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This table summarises the general requirements and standards for food and agricultural imports into United Arab Emirates.

Certification/ Requirements	Remarks
Food Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member of ISO• For most part, UAE regulation is based on GCC standards (available at http://www.gso.org.sa/gso/home.do).• In absence of GCC standards, UAE recognizes International Standards such as Codex/ EU/ US standards
Regulatory/ Enforcement Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emirates Authority for Standardization and Metrology (ESMA)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Works in cooperation with other members of the GSO to develop or adopt all standards- Standards are available for sale at https://www.esma.ae/e-store/defaultar/default.aspx• UAE General Secretariat of Municipalities (GSM)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- responsible for establishing food safety regulations based on recommendations made by the National Food Safety Committee (NFSC) and the Veterinary Committee (VC)- coordinating body between the eight municipalities of other UAE federal entities• The respective health department in each municipality is responsible for enforcing the federal food safety standards on locally produced and imported foods through its food control section (each operates independently of one another).
Food Import Health Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required for general products that are not covered by other certificates e.g. chilled and unprocessed meat, dairy products, egg and egg products, fish and marine products• Attests to the product's fitness for human consumption.
Halal slaughter certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issued by a UAE-approved Islamic Centre and notarized by UAE Embassy/Consulate to accompany export health certificate for meat and poultry products
Phytosanitary Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For import and re-export of live plants• Issued by the country of origin
Veterinary Health Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required for the import and re-export of live animals• Issued by the country of origin
Import Permit Agricultural Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The UAE Ministry for Environment and Water (www.moew.gov.ae/en/) is responsible for registering all types of agricultural chemicals that are imported• A permit must be issued to any importer prior to placing orders to buy any type of agricultural chemicals

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Pre-shipment approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not required, but strongly encouraged for new products, and ingredients for new products• For food Labels<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Copies of labels can be sent (fax/e-mail/through importer) to health officials for review and registration, at no cost. When approved and registered, the products bar code will be added to the municipality's list of approved and registered products. This procedure is meant to facilitate the importation of products and reduce clearance time.• For products<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Officials will analyze a product to determine compliance with food ingredient standards. Costs involved vary, depending on type of product and ingredients. Laboratory testing is required on first consignments to the UAE. The same product may be subject to future random laboratory testing.
Labeling	
General Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The UAE has adopted Gulf standard GSO 9/2007 and GSO 150/2007 for labeling and shelf life as its domestic standards.• Food labels may not include pictures of pork, nor may recipes list pork.• To avoid confusion with regulatory officials and consumers, exporters may wish to steer clear of names traditionally associated pork on non-pork products such as turkey ham or beef bacon
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arabic/English labels are permitted, as are Arabic stickers in lieu of Arabic labels.
Required Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Product name (name of the food) in a prominent position on the label• Ingredients in descending order of proportion• Additives using their "E" number (group names are accepted)• The source of the animal fats (beef, buffalo, etc) (must be halal-slaughtered)• The foodstuff and ingredients which are known to cause hypersensitivity shall always be declared• Net content in metric units• Production and expiry dates• Country of origin• The name and address of the manufacturer, producer, distributor, importer, exporter or vendor shall be declared on the label• Special storage and preparation instructions, if any

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Certification/ Requirements	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foods making health claims must be labeled accordingly and require pre-approval by the Ministry of Health• Lot identification <p>Exemptions: products intended for institutional use, Small packages (where largest surface area is <10cm²)</p>
Date marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production/expiry dates must be engraved, embossed, printed or stamped directly onto the original label or primary packaging at the time of production, using indelible ink.<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Day/month/year for products with a shelf-life of three (3) months or less- Month/year for products with a shelf-life longer than three (3) months. The last day of the month is considered the expiry date• The word "Production" or the letter "P" must precede the production date.• The expiry date must be preceded by one of the following statements: "Expiration (date)"; "Fit for.....from the date of production"; "Use by (date)"; "Use before (date)"; "Sell by (date)"; "Valid until (date) from the date of production;" or the letter "E."• Exporters who list the first day of the month following the expiry date have run into issues when trying to clear shipments.• The month may be printed in numbers or letters. For example, both 3/08 and March 08 are acceptable formats.• Production and expiry dates are not required for bulk cartons of fresh fruit and vegetables
Shelf life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regulated by GSO 150/2007 (Expiration Periods of Food Products)• Not required for salt, white sugar, dried legumes, dried vegetables, spices and other condiments, tea, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables and vinegar
Nutritional Labelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Required for specialty foods, such as diet, health and baby foods• Must contain detailed information about the product's vitamin and mineral contents, nutritive value per 100 grams and proper use and storage.• RDA labeling not required
Health Claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a food product carries certain health claims such as "maintains sugar of blood pressure for certain number of hours", they must be pre-approved by one or more of the following bodies:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1. The food control section of the importing municipality• 2. The medical clinic of the municipality

