

Requirements and Procedures for Meat Import in Indonesia and the U.S.A. : A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

In order to protect the consumers from zoonosis diseases and to assure the wholesomeness of imported meat from abroad, a decree on requirements for and supervisions of the importation of meat has been issued by the Minister of Agriculture in 1992. The decree, however, has not been adequately socialized to general public until now. Indonesian meat consumers also have to know how the existing decree measure up with similar regulation in other meat importing country such as the United States of America. The recent debate on the possibility of importing beef from India can be used as a test for the Directorate General of Livestock of the Republic of Indonesia in enforcing the decree. The Indonesian and the U.S. requirements and procedures for importation of meat have many things in common. There are, however, at least three major point of differences worth to consider. First, the halal certificate is a must for meat imported into Indonesia. Second, drug and chemical residues are strictly enforced by the FSIS for meat imported to the U.S. Third, the Indonesian National Standard of meat (especially beef) is not adequately prepared to accomodate the imported meat quality and safety specifications.

INTRODUCTION

In early February 1999 the Minister of Agriculture Republic of Indonesia instructed the Director General of Livestock to consider importing meat from India. This initiative came up due to the soaring beef price in the domestic market. To meet the growing demand of meat and keeping the prices relatively stable, the government has decided to increase the volume of imported meat usually from Australia and New Zealand. The idea of importing meat from India was not necessarily new. In

1992, a group of meat inspectors and veterinarians have been dispatched to India to assess possibility of importing meat from India. The report indicated that they did not recommend to go ahead with the importation due to health and economic reasons. The recent proposal on importing meat from India has become a probable choice because the price is less expensive than meat from Australia and other countries such as Malaysia and Philippines have imported meat from India for many years.

The main problem on importing meat from India is the fact that India has not been declared as free from contagious foot and mouth disease and rinderpest by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). Indonesia has been declared free from foot and mouth disease by the OIE in 1990 and free from rinderpest for decades, while Malaysia and Philippines have not been declared free from these diseases.

Indonesian meat consumers are increasingly concern about the possibility of illegal entry of imported raw meat which is unfit for human consumption. This, in part, is due to the fact that they do not well informed about the requirements and standard for importing meat from abroad. Therefore, it is considered very crucial to let consumers know what the domestic law says about importing meat from abroad. In addition, they may need to learn in what way that the domestic regulation differ from other country requirements on meat importation. For the sake of reference, therefore, the United States of America requirements on meat and poultry import has been selected as a comparison.

MEAT IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES IN INDONESIA

In order to meet the domestic demand of meat for general purposes and specific market, it is deemed

necessary to provide opportunity to import meat into territory of Republic of Indonesia. Since the importation of meat from abroad may introduce contagious animal diseases which pose significant threat to meat consumers, it is considered very important to have a regulation that specifically address the requirements and supervision of imported meat.

Eligible Countries

Importation of meat in Indonesia must comply with the technical requirements pertaining to country of origin, abattoir from which the meat originated, quality of meat, method of slaughter, packing, transportation, and must be accompanied with a health certificate and other documents from the country of origin.

Meat imported to Indonesia should originate from a country which at least in the last 12 months have been declared free from the main contagious diseases such as foot and mouth disease and rinderpest, in the last three consecutive years the country has not conducted vaccination against the main contagious foot and mouth disease and rinderpest, and has a system for the supervision of meat wholesomeness, both in abattoirs and in distribution, which at least meets the standard and regulations applied in Indonesia. In addition, the importation of pork the country of origin must have been declared free from swine vascular disease, teschen disease, and African swine fever at least in the last 12 months. The imported pork should come from a ranch which has been declared free from transmissible gastro enteritis, trichinosis and cysticercosis.

Importation of poultry must comply with the requirements as to country of origin has been declared free from fowl plaque epidemic at least in the last 90 days, while for imported duck meat must be originated from a farm which has been declared free from duck viral hepatitis and duck viral enteritis at least in the last 90 days.

Certified Plants

Meat imported to Indonesia should originate from an abattoir which is under the supervision of an authorized veterinarian in the country of origin and the abattoir, of which the standard is at least equal to that of abattoir A in Indonesia, has been approved by the government of Indonesia. The meat should also be accompanied with health certificate from a competent veterinarian in the country of origin indicating that the

country of origin of the meat has been declared free from the main contagious animal diseases, the meat is obtained from livestock born and reared on at least for four months, passed ante mortem and post mortem inspections, processed according to sanitary requirements, contain no preservative, and fit for human consumption. It has to be indicated that the storage period of meat from the time of slaughter until the time of departure should be no longer than three months.

