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## Colombia

# Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards

## Country Report

### 2003

Approved by:

**David J. Mergen, Agricultural Attaché  
U.S. Embassy, Bogota, Colombia**

Prepared by:

Alberto Restrepo, Agricultural Specialist

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**Report Highlights:** Some structural changes have occurred in the government of Colombia agencies dealing with trade. However, the changes do not affect the way imports are registered, approved and introduced into the country. Stricter sanitary requirements have been announced by the GOC because of BSE detention in Canada and they affect the US exports to Colombia. A recent decree raised from 20 to 80 percent the import duty for beef and beef offals, and established a TRQ of 3,000 tons/year for fine beef cuts.

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
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**DISCLAIMER:** This report was prepared by the Office of Agricultural Affairs of the USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service in Bogota, Colombia, for U.S. exporters of domestic food and agricultural products. While every possible care was taken in the preparation of this report, information provided may not be completely accurate, either because policies have changed since its preparation, or because clear and consistent information about these policies was not available. It is highly recommended that U.S. exporters verify the full set of import requirements with their foreign customers, who are normally best equipped to research such matters with local authorities, before any goods are shipped. **FINAL IMPORT APPROVAL OF ANY PRODUCT IS SUBJECT TO THE IMPORTING COUNTRY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS, AS INTERPRETED BY BORDER OFFICIALS AT THE TIME OF PRODUCT ENTRY.**

## SECTION I. FOOD LAWS

The Colombian Government maintains control over imports through the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MOCIT). It approves or disapproves imports, according to foreign exchange availability and the needs of Colombia's industry or the market. In early 2003, as part of a restructuring and shrinking process of government institutions, MOCIT absorbed the previous Ministry of (Economic) Development in the same way that the Ministries of Health and Labor were merged into one now known as Ministry of Social Protection. However, these changes have not affected the basic government structure dealing with food imports. All responsibilities in dealing with the Colombian foreign trade have been transferred to the MOCIT including the issuance of import licenses and the registration of import and exports as well as the handling of the export incentives.

The basic piece of legislation dealing with food products and human health in Colombia is Law 9 of January 24, 1979. All the decrees and regulations produced since then are based on the above mentioned Law.

The import registration procedure for 2,298 items out of 6,782 listed in the Colombian Harmonized Tariff Schedule was abolished. However, no food and agricultural import products were included among the 2,298 items.

Because most, if not all, agricultural commodities require permits or have to be approved by another government agency (i.e., the Ministry of Agriculture), they do need import registration at the MOCIT to be cleared through customs. There are three categories of imports in Colombia:

**Free (libre) Imports.** Free imports are products whose importation is not limited and do not need prior approval by the MOCIT. However, free import products must be registered at the MOCIT if they are under the special import-export program. The majority of agricultural product imports require authorization or permits from official institutions (Ministry of Agriculture or Invima) and import registration at MOCIT.

**Prior License (licencia previa) Imports.** Import products which require import registration, in addition to prior approval of the MOCIT. This category includes fresh, frozen and chilled poultry and food preparations of poultry.

**Prohibited (prohibida) Imports.** Imports on the Prohibited list are not allowed entry into Colombia. No food and agricultural products are included into this category.

## SECTION II. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

The Government of Colombia (GOC) requires country-of-origin labeling for processed foods. The GOC, however, does not classify frozen vegetables as a processed food and, therefore, no country of origin labeling is required. Also, fresh fruit and vegetables do not require country of origin labeling.

Imported processed food products that are not destined for further processing must carry a sticker indicating the producer/processor's name and address, the importer's name and address, product composition, the GOC's sanitary registration number, and the original sales label. GOC labeling requirements for processed foods do not address the question of ingredient origin. Therefore, if an imported food item contains ingredients from more than one country, for example, U.S. and Canadian peas in the same frozen package, the label must only identify the processor's name and address. The GOC's product labeling requirements for imported processed foods do not require that the exporter identification information be affixed in a specific part of the package.

Product labeling information on imported processed products must be present at the point of retail sale. The responsibility for this labeling information rests with the importer, not the retailer. Many Colombian importers arrange for this information to be placed on the product by the exporting firm, before it enters Colombia.

