



هيئة أبوظبي للزراعة والسلامة الغذائية
ABU DHABI AGRICULTURE AND FOOD
SAFETY AUTHORITY

Food Importers Guideline

No (1) Year of 2018





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Introduction

Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority (ADFCA) is keen to apply control systems based on best international practices that acts on facilitate trade and trade exchange as risk-based system.

The risk-based system approach is applied based on the identification of the food associated risks so that it is categorized according to the purpose of its use, which allows efficient utilization of resources according to priorities and constitutes a pillar in increasing consumer confidence and maintaining the level of health protection.

The risk -based regulatory system approach relies on tightening the control standards on high-risk foods based on sound scientific evidences compare to less stringent controls on medium and low risk foods . At the same time, this system takes into account the simplification of import procedures and requirements so as to achieve the required protection limits avoiding unjustified trade restrictions which are not based on risk assessment.

Objective:

In this guide which is directed to food importers, ADFCA presents requirements of food importation within risk based inspection system frame , in a clear and transparent manner to assist the importers of food through all Abu Dhabi ports, and provide a simplified explanation regarding the importation and clearance procedure of food consignments received through borders.

Scope:

This guide is intended to be used by all people working in importation of food to Abu Dhabi Emirate. Where it states the basic requirements and procedures to be followed by importers to assure the safety and suitability of food as it is applicable to all food consignments including consignments transferred to port of any



other Emirate, as well as to food consignments passing through the territory of Abu Dhabi Emirate as “transit”.

The guide also refers to special requirements related to certificates, documents associated with the consignment, transportation, storage and food label requirements

Related documents:

- Federal Law number (10) for the year 2015. With respect to the food safety
- Regulation number. (05) for the year 2010, food sampling for official control.
- Law number. (02) for the year 2008, with respect to Food within the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- Regulation number (02) for the year 2008. Risk - Based approach for the control of imported foods via borders of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
- Regulation number (03) for the year 2008, Food Traceability and Recall.
- Regulation number (06) for the year 2010, Food hygiene throughout the Food Chain.
- Ministerial Decision number (14) for the year 2016, regarding non-commercial food consignments.
- Ministerial Decision number (239) for the year 2018, concerning federal system for accreditation and registration of food items.
- Code of practice number (4) for the year 2011 concerning Food Traceability and Recall.
- Code of practice number (5) for the year 2011 concerning requirements of food labelim



Definitions

For the purpose of this guide, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings assigned to each of them unless the context of text indicates otherwise:

The Emirate:	The Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
The Authority:	Abu Dhabi Food Control Authority, ADFCA.
Competent Authority	The local authority responsible for food safety in each emirate
Competent Authorities	Ministries, government departments and federal public bodies and institutions concerned with food safety.
Consumer	Person using the food to meet his/her personal needs or those of others.
Food Control	A compulsory organizational activity conducted by the authority for protecting the consumer, ensuring food safety through all food handling chain, and complementary to safety and suitability for human consumption contained in related requirements and regulations in UAE.
Sample	Any number of food sample units which are used for inspection, the sample comprises all the containers or sample units drawn for inspection or testing purposes, from a particular batch.
Requirements	Criteria and conditions decided by the competent authorities to ensure the safety of food and fair business practices.
Consignment	Specific quantity of food, contains one batch or more, involved in the same certificate and other documents.
Importer	A real or juridical person legally authorized to import foodstuffs to the Emirate.



Transmitted consignment	The consignment that is imported through one of the ports of the state and is officially transferred by the regulatory authority at the port of entry to the competent authority in another emirate to complete the control procedures.
Crossing consignment (Transit)	Goods or consignments not destined to be within the state but are transferred within the territory of the country to settle in another country.
National system for accreditation and registration (ZAD)	A national system for the accreditation and registration of food according to the requirements and procedures contained in the annex of Ministerial decree No. 239 of 2018 regarding the national system for the accreditation and registration of food

Chapter One: Responsibilities of food importers

Food Importers should adhere the following, to be able to import food to Abu Dhabi Emirate:

