**The Lebanese Republic**

**Ministry of Agriculture**

**The Minister**

**Decision no. 520/1**

**Organization of import of chilled and frozen fishes and aquatic species**

The Minister of Agriculture,

Pursuant to decree no. 5818 dated 13/06/2011 (Formation of the Council of Ministers);

Pursuant to law no. 31 dated 18/01/1955 and modifications thereof, mainly, articles 1 and 2 thereof (Designation of tasks of the Ministry of Agriculture);

Pursuant to legislative decree no. 97 dated 16/09/1983 and modifications thereof (Merger of public institutions with the Ministry of Agriculture and re-organization of the Ministry),

Pursuant to decree no. 5246 dated 20/06/1994 and modifications thereof (Organization of the Ministry of Agriculture);

Pursuant to law issued by decree no. 12301 dated 20/03/1963 (Veterinary health quarantine law);

Pursuant to decision no. 964/1 dated 26/10/2011 (Organization of import of chilled and frozen fishes and aquatic species);

Pursuant to decision no. 952/1 dated 26/10/2011 (Health conditions of fresh, chilled and frozen fishes transport vehicles);

Pursuant to decision no. 469/1 dated 28/05/2012 (Organization of extraction, transport and examination ways of imported products);

Pursuant to decision no. 540/1 dated 15/06/2012 (Health registration conditions of animal food warehouses);

Pursuant to the revision of the director of animal resources no. 2602/6 dated 15/05/2013;

Pursuant to the proposal of the Director-General of the Ministry of Agriculture;

Decides the following:

**Article 1:** The present decision shall designate the necessary conditions and requirements of import of chilled and frozen fishes and aquatic species, should it be complete or sliced, and valid for human consumption (except prepared and manufactured goods thereof, aquarium fishes, aquaculture, juveniles and eels).

**Article 2:** Every institution wishing to import chilled and frozen fishes and aquatic species shall submit a registration request to the animal resources directorate – import-export department (in accordance with the attached sample - Sample no.1), provided that the request shall be associated with the following documents:

1. Commercial register showing the type of trade thereof.
2. Real estate certificate or annual lease agreement showing the existence of a cold storage or refrigeration warehouse, provided that it shall be subject to the provisions of decision no. 540/1 dated 15/06/2012.

**Article 3:** It shall be allowed to import fishes and aquatic species directly or through another country (Trans-shipment), provided that the shipment shall be associated with the following documents:

1. Health certificate issued by the pertinent administration in the country of origin agreed thereupon or approved by the animal resources directorate showing the production date, expiry date, required cooling degree for preservation thereof, catch certificate number of fishes and packaging thereof on the high seas (Block, IQF, Frozen).
2. Certificate of origin issued by the pertinent authorities showing that the said shipment is intended to be exported to Lebanon.
3. Commercial invoice.

**Article 4:** The following standards, packaging and transport conditions shall be fulfilled:

1. All chilled and frozen fishes, aquatic species and slices imported by land or sea in refrigerated containers and by air in refrigerated pallets and equipped with thermograph or Data logger.
2. Chilled fishes, aquatic species and slices: Shall be transported on a temperature between -2 and 2 degrees Celsius and shall not exceed 4 degrees Celsius for four consecutive hours.
3. Frozen fishes, aquatic species and slices: Shall be transported on a temperature between -18 degrees Celsius provided that the temperature shall not exceed -15 degrees Celsius for 24 consecutive hours during transportation thereof from country of origin to Lebanon.
4. All chilled and frozen fishes, aquatic species and slices shall be packaged in appropriate packets with identifiers showing the country of origin, weight, batch number, production date, expiry date, preservation temperature, trademark or name of the production company.
5. Regarding the packaging in packets, should the shipment be packed in several closed packets intended to be sold directly, each packet shall carry the label mentioning the information stated on the packets. Should the shipment be hunting and packaging of land frozen or in ships on the high seas (Sea Frozen), it shall be allowed to stick the label on packets only.

**Article 5:** All shipments shall be put under analysis before permitting consumption thereof, except for the fresh chilled shipments which shall be allowed to enter with an undertaking letter from the concerned party, thus, in virtue of provisions of decision no. 469/1 dated 28/05/2012 (Organization of sampling ways) and decision no. 547/1 dated 16/06/2012 (fresh fishes).