For processed products shipped with Spanish labels, the following information must be shown: product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Social Protection (INVIMA) registration number, any recommended method of storage/conservation, and product expiration date, if appropriate.

Imports that are destined for further processing, such as mechanically deboned chicken, do not require country-of-origin labeling. The GOC also does not require country-of-origin labeling for imported bulk-packed or consumer-packed fresh fruits and vegetables. The GOC does not require a sticker/label indicating country of origin on individual pieces of fresh fruit. Colombian consumers, therefore, seldom are aware of the origin of imported fruit and vegetables.

## SECTION III. PACKAGING AND CONTAINER REGULATIONS

No specific requirements are established for food packages or containers. **However, pet food packages and consumer presentations have to be approved by ICA, the Colombian Agricultural Institute, before a product is approved for sale in Colombia.**

## SECTION IV. FOOD ADDITIVE REGULATIONS

The Ministry of Social Protection (previously known as Ministry of Health) is the Colombian government

agency in charge of food additive legislation. Within the Ministry, the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food (INVIMA) was established in 1993 to guarantee the quality and safety of drugs, food and medical supplies in the Colombian market. INVIMA is the implementing agency for the food and drug legislation originated by the Ministry of Social Protection.

All GOC decrees and resolutions, as well as regulations by the Ministry of Social Protection and the related agencies on food additives, must be published in the Official Gazette (Diario Oficial), in order to become effective. Subscription to the “Diario Oficial” can be obtained at the following address: Diagonal 22 Bis No.67-70 (Ave Esperanza–Ave 68), Bogota, D.C., Colombia. Tel: (57-1) 324-3100/13/14/15/16. E-mail: [correspondencia@imprensa.gov.co](mailto:correspondencia@imprensa.gov.co)

The basic food additive legislation is Decree 2106 of 1983 from the previous Ministry of Health. Decree 2106 defines and classifies food additives. It also regulates the use and manufacturing of food additives, as well as their importation. Decree 2106 also regulates the transportation and marketing of food additives. It indicates what information is required in order to ask the authorization for a new food additive.

Besides the basic Decree 2106, the Government of Colombia, through the Ministry of Health, has issued other decrees that list specific kinds of food additives, e.g., food dyes and anti-oxidants, along with specific requirements for their use.

Colombian regulations do not specifically state that CODEX food additives are accepted. Nevertheless, Article 5 of Decree 2106 states that the current recommendations of the Food Chemical CODEX and the CODEX Alimentarius or any other pertinent scientific publications will be taken into consideration in the formulation of regulations governing the use of food additives. Additionally, Articles 7 and 8 of Decree 2106 establish an Advisory Committee to suggest changes to Colombian legislation on food additives.

Decree 2106 applies to food additives manufactured in and imported into Colombia, as well as those processed, transported, packed or bottled in Colombia. Food additives sold or consumed in the Colombian territory are subject to this Decree.

Food additives are all substances or a mix of substances--with or without nutritional value--added intentionally in a minimum quantity to food products with the purpose to avoid their alterations or to preserve them; to grant or intensify their aroma, color or flavor; to modify or preserve their general physical presentation; or to perform any role necessary for the good technology in food production. Casual contaminants, such as pesticides and fertilizers, are not considered to be food additives nor are vitamins or minerals added to enhance food nutritional value, nor any alien substance that has come in contact with food by accident.

The Social Protection (Ministry of Health) elaborates and updates continuously the list of food additives that can be used in Colombia, as well as their levels of use and tolerances and to which foods they can be added. These regulations will take into account technological developments, as well as current publications of the Food Chemical CODEX and the CODEX Alimentarius or any other pertinent scientific source.

If someone is interested in using a food additive not included in the official list of authorized additives he/she

must request its inclusion by applying to the Director of Environment Protection (Dirección de Saneamiento Ambiental) of the Ministry of Social Protection (previously known as Ministry of Health). The applicant must specify:

- Purpose in using the additive,
- Justification for its use,
- Food list in whose preparation the additive will be used and food composition (food ingredients),
- Additive physical-chemical properties, and
- Technical bibliography to prove additive effectiveness and harmlessness.