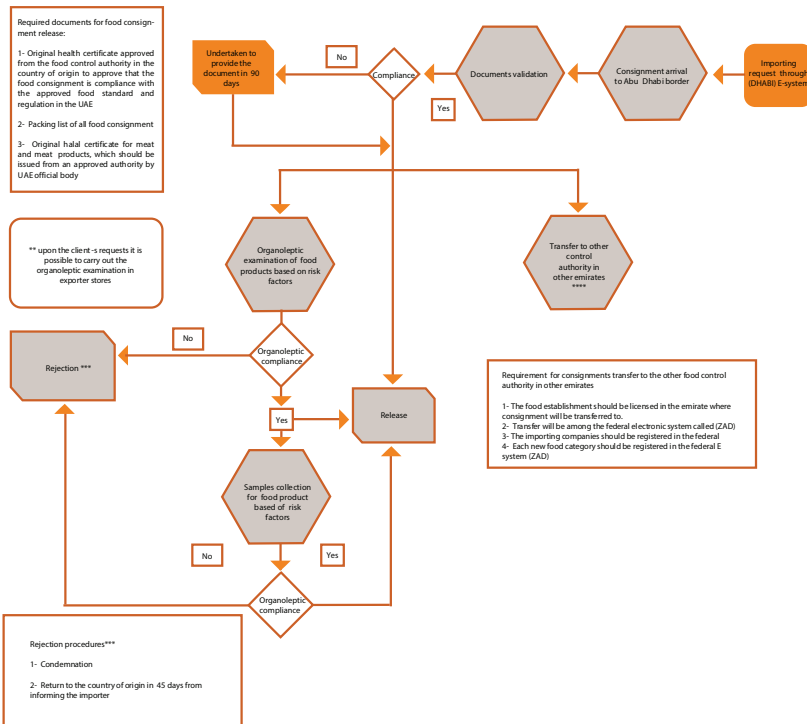
- Implement requirements of the national system of accreditation and registration program (Zad). Food items imported for the first time or local products before being released into the market have to be registered in the system (ZAD) and accredited by having approval of the competent authorities by compliance of these food items to accreditation requirements stated in annex "1" of this guide .
- make sure to accompany the consignment with The required records, certificates and documents in Arabic or English language as they are considered basis for the application of regulatory systems and facilitate the procedures of conformity,



so the importer must take all measures to ensure the accuracy and accuracy of certificates associated with the food consignment.

- Keeping of records and documents required by ADFCA and Competent Authorities.
- Implement the required procedures to ensure that the imported food conforms to the requirements.
- Provide all equipment and other requirements needed for transport, storage and temperature control as declared in annex "2"

Chapter two: Health Clearance Procedures:



Refer to Figure 1, and after the importer has obtained the approval from the competent authority to practice the importation of foodstuffs in the Emirate, and in order to expedite the completion of transactions related to the procedures of health clearance and to avoid any delay the importer shall do the following:

1. fill out the required information electronically using the computerized customs information entry system (DHABI). All details of the contents of the consignment shall be documented separately for each foodstuff item according to the customs tariff HS code.
2. Officially submit the health certificates and relevant documents for the importation of foodstuffs to the officer of ADFCA in order that all health certificates and documents requested in chapter 3 of this guide are available.

Clarrification#1:

when releasing the food consignments from an outlet of other emirates of UAE the certificate of product registration in ZAD System is requested

2.2 With reference to Figure 1, and after the food consignment has been automatically transferred via DHABI to imported food control system, the relevant employee checks the information of the consignment and verifies the accuracy of the data and determines the type of action required electronically.

