissuances.da.gov.ph/attachments/article/1013/DA%20AO%20No.26_S_2005.pdf
<https://www.nmis.gov.ph/images/pdf/ao-24-2010.pdf>

Sanctions for Non-Conformance

According to BAI – NMIS Joint Memorandum Circulars No. 01 and No. 02, Series of 2021:

- Meat import arrivals arriving in the country until 31 December 2021, ‘which are non-conforming to the minimum labelling requirements but have passed inspection at the port and cold storage warehouses (provided that the violation does not constitute misrepresentation, misbranding, false claim and other deliberate acts), shall be held in abeyance, and be released only upon the consignee/importer's compliance on modification of labels which meet the minimum requirements, as approved by the DA BAI and NMIS. Non-compliance to the required modification of labels, as approved by DA BAI and NMIS, shall be subject to confiscation and disposal.’
- ‘The BAI and NMIS reserves its right to hold shipments/import arrivals, not complying to Philippines rules and regulations, for further investigation.’
- ‘The importer/consignee shall bear the expenses (includes but not limited to destruction, storage and labour) incurred in the confiscation and disposition of the shipment.’

From 1 January 2022, meat imports arriving in the Philippines, which do not conform to the minimum labelling requirements, shall be seized and **subject to confiscation and disposal**.

Role of the Food Business Operator

Food Business Operators (FBOs) approved to export meat to the Philippines are obligated to comply with the minimum labelling requirements.

Until 31 December 2021, labels of any meat shipments arriving in the Philippines which, upon NMIS inspection, do not meet the labelling requirements, are allowed to be modified at the cold storage warehouse by the consignee/importer of the shipment. Meat imports arriving after that date which do not meet the labelling requirements will be subject to confiscation and disposal.

Meat Market Access Section
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01 September 2021