The Advisory Committee will study the application and submit a recommendation to the Ministry of Health, which will take the final decision on inclusion or exclusion of the requested food additive.

Decree 2106 also lists the maximum level of a mixture of food additives that can be used in a given food product. Exceptions to this norm will be specifically established by the Ministry of Health.

Food additives are forbidden when they:

- interfere with the food's nutritional value,
- serve to disguise food processing failures or mishandling,
- disguise alterations, changes, contamination or falsification of the food's raw material or the finished product,
- lead to consumer error, confusion or fraud, and
- do not meet the specifications of this decree.

Additives to food products must be listed on the label, according to the role they are supposed to perform. Additionally, labeling regulations from the Ministry of Social Protection must be followed.

## **SECTION V. PESTICIDE AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS**

Colombia does not have national standards for MRL (pesticide Maximum Residue Limits). Colombia applies the Codex Alimentarius regulations on maximum residue levels. If for some reasons there are not Codex MRL information for a specific product (either imported or domestically produced) or there are serious doubts about its pesticide content, a sample is taken and analyzed by the National Laboratory for Agricultural Inputs (known by the Spanish acronym LANIA) which is administered by the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA) of the Colombian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The analysis fee must be paid by the interested party (i.e., producer and/or importer/exporter).

## **SECTION VI. OTHER REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **a. Product Health Registration**

All processed retail food items, including products imported in bulk for repackaging for retail use without

further processing, must be registered and approved by the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food (INVIMA), an agency of the Ministry of Social Protection (decree 3075/97). Food products that are sold to restaurants, other institutions, or to processors do not need to be registered with INVIMA. Products that have not undergone transformation, such as fresh or frozen produce and meat, also do not need INVIMA registration. A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

(a) In case the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA's registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).

(b) In case the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.

Besides, INVIMA registration is valid only for the specifications (e.g., presentation and size) mentioned in the registration. If another presentation of the same product is to be imported, the registering company needs to inform INVIMA in writing of the new product.

INVIMA registration of processed foods requires: (1) a written document from the manufacturer stating that it manufactures the product; and (2) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not strictly required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings (dyes), is submitted. All documents submitted to INVIMA must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. All documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

INVIMA charges a registration fee ranging from \$399.30 to \$838 per product. After the submission of all required documentation, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days. Most of the product registration process can be carried out by Internet.

## **b. Importer Registration, Import Registration and Import Licensing**

Every Colombian importer must be registered with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MOCIT). U.S. exporters seeking to sell to a Colombian firm should ascertain that the Colombian importer has obtained the legal authority to import agricultural products by completing the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism registration process. Once registered, the importer or importing company enjoys the legal right to import any agricultural product.

Most agricultural imported products require import registration (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50) issued by the MOCIT. Import registration approval takes about two working days.

### **c. Sanitary Permit**

Non-transformed products that are fresh or frozen (meat and produce) do not need an INVIMA registration, but they do need a sanitary permit from the Ministry of Agriculture's Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA). ICA is responsible for the issuance of import sanitary permits for animal products, vegetables, fruits, and grains. This permit details the phytosanitary and zoosanitary (SPS) import requirements for these products. The Colombian importer must first obtain the import permit from ICA, before requesting an import registration from the MOCIT. The ICA import permit is supplied by the importer to the exporter for submission to USDA. USDA then issues a sanitary certificate referencing the requirements in ICA's import permit. No shipments should be loaded and transported without the submission of the sanitary permit. Whenever, ICA issues new health requirements, the health agency in the US is notified to see if it can comply with the new requirements.

For ICA approval, the product must: (1) come from a USDA inspected facility; (2) be free of disease; (3) be inspected by USDA prior to its shipment and be accompanied by a USDA health certificate; and (4) be inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia.

### **d. Pre-Shipment Certification**

Beginning on July 1, 1999, the Colombian Government eliminated the inspection and certification of imported food products at the loading port, as part of an effort to ease import procedures.

