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Mexico

Poultry and Products

Poultry Ban Partially Lifted – Update #2

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Report Highlights:

The Government of Mexico (GOM) continues to modify the import requirements for poultry products. On March 17, the GOM amended import requirements for poultry meat for the border region. A few days later, the GOM allowed imports of other products like turkey poults for repopulation of commercial farms and hatching eggs for repopulation of commercial broiler and table egg commercial farms (baby chicks, turkeys poults and hatching eggs grand-parent and parent stock repopulation had been granted earlier). The GOM has also recently allowed imports of poultry carcasses and bone-in turkey thigh meat for processing.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Mexico [MX1]
[MX]

AMENDMENTS FOR POULTRY MEAT IMPORTS FOR THE BORDER

On March 17, 2004, the Secretariat of Agriculture (SAGARPA) announced amendments to the import sanitary requirement sheet (Hoja de Requisitos Zoosanitarios--HRZ) for poultry meat for the retail market for the border region, reported in MX 4038. First, SAGARPA changed the term "border region" (region fronteriza) to "border strip" (franja fronteriza) or the international border with the United States plus a 20 km parallel line inside Mexico, including a portion of the State of Sonora to the Gulf of Mexico. Second, SAGARPA indicated that the ports of Matamoros, and Puerto Morelos (Cancun, usually considered part of the "border strip") were no longer eligible because SAGARPA has no appropriate sanitary inspection facilities for meat products.

The ports of entry are currently: Tijuana, Baja California; Mexicali, Baja California; San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora; Nogales, Sonora; Juarez, Chihuahua; Colombia, Nuevo Leon; Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas; and Reynosa, Tamaulipas.

AMENDMENTS FOR POULTRY MEAT IMPORTS FOR THERMAL PROCESSING

In a meeting between Mexico and U.S. Veterinary Officials on March 31, 2004, the GOM agreed to modify some import requirements for poultry products. SAGARPA agreed to change the testing window for the 59 serological samples to test for avian influenza from a period of 2 to 3 weeks, to a period of zero to 21 days before slaughter. The first HRZ to be issued with the changes was for mechanically de-boned chicken and turkey meat and de-boned turkey thigh meat for thermal processing. Also, SAGARPA allowed for more time to comply with this requirement which will now be enforced on April 10, 2004.

Another HRZ was issued later to allow imports of poultry carcass for thermal processing. However, the 59 serological samples to be tested for AI testing window change agreed upon is not reflected in the text, and the sample taking of "2 to 3 weeks days before slaughter" language is still there. SAGARPA is allowing more time to comply with this test for this product as requirements will apply on April 20, 2004. On April 7, 2004, SAGARPA allowed imports of bone-in turkey thigh meat for processing. There again the 2-3 week window remains.

DUCK MEAT IMPORTS

On March 29, 2004, SAGARPA allowed duck meat imports. A requirement of concern is that serological random samples should be tested for avian influenza within a period of two to three weeks before slaughter using both: the Agar Gel precipitation test and Hemagglutination Inhibition (HI) test for the subtype H5N2. The sampling with the HI test will apply on April 16, 2004.

CONCERNS FOR HATCHING EGGS AND THREE-DAY-OLD CHICKS IMPORTS

Until recently, SAGARPA had only issued the import requirement sheets, HRZ, for grand-parent and parent stock for chicks, turkey poults, and hatching eggs. The Mexican poultry industry had meetings with SAGARPA officials to request the addition of chicks, turkey chicks, and hatching egg for commercial broiler and table egg repopulation, since many domestic producers are dependent on these imports. On March 25, 2004, SAGARPA issued the HRZ's for hatching eggs including repopulation of commercial broiler and table egg commercial farms, a new HRZ for three-day-old chicks for grand-parent and parent stock purposes, and three-day-old chicks and turkey poults for grand-parent and parent stock, and

repopulation of commercial farms. SAGARPA now added that the HI test will be required for subtype H5N2 for the three products.

Another requirement of concern is that farms and hatcheries that export to Mexico have to be approved by SAGARPA. To that end, the government requested that each U.S. farm and hatchery fill out a questionnaire relating to risk assessment that has to be submitted by April 7, 2004. Accordingly, farms and hatcheries that submit their questionnaire will continue to export until the corresponding evaluation is done by SAGARPA. The Mexican processing industry is concerned that if the questionnaires are not submitted by U.S. producers or not submitted on time, their ability to source the products they need could be hurt.