**Article 6:** Transport and sale conditions on the Lebanese territories:

1. The goods shall be transported from the border crossing point after allowing entry thereof to the warehouses of importing companies and registered in virtue of provisions of decision no. 540/1 dated 15/06/2012 within containers and packets therein or through transport vehicles equipped with required cooling system and registered in virtue of provisions of decision no. 952/1 dated 26/10/2011.
2. Fishes and aquatic species and slices thereof shall be conserved in freezer storage in original cans thereof.
3. It shall be forbidden to pack fishes and aquatic species except in animal food factories registered in virtue of provisions of decision no. 897/1 dated 22/09/2012 and under the same conditions stipulated in clause no. 2 of article no. 4 of the present decision and mentioned on the identification label of the original cans.
4. It shall be forbidden to freeze imported fresh and chilled fishes except in institutions registered in virtue of the provisions of decision no. 897/1 dated 22/09/2012 (Conditions of health registration of animal food factories).

**Article 7:** All shipments of fishes, aquatic species and chilled and frozen slices shall be rejected should, during the examination on the border crossing point, the following appears:

1. Failure in the cooling process
2. Change in the organoleptic characteristics of the products (color – odor- touch – etc.)
3. Shipments with laboratory results not in conformity with the Lebanese standards

**Article 8:** The schedule of organoleptic inspection attached hereto shall be adopted and considered as an integral part thereof regarding fresh fishes. Moreover, it shall be forbidden to enter fresh fishes unless they are rated A or B according to the abovementioned schedule.

**Article 9**: All decisions contradictory to the provisions of the present decision, mainly, decision 964/1 dated 26/10/2011.

**Article 10**: The present decision shall be published and enter into force on issuance thereof.

A copy shall be notified to:

- Presidency of the Council of Ministers

- Central inspection

- Ministry of Economy and Trade

- Ministry of Public Health

-Ministry of Industry

- Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

-Ministry of Environment

- Official gazette (for publication)

- Syndicate of Exporters & Importers of Chilled and Frozen Meats, Fish and Vegetables

- Regional divisions in the Ministry of Agriculture

- Animal Resources Directorate

- Archives

- Email

- Office of the Minister of State for Administrative reform (OMSAR) The Central Office for Administrative Information (COFAI)

The Minister of Agriculture - Dr. Hussein El Hajj Hassan (Seal and signature)

Date: 24/05/2013

**The schedule of organoleptic inspection of imported fresh fishes**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Class | | | | | |
| Part of fish inspected | | A | B | C | Unfit (D) |
| Skin | | Bright, shining, iridescent (not redfish) or opalescent; no bleaching | Waxy; slight loss of bloom; very slight bleaching | Dull; some bleaching | Dull; gritty; marked bleaching and shrinkage |
| Outer slime | | Transparent; water white | Milky | Yellowish-grey; some clotting | Yellow-brown; very clotted and thick |
| Eyes | | Convex; black pupil; translucent cornea | Plane; slightly opaque pupil; slightly opalescent | Slightly concave; grey pupil; opaque cornea | Completely sunken, grey pupil opaque discolored cornea |
| Gills | | Dark red or bright red, mucus translucent | Red or pink; mucus slightly opaque | Brown/grey and bleached; mucus opaque and thick | Brown or bleached; mucus yellowish grey and clotted |
| Flesh (cut from abdomen) | | Bluish, translucent, smooth shining | Velvety, waxy dull, color slightly changed | Slightly opaque | Opaque |
| Color (along vertebral column) | | Uncolored | Slightly pink | Pink | Red |
| Organs | | Kidneys and residues of other organs should be bright red, as should the blood inside the aorta | Kidneys and residues of other organs should be dull, red, blood becoming discolored | Kidneys and residues of other organs and blood should be pale red | Kidneys and residues of other organs should be brownish in color |
| Flesh | | Firm and elastic | Less elastic | Slightly soft (flaccid), less elastic, waxy (velvety) and dull surface | Soft (flaccid) scales easily detached from skin, surface rather wrinkled, inclining to mealy |
| Vertebral column | | Breaks instead of coming away | Slices | Slices slightly | Does not stick |
| Peritoneum (in gutted fish) | | Glossy, brilliant, difficult to tear from flesh | Slightly dull, difficult to tear from flesh | Gritty, fairly easy to tear from flesh | Gritty, easily torn from flesh |
| Gill and internal odors | All except plaice | Fresh, seaweedy, shellfishy | No odor, neutral odor, trace musty, mousy, milky, capryllic, garlic or peppery | Definite musty, mousy, milky, capryllic, garlic or peppery, bready, malty, beery, lactic, slightly sour | Acetic, butyric, fruity, turnipy, amines, sulphide, faecal |
| Plaice | Fresh oil, metallic, fresh-cut grass, earthy, peppery | Oily, seaweedy, aromatic, trace musty, mousy or citric | Oily, definite musty, mousy or citric, bready, malty, beery, slightly rancid, painty | Muddy, grassy, fruity, acetic, butyric, rancid, amines, sulphide |