### **e. Import Duties**

Most processed foods are assessed a 20 percent ad-valorem import duty. However, some high-value food product imports, such as powdered milk, fresh/chilled and frozen pork, and chicken parts, are subject to the Andean Community's price band and reference price system, which can markedly increase the Colombian import duty. The U.S. Government views the reference price and price band systems applied by Colombia to be inconsistent with Colombia's World Trade Organization obligations. The price band system distorts trade and does not operate in a transparent manner. This regime often makes it difficult, if not impossible, to know in advance what duty will be assessed on a product shipped to Colombia. Furthermore, it often appears that the reference price used to calculate the import duty does not accurately match the imported product, but rather a different class of product. This often causes an inflated surcharge to be assessed. For example, floor and ceiling prices for imports of chicken parts are based on prices for whole chickens, which tends to unfairly assess a higher import duty than would appear appropriate.

Colombian processed food imports from Chile and other country members of the Andean Community (Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela) enter duty-free. This, combined with lower transport charges, provides a significant cost incentive for local importers to turn to regional suppliers rather than to purchase from the United States. This is particularly true for fresh and processed fruit, wine, and at times for meat.



For those U.S. products subject to the price band system, import duties are calculated based upon the CIF adjusted floor, ceiling, and reference price levels determined by the Andean Board of Directors. Under this system, import duties are levied on calculated reference prices and not on actual invoice prices. The Andean Community establishes annual ceiling and floor prices every April. Reference prices are adjusted by the Andean Community every two weeks. If, the applicable reference price falls within the floor and ceiling price band, the import duty is calculated by applying the common external tariff rate for the Andean Community to the reference price. When the reference price falls below the floor price, a variable levy, or surcharge, is applied, which is based on the difference between the floor price and the reference price. This surcharge is levied in addition to the applied duty. Conversely, when the reference price exceeds the ceiling price, a reduction is made to the applied duty, based on the difference between the reference and the ceiling prices.

The following illustrates how Colombia's import duties are calculated for those U.S. food products subject to the price band system. In the example below, we have calculated Colombia's import duty treatment that would be assessed against imports of powdered milk arriving at Colombian ports August 1 through 15, 2003.

Price Band Ceiling Price	\$2,219 per ton
Price Band Floor Price	\$2,001 per ton
Reference Price	\$1,806 per ton
Applied Duty Rate	20 percent
Duty Calculation--\$1,806 X 20 percent	= \$361.20
Duty Surcharge--\$2,001 - \$1,806	= \$195.00
Duty on surcharge--\$195 X 20 percent	= \$ 39.00
Total Import Duty	= \$595.20

The \$595.20 per ton total duty assessment is equal to 33 percent of the reference price (\$1,806 per ton).

## **SECTION VII. OTHER SPECIFIC STANDARDS**

No other specific standards are noted.

## **SECTION VIII. COPYRIGHT AND/OR TRADEMARK LAWS**

### **1. Patents and Trademarks**

The agency in charge of patents and trademarks is the Superintendency of Industry and Commerce. This entity is now under the MOCIT, but it used to be under the Ministry of Economic Development. Two Andean Community decisions on the protection of patents and trademarks and of plant varieties have been in effect in Colombia since 1994. They provide a 20-year term of protection for patents. Provisions of the decisions covering protection of trade secrets and new plant varieties are generally consistent with

international standards for protecting intellectual property rights.

Trademark protection requires registration and use of a trademark in Colombia. In a recent decree, Colombia announced that registration of a trademark must be accompanied with its use in order to prevent parallel imports. Trademark registrations have a ten-year duration and may be renewed for successive ten-year periods. Priority rights are granted to the first application for a trademark in an Andean Community country. Colombia is a member of the Inter-American Convention for Trademark and Commercial Protection. The Andean Community decision on patent and trademark protection also provides for protection of industrial secrets.

## **2. Copyrights**

Andean Community Decision 351/94 and Colombia Law 44/93 regulate protection of copyrights in this country. Law 44/93 extends computer software protection to 50 years, but does not classify it as a literary work. Colombia belongs to both the Berne and the Universal Copyright Conventions. This decision provides a generally Berne-consistent system.