(Figure 2 below shows the type of procedures according to their degree of severity and according to the approved criteria)



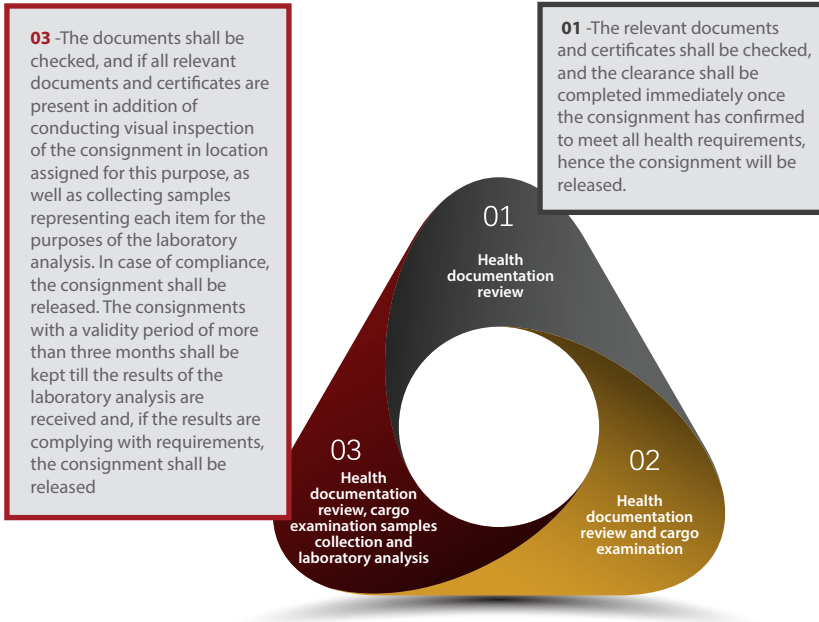


Figure 2: Type of health control procedures on imported food consignments

02 -The relevant documents and certificates shall be checked, along with conducting the visual inspection carried out on the consignment in the location assigned by ADFCA. In case of compliance, the clearance statement shall be completed, and the consignment will be released.

Clarification#2:

- Food items with a validity period of three months or less shall be subject to applicable procedures of control programs in the local market and shall be subject to sampling procedures or laboratory analysis upon importation as deemed appropriate by ADFCA
- Release of food consignments is based on the previous laboratory test results in the country of origin three months after the date of the issue of the laboratory analysis result.



Chapter Three: Documents and Certificates required for imported food.

Refer to Figure 1, and after the arrival of food delivery to the ports of entry in the Emirate, the importer provides the certificates and documents of the consignment , which is divided into two types, depending on where they are issued:

3-1 Certificates and Documents from Within UAE(Emirate

- 1- A commercial license that includes an activity of importation of foodstuffs , general trade or import permission specially for the imported products in the consignment issued by the concerned authorities
- 2- Customs declaration
3. Any additional official documents issued by the concerned authorities in the country and requested by the ADFCA.

3.2 Certificates and documents from the exporting country or country of origin

1. Original health certificates issued by the competent authority or by a officially recognized body in the country of origin or export with food consignments and containing texts and statements attesting to the compliance and conformity of the contents of the consignment with the import requirements and, where appropriate, to the sanitary & phytosanitary requirements.
2. Halal slaughter certificates for meat and poultry issued by UAE recognized bodies to issue a certificate of slaughter halal in UAE, and that the slaughter was carried out in an approved abattoir by the Ministry of Climate Change and environment.
3. Halal certificate for food containing ingredients derived from animal products issued by accredited bodies for the issuance of Halal certificate to UAE by the Ministry of Climate Change and environment. .



4. List of contents of the packing list issued by the producer indicating the container filling date, the types and quantities of food items, along with production and expiry dates for each item or dispatch.
5. Bill of Entry / Customs Declaration, Delivery order or Bill of Lading.
6. In the case of nutritional, health claims or Halal claim on the label, the supporting documents must be provided on the validity of the claim issued by the competent authorities in the country of origin in accordance with the UAE and Gulf regulations in this regard.
7. Any additional documents or certificates may be requested due to international updates and notifications on food safety issues.
8. The temperature readings log during transportation of chilled or frozen consignments when required.
9. Any additional official documents issued by the concerned authorities in the country and requested by ADFCA

Clarrification#3

The importer shall refer to the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment to ensure the following:

- Electronic documents and certificates can be adopted as an equivalent alternative to paper documents when electronic systems are adopted and applied..
- Accredited bodies to issue the certificate of Halal slaughter and Halal certificates in the country.



