

17/12/2021

[National] Further interpretation issued by the GAC regarding the registration of foreign manufacturers of imported food

As a reminder, the General Administration of Customs ("GAC") promulgated, in April 2021, the revised <Administrative Measures for Safety of Imported and Exported Food> ("Order 249") and <Administrative Regulations on Registration of Foreign Manufacturers of Imported Food> ("Order 248"), both will come into force on January 1st, 2022.

According to the new regulations, all foreign manufacturers (i.e. manufacturers, processors and storage establishments) of food products to be imported into China are required to be registered with the GAC, either through recommendation by the competent authority of the home country (for 18 listed types of food), or through self-registration (for non-listed foods). It is a fundamental change because under the current regime, only manufacturers of so-called "high risk" foods, including meat, aquatic products, dairy products and bird nest products, need to be registered.

After the registration online portal is activated by the GAC since November 18th, the GAC issued, on December 13th, a circular with further clarifications regarding the registration and labelling requirements under the Orders 248 & 249 ("Bulletin 103").

Bulletin 103 has made clear several points among which:

- For foods that are exported to China and depart on and after January 1st, 2022, the foreign manufacturers shall fill in its Chinese registration number on the Customs Declaration Form when declaring imported foods with Chinese customs authority.
- For foods that are manufactured on and after January 1st, 2022, the label of internal and external packaging of the foods shall include either the Chinese registration number of the manufacturer, or the number assigned by the competent authority of the home country.

The foreign manufacturers shall, and the food importers shall cause foreign manufacturers to, take prompt actions in completing the registration with the GAC.

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