Law 44/93 significantly increased penalties for copyright infringement, specifically empowering the Attorney General's office to combat piracy. However, U.S. industry estimates that piracy represents over 75 percent of the video cassette market, 66 percent of the sound recording market, and 67 percent of the business software market.

## **SECTION IX. IMPORT PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC COMMODITY GROUPS**

### **a. High-Value, Consumer-ready Food Products for Retail Sale**

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants the Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products; and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. The product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. The

registration cost depends on the item, but ranges from \$116 to \$621 per product. After all required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

(a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).

(b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.

3. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (phytosanitary permits cost 41,100 pesos or about \$14.40 and zoosanitary permits cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form, INVIMA clearance and ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The MOCIT will then issue an import registration or license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
7. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, INVIMA (Ministry of Social Protection) registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.

Note: Consumer-oriented food products are assessed a 20 percent import duty. If they are under the Andean Price Band System, then the import duty is assessed as previously shown.

#### **b. Processed food items for institutional use**

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).

3. The importer then submits the completed import registration form to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This import registration approval takes about 2 days.

Note: a. Processed food products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.  
b. No registration at ICA or INVIMA is required for processed food products for institutional use.

**c. Beef and Pork, Not-transformed (Fresh, Chilled or Frozen)**

HS: 02.01-/02-/03

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MOCIT). This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import any and all agricultural products.
2. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
3. The importer presents to ICA his completed import registration form and is issued a sanitary permit (cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). This process normally takes about 48 hours. The outbreaks of BSE in different parts of the world have made necessary stricter import regulations for beef and beef products.
4. The importer presents the completed import registration form and the ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MOCIT). The Ministry of Commerce will then issue an import registration approval. This process normally takes 48 hours.
5. The imported meat product is inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product comes from U.S. inspected production facilities, is free of disease, has been inspected by USDA prior to its shipment, and is accompanied by a USDA (FSIS) health certificate.
6. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, INVIMA (Ministry of Social Protection) registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.
7. A recent decree (Decree 1133 of May 21, 2003) established a TRQ of 3,000 tons for fine beef cuts and raised 20 to 80 percent the import duty on beef (out of the 3,000 tons quota) and beef offals. See Voluntary report CO-3007 of 6/6/03.
8. Poultry meat and pork are subject to a variable duty under the Andean price band system. Currently, total import duties stand at 122 percent for poultry meat, and 20 percent for pork.

Note: No registration with INVIMA is required for non-transformed beef or pork.

**d. Beef and Pork, Transformed (fresh, chilled or frozen)**

HS: 02.10-

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MOCIT). This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Drugs and Food. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority.

Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. The product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Costs depend on the item, but range from \$399 to \$838 per product. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

- (a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).
  - (b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
3. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
  4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 36,000

- pesos or about \$12.60). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form, INVIMA clearance and ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The MOCIT will then issue an import registration approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  7. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, INVIMA (Ministry of Social Protection) registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.

#### **e. Import Requirements for Poultry Meat (whole birds), not transformed**

A transformed product is defined by the GOC as having been subjected to processing that resulted in a change in its internal structure.

1. The Ministry of Agriculture must approve chicken (or other poultry) imports. Whenever this Ministry determines that domestic supplies are sufficient to meet local demand and/or that imports of this product would economically damage local poultry industry, imports are not approved. Except for selected ports (San Andres, Portete, Leticia), the Ministry of Agriculture has not approved fresh/frozen chicken part imports since 1994.

The GOC, however, does approve imports of processed or prepared poultry parts. Duty treatment for these products is subject to the application of the Andean Community price band and reference price systems.

In 1998, the GOC ruled (resolution 281) that poultry meat import approval is subject to domestic absorption policies. Importers must purchase a certain amount of locally produced poultry meat before they their import license is approved. Importers must buy 95 kilos of chicken meat or 2.6 kilos of turkey meat for each kilo of the same product to be imported; duck, goose meat and Cornish hen meat are not subject to the absorption requirement.

2. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
3. The importer presents to ICA his completed import registration form and is issued a sanitary permit (cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). This process normally takes about 48 hours.
4. The importer presents the completed import registration form, the ICA sanitary permit, and the Ministry of Agricultural approval to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import registration approval. This process normally takes 48 hours. The imported meat product is inspected by an ICA veterinarian upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product comes from U.S. inspected production facilities, is free of disease, has been inspected by USDA prior to its shipment, and is accompanied by a USDA health certificate.

5. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, INVIMA (Ministry of Social Protection) registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.
6. All meats are assessed a 20 percent import duty. Poultry meat is also subject to a variable duty under the Andean price band system. Currently, the total import duty stand at 122 percent for poultry meat.

Note: Product registration with the INVIMA (Ministry of Social Protection) is not required.

**f. Poultry Parts (fresh, chilled or frozen)**

HS: 02.07-13./14./26./27.35./36. and 16.02-31.00.10/32.00.10/39.00.10

The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products. *The products under this HS codes are subject to the prior licensing approval by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.*

1. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority.

Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. The product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Costs depend on the item, but range from \$116 to \$621 per product. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

- (a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).

- (b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
2. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
  3. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form, INVIMA clearance and ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
  6. If the meat is sold in retail packages, it must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, name and address of producer, net contents in metric units, list of ingredients, Ministry of Health registration number, recommended method of storage, and product expiration date. This information may be provided by the application of a sticker to the package.

Note: Poultry parts (fresh, chilled or frozen) are assessed a basic 20 percent import duty, plus an additional import duty calculated by the Andean Price Band System. Currently, the total import duty for chicken parts is 122 percent.

#### **g. Mechanically Deboned Chicken or Pork**

HS: 16.02.39-

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food (INVIMA). INVIMA registration requires: (1) a written document from the manufacturer certifying that it manufactures the product, and (2) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not required, product approval is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and a list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings are detailed.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or Consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. All documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label may be submitted. A registration fee must be paid. This fee covers the cost of preparing an analysis of the product. The



analysis need not be done prior to registration approval. INVIMA registration charges depend on the item, but it is ranging from \$399 to \$838 per product. After all required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

(a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).

(b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.

3. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form, INVIMA clearance and ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.

Note: Processed meats are assessed a basic 20 percent import duty.

#### **h. Fresh Fruit and Vegetables**

HS: 07./08.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import any and all agricultural products.
2. The importer purchases an import registration form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
3. The importer presents to ICA his completed import license form and is issued a sanitary permit (cost 41,100 pesos or about \$14.40). This process normally takes about 48 hours.
4. The importer presents the completed import license form and the ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import license approval. This process normally takes 48 hours.
5. The imported produce is inspected by an ICA official upon arrival in Colombia. The ICA official ensures that the product meets the wholesomeness conditions and is free of disease/pest, has been

inspected by USDA prior to its shipment, and is accompanied by a USDA plant health certificate.

- Note:
- a. Fresh produce products are assessed a 20 percent import duty.
  - b. No labeling requirements are specified by the GOC for fresh produce imports.

### **i. Processed Fruit and Vegetables**

HS: 20.

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Drugs and Food. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, and (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States. This certificate needs to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee must be paid. This fee includes an analysis of the product. Product does not need to be analyzed before registration approval is given. Costs depend on the item, but range from \$116 to \$621 per product. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days. The registration can be made by Internet.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

- (a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).
  - (b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or a lawyer.
3. The importer purchases an import license form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
  4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.

5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 41,100 pesos or about \$14.40). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form, INVIMA clearance and ICA sanitary permit to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import license approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.

Note: Processed produce products are assessed a 20 percent import duty. The GOC, however, does not classify frozen vegetables as a processed food and, therefore, no country of origin labeling is required.

#### **j. Wine**

HS: 22.04

1. The Colombian importer must register his company with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. This grants Government of Colombia authorization to the company to import all agricultural products.
2. The product must be registered with INVIMA, the National Institute for the Surveillance of Drugs and Food. This registration can be done by either the exporter or the importer. INVIMA registration requires: (a) a written document from the manufacturer stating that they manufacture the listed products, (b) a certificate of free sale stating that the products are approved for human consumption in the United States, (c) a product analysis certificate, (d) manufacturer authorization for selling the product in the country by the importer included, and (e) three copies of the product label. Certificates need to be issued by a U.S. Government (state, local or federal) health authority. Although not required, INVIMA registration is facilitated if a description of the manufacturing process and list of the ingredients, including any additives, preservatives, and colorings is submitted.