An additional requirement change of concern, that falls within the importer are the requirements while under quarantine for imported hatching eggs and three-day-old chicks and poults after crossing the border. Now, SAGARPA requires a serological test of 59 samples to diagnose AI using the using the AGAR gel precipitation test and hemagglutination inhibition (HI) test subtype H5N2.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS

Imports of uncooked poultry and poultry products continue to be banned from the states of Texas, Maine, Virginia, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, West Virginia, California, Arizona, Nevada, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland. Status on restrictions to import AI and END states remain in place as reported in MX 4038.

The following table summarizes some of the regulations that are currently being implemented by the Mexican government for U.S. live poultry and poultry meat exports.

REGULATIONS FOR POULTRY AND POULTRY PRODUCTS EXPORTS

ITEM	RAW POULTRY FOR RETAIL ① TO BORDER AREAS	RAW POULTRY FURTHER PROCESSING ⑥	FULLY COOKED PRODUCTS	HATCHING EGGS ⑨	THREE DAY OLD CHICKS ⑨
END STATES EXPORT STATUS ②	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
AI STATES EXPORT STATUS ③	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
REQUIRED LANGUAGE ON CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF TRUCKS	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
REQUIRED SEALING OF TRUCKS AT POINT OF ORIGIN	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
AGAR GEL TEST REQUIRED	YES	YES ⑦	NO	YES ④	YES ④
HEMAGGLUTINATION INHIBITION TEST	NO	NO	NO	YES ⑧	YES ⑧
CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS ON END ⑤	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

① SAGARPA had previously suspended imports of bone-in chicken leg quarters for further processing to the interior of Mexico because of concerns about products being diverted to the retail market. Currently, all retail imports to the interior of Mexico are banned.

- ② The four states affected by END are: Texas, California, Nevada and Arizona. All END affected states are not eligible to store or consolidate raw product for direct human consumption or further processing. However SAGARPA recently allowed five warehouses in Texas to conduct trailer switching operations between U.S. and Mexican trucks.
- ③ There are eleven states affected by AI: Maine, Connecticut, Texas, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, California, Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland.
- ④ Test should begin two or three weeks before laying and should continue on a quarterly basis.
- ⑤ Statement for meat, meat products and by products. - "That the product comes from flocks that have a monitoring program of 70 birds that began after 12 days of age, using viral isolation tests and identification of velogenic strains through a test that indicates intracerebral pathogenicity in chicks of one day of age and that is carried out for each lot that is delivered for slaughter, obtaining negative results for Velogenic Newcastle disease." (Check the different import requirement sheets for specific products)
- ⑥ Imports are only approved to proceed to Federal Inspected Plants (TIF) and non-TIF meat processing facilities. An official Veterinary Doctor will accompany the shipment through all the import and distribution process. This only applies to mechanically de-boned chicken and turkey and de-boned turkey thigh meat, and poultry carcass as specified in Mexico's import requirements. Other products for further processing are currently banned.
- ⑦ AGAR gel tests will be required by the border inspectors as of April 10, 2004, except for carcasses and bone-in turkey thigh meat, which have until April 20, 2004.
- ⑧ Sampling with the HI test subtype H5N2 will be required as of April 5, 2004. Test should begin two or three weeks before laying and should continue on a quarterly basis.
- ⑨ There is an specific HRZ to imports three-day-old chicks for parent and/or breeding stock farms purposes and another to repopulate broiler commercial farms. There is one HRZ to import three-day-old turkey poults for parent and/or breeding stock farms and to repopulate broiler commercial farms. Farms and hatcheries have to be approved by SAGARPA. To that end, the government has requested the completion of a questionnaire from each poultry farm and hatchery to be eligible to export to Mexico. The deadline for this requirement is April 7, 2004. Farms and hatcheries that submit their questionnaire will continue to export for about 15 more days until the corresponding evaluation is done by SAGARPA. Imports are only allowed for hatching eggs laid on or after March 5, 2004. Imports are only allowed for chicks and turkeys poults that were born on or after March 5, 2004.