Halal Certificate

Meat imported to Indonesia intended for general consumption or commercial purposes should originate from livestock that has been slaughtered in accordance with the Moslem law and that statement should appear on the certificate of halal. Halal certificate is not applicable to importation of pork, meat for special and limited use, and meat which according to the written statement of owner is intended for animal feed.

Packaging and Transportation

Imported meat should be packed with original packing from the country of dispatch and sealed. On the outer surface of packing should be clearly indicated the number of veterinary control, date of slaughter, type and quality of the meat and its intended use. The meat should be transported directly from the country of origin to the port of destination in Indonesia and it is not allowed to be discharged in other country while on transit.

A Container containing imported meat should be sealed by a competent veterinarian from the country of origin and upon arrival at the port of entry the seal should remain intact. The seal may only be opened by an animal quarantine officer. Meat that has a certificate of halal must not be placed together with meat that has no such certificate within the same container. During transportation the meat temperature in a container should be in the range of 0 - 4°C for fresh meat, while for the frozen meat is stored between -18°C to -22°C.

Import Procedure

Any person or corporate body appointed by the government as general importer may import meat into the territory of the Republic of Indonesia from abroad. The Directorate General of Livestock Services will perform an appraisal of the disease situation, health control

system and procedures for animal slaughter, the abattoir and meat processing companies in the country or part of a country from which the meat comes from and the kind, quality and intended use of the meat to be imported into the territory of the Republic of Indonesia.

For the purpose of appraisal the importer should submit a written application to the Directorate General of Livestock to obtain a permit to import meat in which the following information should be provided : country of origin, name, address and number of veterinary control, abattoir or meat processing company, area of destination, kind and intended use, and the quantity and prospective importation of meat, and the application should be accompanied by data of the company and technical data required.

The Directorate General of Livestock upon receipt of the written application should reply within 14 days whether the application is approved or rejected. If the application is approved, the Directorate General should issue a letter of approval for the importation of meat in a specified period of time and specify the requirements for animal health or other obligation which should be fulfilled by the importer. However when the application is rejected, the Directorate General should issue a letter of refusal along with its reasons. Copies of the letter of approval or refusal has to be forwarded to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Directorate General of Customs and Excise, Head of Livestock Service or the Province, Director of the Center of Agricultural Quarantine, and the Head of the Animal Quarantine Station.

Any importation of meat should be notified by the owner to the Animal Quarantine Officer at the point of entry to be subjected to quarantine actions in accordance with existing quarantine regulations. If the quarantine actions are to be performed outside the point of entry, the Director of the Center for Agricultural Quarantine should determine the place for meat storage which comply with the requirements and is available for quarantine actions to be carried out. The meat storage place designated as temporary installation should be allowed to be used by the local livestock service of the corresponding province. This procedure is also applicable for the entry of meat from one to another area within the territory of the Republic of Indonesia.

Inspection at Port of Entry

In addition to the quarantine actions, the meat of foreign origin will be subjected to other inspections such

as the presence or validity of required documents, import permit, halal certificate, veterinary control number and date of slaughter, and organoleptic examination. A simple random sampling method will be performed by the Animal Quarantine Veterinarian followed by laboratory examination. Report of the result of laboratory examination will be submitted to the Director General of Livestock and Head of the Animal Quarantine Station in case of meat was found to be unfit for human consumption.

If all of quarantine actions and inspections have been performed and the meat is considered to be fit for human consumption, the Animal Quarantine installation will release the imported meat. The release of imported meat will be accompanied by a certificate of release (health certificate) with additional declaration indicating that the meat has been subjected to re-examination and is fit for human consumption. The health certificate will be issued to the owner of the meat and a copy of it will be forwarded to the Animal Husbandry Service of the corresponding province. However, when the meat did not pass the inspections then it must be refused or destroyed in accordance with existing regulations.

Supervision on Distribution

Supervision of the distribution of imported meat which has obtained clearance from the Animal Quarantine installation is performed by the Livestock Service of corresponding district at storage places, retails, and means of distribution. This supervision is carried out in an prescheduled time intervals or anytime under certain circumstances. The supervisor is veterinarian holding a certificate of eligibility for the position and is appointed by the head of district.