Chapter four: Procedures for the transfer of the food consignments

As in figure (1) food consignment is being transferred according to import request as follows:

4-1: From ADFCA to competent authorities in other Emirates:

- A. The importer shall be licensed in the Emirate to where the consignment is transferred.
- B. The application of transfer of food consignment shall be submitted electronically via ZAD System at the port of entry of the Emirate to which the consignment is transferred.
- C. Obtain the approval of the control authority to which the consignment is transferred via ZAD System.
- D. In case of electronic approved via ZAD System, the consignment shall be released and transferred under the responsibility of the specified control authority.

Clarification #4:

For consignments with same food items complying on previous laboratory results of three months or less:

- a- Food consignments shall be released immediately without being transferred to the Competent Authority of the Emirate.
- b- In the cases that the imported consignment is not complying with certain non-food safety standards (eg, food label violation or for sample collection purposes), the consignments shall be transferred to be supervised by the Competent Authority of the Emirate to which the consignment shall be transferred

4-2: From competent authorities in other Emirates to ADFCA:

- 1- The importer shall be licensed in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.
 - 2- The transfer request shall be received via ZAD Program from other control authorities.
 - 3- Review of the application of transfer and check the attached documents
 - 4- In case that the transfer application is approved by the concerned department, the transfer fee shall be paid, and an appointment will be fixed to inspect the consignment at the warehouses of the company.
 - 5- Complete the procedures as described in Chapter 4, Figure 2 (type of control procedures on imported food shipments).
- 4-3 Imported food consignments passing across the Emirate's territory, including the free zones controlled by ADFCA, in case of non-compliance, they shall be directly sent out of the Emirate, and not allowed to be downloaded or divided

Chapter Five: Release of imported food consignments

With reference to Figure 1, food consignment is released as follows:

5-1 direct release

The competent employee in ADFCA at the border port shall immediately release the consignment of the imported food if it is found that health documentation and consignment examination meet all the requirements, including the Gulf technical regulations for Labeling of Prepackaged Food Stuffs and expiration dates for food products.

Clarification # 5

The importer must ensure that all food items in the consignment meet the requirements and conditions of the prepackaged food labeling described in Annex 3.

5-2 Conditional release of imported food consignments

The imported food consignments are released with the issuance of the undertaking and / or the financial Warranty in the cases below:

- A) The absence of a list of contents for multi-item consignments.
- B) Incoming consignments for personal consumption purposes.
- C) "import and trade of food" is not be included in the company commercial license of (in the case of the first imported shipment).
- D) The original health certificate is not stated but a copy of it
- E) Transfer the shipment from any of the ports of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to the competent regulatory authority in another Emirate.

Chapter six: Rejection and detention of the Imported Food Consignments

With reference to Figure 1, food consignment is refused and not released as follows:

6.1 Automatic rejection

- 1-Food items that have been banned from entering by the concerned federal or local official authorities or other bodies with in the Emirate and requiring re-exportation to the country of origin.
- 2-Food consignments will be automatically rejected if issued by other country or concerned international organizations as unfit for human consumption.

Clarification#6

Food consignment is automatically detained upon entry into the Emirate for the first time until the completion of the control procedures, except for foodstuffs will expire within a period of three months or less

6-2 Rejection of non-compliant consignments:

Imported food consignments will be rejected in the below cases:

- 1-Proved to be unfit for the purposes of human use.
- 2- If the date of issuance of the health certificate is established before the date of production of the food or after the date of shipment to the country.
- 3- The date of production is issued before the date of halal slaughter stated in the certificate of health and the halal certificate of slaughter.
- 4- Absence of Halal certificate or halal slaughter with shipments of imported meat or poultry
- 5- Lack of a health certificate with shipments of imported food or an attested copy thereof.
- 6- Non-matching accompanying label.
- 7- The list of food items in the accompanying health certificate do not match with those in the consignment.
- 8- Foods that proved by the control procedures are not in compliance with approved regulations.
- 9- The import and trade of food is not included in the company's trade license (in the case of the first imported shipment)