All documents must be notarized by the Colombian Embassy or a consulate in the United States and by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bogota. These documents must be translated into Spanish by a translator approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A sample label also may be submitted. An INVIMA registration fee of about \$838 must be paid. After all the required documentation is submitted, product registration by INVIMA takes about three working days.

INVIMA registration is valid only for the applicant (exporter or importer) and the manufacturer specified in it. Whenever the U.S. exporter wants to change its Colombian importer, there are two possibilities:

(a) If the U.S. exporter is the applicant for INVIMA registration, he must submit an application for modification to INVIMA (cost 76,176 pesos or about \$27).

(b) If the Colombian importer is the applicant, the U.S. exporter must initiate a new registration process, specifying his new importer(s). Afterwards, he may change his importer(s) whenever he deems it advisable. The U.S. exporter must apply through his legal representative in Colombia or

a lawyer.

3. The importer purchases an import license form at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (cost 30,000 pesos or about \$10.50).
4. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form to INVIMA for clearance. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
5. The importer presents the completed MOCIT form and INVIMA clearance to ICA (cost 36,000 pesos or about \$12.60). ICA then issues a sanitary permit. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
6. The importer presents the completed MOCIT import registration form and INVIMA clearance to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism will then issue an import registration approval. This process normally takes about 48 hours.
7. Wine must be labeled. Labels must be in Spanish and contain the product name, name and address of importer, place of production, percentage of alcohol, net contents and a statement indicating that excessive consumption of alcohol is harmful to the health. All of this information must be printed on the label prepared by the wine producer/exporter. Imported bottled wine is permitted in containers not exceeding two liters.

Note: Wines are normally assessed a 20 percent import duty. Wines imported from Andean Community countries and Chile enter duty free.

**APPENDIX I. GOVERNMENT REGULATORY AGENCY CONTACTS**

Mario Aranguren, Director General  
Dirección de Impuestos y Aduanas  
Nacionales (DIAN).  
(Customs and Tax Directorate)  
Carrera 8 No. 6-64, Piso 5  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: (57-1) 297-1220/341-7521/607-9999  
Fax: (57-1) 286-5789  
E-mail: [dian@dian.gov.co](mailto:dian@dian.gov.co)  
Web site: [www.dian.gov.co](http://www.dian.gov.co)

Julio C. Aldana, Director General  
INVIMA  
Carrera 68 No. 17-21  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: (57-1) 294-8700 Ext. 3822/3885  
Fax: (57-1) 294-8700 Ext. 3896  
E-mail: [Invimadg@invima.gov.co](mailto:Invimadg@invima.gov.co)  
Web site: [www.invima.gov.co](http://www.invima.gov.co)

Deyanira Barrero, Coordinadora  
Riesgos Zoonosarios  
ICA  
Calle 37 No. 8-43, Piso 4  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: (57-1) 288-4334  
Fax: (57-1) 288-4334  
E-mail: [sanidad.animal@ica.gov.co](mailto:sanidad.animal@ica.gov.co)  
Web site: [www.ica.gov.co](http://www.ica.gov.co)

Jaime Cárdenas  
Inspección y Cuarentena Vegetal  
ICA  
Calle 37 No. 8-43, Piso 4  
Bogotá, Colombia  
Tel: (57-1) 232-4709  
Fax: (57-1) 288-1753  
E-mail: [sanidad.vegetal@ica.gov.co](mailto:sanidad.vegetal@ica.gov.co)  
Web site: [www.ica.gov.co](http://www.ica.gov.co)

**APPENDIX II. OTHER CONTACTS**

Office of Agricultural Affairs  
U.S. Embassy - Bogota  
Unit 5119  
APO AA 34038  
Tel: (57-1) 315-2138  
Fax: (57-1) 315-2181  
E-mail: [agbogota@fas.usda.gov](mailto:agbogota@fas.usda.gov)