The inspection of imported meat includes laboratory examination which are carried out four times a year by random sampling method on the basis of importer, country of origin, kind of meat and trade mark, at the storage places, retails and means of distribution. The supervisor of distribution of imported meat submits a report on inspection finding to the head of the Livestock Service of the district. Subsequently the report is submitted to the Director General of Livestock, Head of Livestock service of the province, and the Director of the Center of Agricultural Quarantine once a year.

U.S. MEAT IMPORT REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for assuring that imported meat and poultry products, like domestic products, are wholesome, unadulterated, and accurately labeled. To be eligible to have their meat or poultry products imported into the United States, the country of origin must impose inspection requirements at least equal to U.S. requirements.

FSIS carries out its import inspection responsibility with a two-pronged approach. First is system review which include evaluation of the laws, policies, and administration of the inspection system in each eligible country. The second aspect is port of entry inspection by USDA inspectors, which verifies the effectiveness of foreign inspection systems. Products that do not meet U.S. standards are refused entry.

Eligible Countries

To become eligible to have its meat or poultry imported into the U.S., a country must first make a formal request through diplomatic channels. FSIS then reviews that country's inspection system to determine whether it is at least equal to the U.S. requirements. System review begins with an evaluation of foreign inspection laws and regulations that cover the slaughtering, processing, labeling and transportation of meat or poultry products.

The foreign system must also be at least equal to the U.S. system with respect to the following: (1) organizational structure and staffing of the inspection program; (2) the degree of control and supervision over the official activities of all employees of the system; (3) the assignment of competent, qualified inspectors; and (4) the authority and responsibility of national inspection officials to enforce laws and regulations governing meat inspection and to certify or refuse to certify products intended for export. Foreign countries must train and license their own inspection personnel.

Certified Plants

Once a country becomes eligible to have its products imported into the U.S., foreign inspection officials are responsible for determining which plants meet U.S.

standards and certifying them to prepare products for the U.S. These plants are certified by use of the same standards applied to domestic plants in the U.S.

Onsite Review

Once a country has been declared eligible to import products into the U.S. and plants within that country are certified, FSIS foreign programs officers periodically review these plants to monitor the effectiveness of foreign inspection. Some officers are based in exporting countries, while others travel as needed from Washington D.C. Reviewers are chosen from veterinarians with considerable experience in the domestic inspection program, and FSIS relies heavily on their expertise in food hygiene and public health.

During onsite reviews, FSIS foreign programs officers look at plant layout, equipment, sanitation, handling of animals, processing operations, how animals are inspected before and after slaughter, labeling, the control of condemned products, and the incidence of animal diseases. In addition, they review laboratory capabilities for residue testing to assure that U.S. standards are met regarding types of test conducted, organs or tissues used for specific analyses, compounds tested for, and methods used to monitor laboratory functions. Also, reviewers check the entire system of maintaining security over a product as it moves from point of production to the loading dock for export.

FSIS findings are discussed with the foreign inspection officials who accompany the FSIS reviewer. If no health hazard exists and deficiencies can be corrected promptly, shipments from the country usually are not interrupted.

Plant Delistment

If serious deficiencies are found during onsite reviews, or if minor deficiencies have gone uncorrected despite warnings, it may be appropriate to require the foreign country to remove the plant's certification. This action is called delistment.

If the reviewer finds a problem that is not restricted to an individual plant but occurs throughout a country's inspection system, FSIS may delist all plants in the country until the problem is corrected. In cases where the foreign inspection system cannot be relied upon carrying out its responsibilities, the country eligibility to ship products to the U.S. is withdrawn. These sanctions re-

main in effect until U.S. officials are satisfied that products destined for this country satisfy U.S.

Inspection at Port of Entry

All meat and poultry imports must also pass USDA inspection before they enter the U.S. Products imported into the U.S. must meet the same standards as those produced domestically. There are six basic categories of inspection : net weight, condition of container, condition of product, incubation of canned goods, label examination, and laboratory analysis. Within each category, many different examinations may be assigned, depending on the type of product.

All meat and poultry products, when imported, must be labeled with the name of the country of origin. However, only imported products that reach consumers without further processing retain such labeling. This, however, is not the case for items that are further processed.

Whenever one lot fails inspection, all related lots in the shipment are tested for that problem. Generally, inspection is intensified whenever a lot fails inspections or when no products are imported for a 180-day period.