Clarification #7

If the non-compliance condition is confirmed on the consignment of the imported food, it will be refused by issuing a notice stating the reasons for refusing the consignment, and the importer have the right, subject to ADFCA official approval to request any of the options set forth below within a period not exceeding 45 days from the date of the rejection notice. The importer shall bear all expenses and administrative and financial costs incurred in approving the application of any of the below mentioned options:

1. Request additional information from the manufacturer / supplier or from the official authorities in the country of origin supporting food matching.
2. Request for re-analysis of the non-compliant sample in accordance with applicable regulations
3. Request for re -preparing of the consignment to comply with the health requirements and the relevant technical regulations for food.
4. Request for retrofitting the consignment for purposes other than human consumption.
5. Requesting the re-export of the consignment to the country of origin or to other countries.
6. Request to consignment destruction under ADFCA supervision.
7. Requesting donations to charitable organizations (if food is fit for human consumption).
8. Request for reconsideration of the laboratory rejection decision to the product (request for risk assessment) based on scientific justification, and the application should be studied by the Authority.

Chapter seven: Destruction procedures

In reference to Figure 1, the importer proceeds with the destruction procedures of imported foodstuffs that were rejected and not released by ADFCA competent employee as follows:

- A. The importer shall submit a request for the destruction of foodstuffs through the approved electronic system.
- B. The concerned employee receives the application, approves it and calculates the destruction fee based on the weights of the rejected food items in kilograms



- C. The importer shall pay the destruction fees through customer service counter.
- D. The concerned section shall issue a letter to the center of waste management -Abu Dhabi (TADWEER) with the company's detailed information and the foodstuffs to be destroyed.
- E. The center of waste management -Abu Dhabi (TADWEER) shall e-mail notification to ADFCA concerned section and the establishment owner with the destruction date and time through ADCFAs coordinator.
- F. ADFCA competent representative shall supervise the destruction process in the place and time specified by the center of waste management -Abu Dhabi (TADWEER).
- G. The destruction report shall be received from the center of waste management -Abu Dhabi (TADWEER).by e-mail to the ADCFAs coordinator.

In case the quantity of food materials to be destroyed is less than 100 kg, the quantity shall be destroyed at the port of entry or the at the company's stores under the supervision of the inspector along with issuance of the destruction certificate.

References:

1. The technical rule No. 9 on food labeling, issued by the GCC Standardization Organization and the Emirates Standardization and Metrology Authority
2. The Gulf Guide for the Control of Imported Foods and its Implementing Mechanisms issued by the General Secretariat of the GCC Countries.
3. Conditions and specifications of food import and export issued by Dubai Municipality..



4. Food import and export inspection and certification systems third edition. codex Alimentarius
5. Food (Importer General Requirements) Standard 2008. New Zealand Food Safety Authority
6. COMMISSION REGULATION (EC) No 669/2009.
7. COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) No 323/2014. European Commission

Annex 1:

Requirements of the national system of accreditation and registration for food items -E-system for food item registration (Zad program).

Part one

Registration provisions

Food whether imported or locally produced must be registered in the electronic system (ZAD) before being handled in the markets of UAE.

All food establishments licensed in the country shall ensure the registration of their food items in particular the following cases:

- Food to be imported to the country.
- Food manufactured or produced in the country.
- Food that undergoes modification on its food label or its ingredients or composition.
- Registration of food product is considered a requirement and not accreditation.



Part 2

Conditions and procedures for food registration and certification

First: Food Registration Conditions:

The food establishment shall provide the following:

- A. A copy of the food label for the food to be evaluated and / or registered where the food label copy shall be detailed, clear and readable in both Arabic and English.
- B. A picture of the product in its final form to clarify the type of food package.
- C. In case of health or nutrition claims, an official certificate must be provided by the competent official authority in the country of origin confirming such claims.