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Certification/ Requirements	Remarks
Pet Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3. The Ministry of Health (http://www.moh.gov.ae/en/) • Must contain statement "Not fit for human consumption" • Production/expiry dates are required
Other Information	
Food Additives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAE Standard 23/2000 (GS 23/1998): Regulates the use of food coloring additives • UAE Standard 356/1995 (GS 356/94): Regulates the use of food preservatives • UAE Standard 357/1995 (GS 357/94): Regulates the use of antioxidants • UAE Standard 381/1995 (GS 381/94): Regulates the use of emulsifiers, stabilizers and thickeners. • UAE Standard 707/1997 (GS 707/96): Regulates the use flavors • If a food additive is not listed in any of the approved GCC standards, laboratory officials usually refer to Codex, EU or the U.S. standards. • UAE health authorities look closely at the addition of food coloring, preservatives, antioxidants and non-nutritive sweeteners when reviewing new-to-market products. The Food Control Section of the respective Municipality should be contacted for further details.
Pesticides and other contaminants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits of residues in agricultural and food products are regulated in UAE Standard #382/1995 (GS382/ 1994) and #383/1995 (GS383/ 1994) • In the absence of a GSO or UAE standard, the UAE recognizes the Codex that governs pesticide and other contaminant residue levels.
Inspection / control procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every food shipment is subject to visual inspection upon arrival to ensure compliance with label and shelf-life regulations by health inspectors. • Shipments are subject to random laboratory analysis. • New-to-market food products are subject to thorough laboratory analyses. • Poultry products - routinely checked for Salmonella. If salmonella is detected in more than 20 percent of tested samples, the shipment will be rejected.
Food Samples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples for food shows and other promotional events are routinely exempt from local labeling and shelf life requirements, yet they must be accompanied by a health certificate. • Product samples must be clearly marked as samples and accompanied by a statement claiming that they are not for sale or commercial use. • Meat and poultry samples must be accompanied by a Halal certificate and export health certificate.

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Baby foods and edible oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be inspected each time imported, subjected to 100% sampling.
Packaging and container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no special packaging or container size requirements for food products. • GS 839/1999, adopted as UAE Standard #839/2000, addresses "General Requirements for Food Packages – Part I. The standard stresses the need to use suitable materials that protect the integrity of the food, its wholesomeness and characteristics.
Products Containing Pork/Non-Halal Meats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pork products may be sold in designated excluded areas of retail stores and in certain restaurants. • Other non-Halal meats (meat and poultry) are permitted import through an exemption issued by the Director, Food Control Section of the municipality. • Such products are subject to certain restrictions, i.e., can only be sold to non-Muslims via the designated areas/establishments. • Labels for pork and pork containing products must comply with the general labeling requirements and must clearly state that the product contains pork.
Alcoholic Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >0.05% alcohol by volume • Alcoholic beverages and alcohol containing products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can be imported but only through authorized importers who run their own retail shops - exempt from local labeling requirements. - no special labeling requirements for alcoholic beverages beyond what is typically required in the country of origin • No alcohol is permitted in any foodstuff

Reference: USDA FAS GAIN Report

Services offered by the Public Health Department of Dubai Municipality

(http://www.dm.gov.ae/DMEGOV/customer/dm-dos-servicesListFromDept?department_id=11&name_e=Public%20Health%20Department)

DISCLAIMER:

This document has been prepared by SPRING Singapore with the intention of assisting Singapore based exporters of food products. While every possible care has been taken in the preparation of this document, the information may not be completely accurate as policies may have changed or clear and consistent information on these policies were not available. They cannot be taken as the official interpretation of the regulations. It is highly recommended that Singapore based exporters verify the full set of certification and import requirements with the relevant authorities in importing country. **Please note that final import approval of any product is subject to the importing country's rules and regulations as interpreted by custom officials at the point of entry.**