Products Refused Entry

If FSIS determines that a meat or poultry product does not meet U.S. standards, it is refused entry. The importer must either ship the product out of the country, convert it to nonhuman food use, or destroy it. The products remain under official hold by FSIS until the importer takes appropriate action. If no action is taken within 45 days, FSIS destroys the product.

Residues

Meat and poultry products that contain illegal levels of drug and chemical residues are considered adulterated. Residues include environmental contaminations such as PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls), animal drugs such as DES (diethylstilbestrol), pesticides such as DDT, and trace elements such as lead. The Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency set legal limits for residues in foods. FSIS enforces these limits in domestics and imported meat and poultry.

Country eligible to export products to the U.S. must have FSIS-approved residue testing programs. They must

test livestock at slaughter for a variety of agricultural chemicals and animal drugs, and must control and regulate the use of these compounds. To verify the effectiveness of these programs, FSIS reviews residue controls and agricultural practices in exporting countries. In addition, FSIS inspectors sample of incoming products at regular, specified intervals, and send them to laboratories for residue analysis.

The port of entry residue testing program has two phases these are monitoring and surveillance. When violative levels of a residue are found in a product from a particular plant, the surveillance phase is triggered for that plant. Each shipment is then sampled for residues and held until acceptable U.S. laboratory test results are received. When enough samples have been tested to demonstrate that the problem is resolved, the plant is returned to the monitoring phase.

Animal Health Restrictions

To protect U.S. livestock, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) restricts some products from entering the United States because of animal disease conditions in the country of origin. For example, countries where rinderpest or foot-and-mouth disease exists are not permitted to export fresh, chilled, or frozen meat to the United States. However, meat from such countries could be shipped to the United States if it is commercially heat processed or cured according to APHIS requirements. Similar requirements are in place for products from countries where other diseases exist.

FSIS Requirements

After the Customs Service and APHIS requirements are met, the shipment must be inspected by FSIS at an approved import inspection facility. FSIS enters information about the shipment into a centralized computer system called the Automated Import Information System (AIIS). The AIIS scans its memory bank to determine if the country, plant, and product are eligible for export to the United States. When the shipment is ready to be reinspected by FSIS, the AIIS will generate an inspection assignment, based on the plant and country's compliance history for that specific product. Inspection results are later entered into the AIIS, helping to establish the level of reinspection for future shipments from the plant and the country.

When a shipment is ready to be reinspected, the importer makes a request to FSIS. The assignment is generated by the AIIS and, within 72 hours, the shipment must be presented for reinspection at an approved import facility. FSIS import inspectors first check the documents to assure the shipment is properly certified by the foreign country. Inspection may be delayed or refused if the documents contain irregularities or errors. Inspectors next examine each shipment for general condition and labeling and then conduct the inspection assignments directed by the AIIS. In some cases, the AIIS will designate the shipment as a "skip," and no further inspections are required for that specific lot. A plant with a good compliance history will not have as many inspections assigned.

Several types of inspection (TOI) may be assigned by the AIIS including net weight checks of retail packages; examination of the container's condition; examination for product defects; incubation of canned goods; and laboratory analyses for product composition, microbiological contamination, residues, and species. In conducting these inspections, a certain amount of product is randomly selected and examined by FSIS import inspectors. When product samples are sent to FSIS laboratories for analysis, the shipment is usually released before test results are received. However, if the plant had previous violations or a problem is suspected, the shipment is held until laboratory results are known. When a shipment passes inspection, each shipping container is stamped with the official mark of inspection and released into U.S. commerce. From this point, the shipment is treated as domestic product. If a shipment does not meet U.S. requirements, the containers are stamped "U.S. Refused Entry," and within 45 days must be exported, destroyed, or—with the approval of FDA—converted to animal food.

SUMMARY

The Indonesian and the U.S. requirements and procedures for importation of meat have many similarities. There are, however, at least three major point of differences worth to consider. First, the halal certificate is a must for meat imported into Indonesia. Second, drug and chemical residues are strictly enforced by the FSIS for meat imported to the U.S. Third, the Indonesian National Standard of meat (especially beef) is not adequately prepared to accomodate the imported meat quality and safety specifications. It is crucial for the

Directorate General of Livestock to systematically enforced the existing regulation on importation of meat to protect the meat consumers against contagious animal diseases and to ensure adequate as well as timely supply of imported meat.

REFERENCES

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