Second: Food Registration Procedures:

1- Applications for registration of food items shall be submitted electronically by the food establishment, so that each food item shall be presented with one application containing the following data:

- Barcode number
- Country of Origin
- Package type
- Weight or size
- Weight or volume unit
- Brand
- Factory name and address
- The brand name of the product
- Food additives found in ingredients
- Storage temperature
- Ingredients



- 2 - Attach the necessary certificates to prove the claims on the food label (if any).
3. After completing the application data and sending it through the system, the applicant receives a reference number from ZAD system.
4. Applications for registration shall be received by the competent local authority in each Emirate, which shall check the application and ensure that the registration requirements are met and that the product has not been registered previously (not registered in the National Food Register).
5. If the application is accepted by the competent local authority, the registration process shall be completed according to the electronic registration form consisting of four parts: -
 - Detailed information for the product exclusively.
 - Categorize the product and give it the appropriate scientific name. --Determining the initial risk level of the product.
 - Setting standards and types of laboratory microbial and chemical tests for the product based on the latest technical regulations and approved standards.
6. The applicant shall be notified through ZAD system by the result of the registration, either by acceptance or rejection, and a certificate of registration can be obtained for the product in case of acceptance.
7. The food items registered electronically are included in the comprehensive database of food items in the ZAD system, which enables the food establishments to submit import and export applications and enable the competent local authorities to deal with these items and control them.



Third: Conditions of Food Accreditation:

The competent local authority shall accredit the food items according to the following requirements:

1. Compliance with the requirements of legislation and requirements relating to animal and plant health and health measures in the country, technical regulations, standard specifications and any terms or criteria contained in any agreement in force with the exporting country.
2. The item shall not be a source of prohibited products from the State based on animal and plant health and health measures.
3. The item conforms to the technical regulations and approved standard specifications (e.g food label specifications, product specifications, validity specifications, specifications of microbial level, etc.).
4. Comparative laboratory tests of the product according to the approved standard specifications.
5. The product of animal origin shall be an export-approved State enterprise in accordance with applicable legislation.
6. In compliance with technical regulations and mandatory standards for Halal foods.

Part three

Food excluded from registration

The following food items are excluded from registration:

1. Food imported for personal use.
2. Samples of imported food for scientific studies and research which will not be used for human consumption.
- 3 - Food samples used for advertising and marketing studies that will not be used for sale, including free samples distributed to consumers, samples for the purposes of conformity requirements and any food items recorded on their label: «free sample»



4- Food samples used in exhibitions and festivals which will not be used for sale.

5- Food prepared in restaurants.

Any food mentioned in a circular issued by the Minister in coordination with the competent authority and the concerned authorities.

Annex 2 : Food Transportation & Temperature Control.

The provisions of Regulation No (6) of 2010 pertaining to Food hygiene throughout the food chain, including the articles related to temperature control and food transportation, shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Transport of food shall be carried out in such a way to prevent any contamination of the food, to maintain its integrity and at the appropriate temperatures, the interior of food transport vehicle shall be adequately insulated with a lined interior that provides a smooth, continuous, easily cleanable waterproof surface.
- b- Food items shall be physically separated from non-food items during transport, bulk food shall be transported in food transport vehicles reserved for such purpose.



- c- Foods shall maintain the following temperatures:
 - i- Refrigerated food; below (5)°C.
 - ii- Frozen food; at or below (-18)°C.
 - iii- All other foods, including shelf stable; at suitable temperature that prevent risk to human health, as appropriate for the particular food.
- d- Food transport vehicles shall be capable of maintaining proper food temperatures and allow those temperatures to be monitored and recorded throughout the period of transport and records maintained for one year.
- e- Food transport vehicles intended for transporting frozen food should be appropriate for such purpose, where return air temperature shall be in accordance with the provisions applicable to temperature control.
- f- Examination of the thermograph recordings of the food transport vehicles shall be starting the last day of which the food was loaded at country of export border until the date where it is examined at border of entry.
- g- For chilled food transport vehicles:
 - I. Electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (2) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is below (5)°C
 - II. If the temperature of chilled foods is not maintained, the following action shall be taken:
 - III. If the temperature of the chilled food at any time is at or above (5)°C and below (8)°C, the food shall be immediately chilled to below (5)°C.
 - IV. If the temperature of the chilled food at any time is above (8)°C, the food shall be disposed of immediately unless substantial science-based food safety evidence is submitted to the Authority.



