

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Trader Notice MH No. 04/2022

To: All operators of DAFM-approved meat establishments

Subject: Revised health certificate for beef exports to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(This Trader Notice supersedes [TN MH 12/2017](#))

Background

The Department has reached agreement with the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) on revised certification arrangements for the export of Irish beef and processed beef products to the kingdom.

Veterinary Health Certificate

The updated veterinary health certificate (VHC) agreed with the SFDA removes the previous requirement that exported meat must be derived from cattle aged 30 months or less at the time of slaughter.

VHCs will be made available on request to Veterinary Inspectors at eligible plants through the usual channels. A specimen copy of the updated certificate is published in tandem with this notice.

Scope and conditions of certification

The VHC covers the export of raw and processed beef products including bone-in beef, minced beef, burgers, and cooked beef.

The main conditions for export to Saudi Arabia are set out below.

1. The meat/meat product must comply with existing Saudi import requirements (which are recognised as equivalent to EU food hygiene regulations).
2. The animals from which the meat is derived must be born and reared in Ireland.
3. The animals from which the meat is derived must be slaughtered in an establishment which is under DAFM supervision and registered by the SFDA prior to export.
4. The meat/meat product must be produced in accordance with Gulf Cooperation Council requirements for meat preparation, handling, storage, transportation, animal feed and residue controls.
5. A Halal Slaughter Certificate, issued by a certification body approved by the Saudi Halal Center, must accompany each consignment – fulfillment of this requirement is not a condition of veterinary certification and is entirely the responsibility of the FBO.

Role of the Food Business Operator (FBO)

Meat imports to Saudi Arabia are permitted only from approved establishments and sixteen Irish meat plants are currently listed by the SFDA as approved establishments.

Beef establishments that wish to be approved for beef exports to Saudi Arabia must inform their plant Veterinary Inspector (VI) and draw up an SOP in consultation with the plant VI. The SOP must set out how the FBO will satisfy certification criteria. It should include verification checks on the integrity of the systems for selection, segregation, labelling, boning and boxing of beef or beef products to Saudi Arabia.

When the SOP and FBO checks are ready for formal verification, the FBO should complete the Application Form, published concurrently with this notice, and present it to the VI for countersignature.

In signing the application, the plant VI confirms that the applicant fulfils the conditions set out in:

- SFDA Food Hygienic Requirements;
- the SFDA.FD 1694 standard “*General Principles of Food Hygiene*”; &
- SFDA.FD 21 technical regulation “*Hygienic Regulations for Food Plants and Their Personnel*”.

Following a veterinary recommendation, the FBO should then scan the completed application form and forward it to meatmarketaccess@agriculture.gov.ie.

DAFM will submit a request to the SFDA to update the relevant list of approved Irish establishments. All ‘lists of exported food establishments to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’ are available to view on the SFDA website at the link below:

https://www.sfda.gov.sa/en/list_countries

Beef establishments currently registered with the SFDA must revise relevant SOPs in consultation with the plant VI to reflect the removal of the age restriction.

Auditable records must be provided to the official veterinarian on request and prior to any request for certification.

Halal certification

Every beef consignment exported to Saudi Arabia must be accompanied by a Halal Slaughter Certificate issued by a halal certification body approved by the SFDA Saudi Halal Center.

All recognised international certification bodies are included in the ‘List of cooperation bodies’ which can be found under the ‘Our Customers’ tab on the home page of the SFDA Saudi Halal Centre website: <https://halal.sfda.gov.sa/>

Meat Market Access Section
meatmarketaccess@agriculture.gov.ie

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