h- For frozen food transport vehicles:

- i. For frozen food transport vehicles complying with the relevant international standards, electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (24) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is (-18°C) or lower, excluding defrost periods.
- ii. For frozen food transport vehicles not in compliance with the relevant international standards, electrical failure is permitted for a maximum period of (7) hours, provided that the return air temperature prior to and following the immediate failure is (-18°C) or lower, excluding defrost periods.
- iii. If the temperature of frozen foods is not maintained, the following action shall be taken:
 1. If the temperature at any time is (-15)°C to (-18)°C, food shall be brought back to minimum of (-18)°C as rapidly as possible.
 2. If the temperature at any time is higher than (-15)°C but lower than (-10)°C, food shall be subjected to comprehensive field examination and laboratory testing.
 3. If temperature at any time rises above (-10)°C or showed signs of thawing, food shall be disposed of; unless substantial science-based food safety evidence is submitted to the Authority.



Annex 3: Food Labeling requirements and conditions

The issued requirements by the concerned federal agencies shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Food label shall be in Arabic language and other languages can be added
- b- Name of the food: The name shall identify the true nature of the food and in the absence of commonly existing name; an appropriate descriptive name which is not misleading or confusing to the consumer shall be used.
- c- List of all ingredients: shall be in a descending order of ingoing weight proportions including a list of food additives to the product or their numerical codes, with declaration of the foodstuffs and ingredients which are known to cause hypersensitivity.
- d- Nutritional Information:
- e- The net contents shall be declared by volume as for liquid foods, by weight for solid foods and either by weight or volume for semi-solid or viscous foods. Also The drained weight of a packed food shall be declared
- f- Name and address: The name and address of the following manufacturer, or packer, or distributor, or importer, or exporter or vendor shall be declared.
- g- Country of origin: The country of origin of the food shall be declared on the Label. If food undergoes processing in a second country which may probably change its fundamental nature, the country where the processing has taken place shall be considered as the country of origin for labeling purposes.



- h- lot or Batch identification number
- i- Date: The date shall appear as (i.e. Day -Month -Year) for food products with a minimum durability of less than three months, whereas date shall appear as (i.e. Month -Year) for food products with a minimum durability of more than three months.

Note: The national concerned Authorities requirements to be followed taking in consideration the food expiration periods In accordance with the UAE.S GSO technical regulation No.1-150 pertaining to Expiration Periods of food products

- j- Instructions for storage and use: any specific requirements pertaining to the storage conditions of the food shall be laid down on the label, should the minimum durability be dependent thereupon instructions for use including reconstitution directives, where applicable, shall be indicated on the label, if necessary for ensuring a correct and sound utilization of the foodstuff
- k- Irradiated foods: the labeling of a food which has been treated with ionizing radiation shall include a written statement indicating such a treatment in close proximity to the food name. in the case where an irradiated product is used as an ingredient, so, this shall be set out in the list of ingredients
- l- Additional labeling: additional statements may be added provided that they are hard to be removed under normal conditions of food handling and shall neither conceal any information on the food label nor contains any alien information to that in the original label.



Annex 4 : Food Sampling requirements

The provisions of regulation (5) for the year 2010 pertaining to sampling of food for the purposes of official control shall apply, taking into account the following main requirements:

- a- Samples classified within red channel intended for official control of the safety shall be taken by authorized inspectors at the borders. Samples thus obtained shall be considered as representative of the lots of food.



- b- Sampling shall be undertaken for a single food item, regardless of the size, where it has been produced under the same conditions, (of the same batch no. or production date), where applicable



- c- The size of the sample shall allow for repeat analysis if required and shall conform to the sample size plans issued by the Authority (ADFCA)
- d- The samples should be transported via the Authority (ADFCA) designated samples transportation vehicles

