



Exporting Meat Products to China

In 2012, China's imports of meat products reached more than EUR 3 billion. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the amount of imports may increase three percent annually over the next ten years to 1.7 million tons in 2022, mainly due to the growing population, urban expansion and growing wealth in the country. Recent food safety scandals are driving demand for imported meat products as well, further increasing opportunities for EU exporters.

Since the control of the meat supply chain at an international level is one of the priorities of the Chinese Government, managing the meat importing process and conforming to a multitude of regulations in the complex regulatory framework is a major challenge for meat exporters. This guideline will provide you with essential information on all aspects of the process, covering protocols and individual company approval, details on the requirements for exporters and Chinese importers, timeframes, costs and authorities involved in the customs process, an overview of the main laws and regulations concerned with meat imports as well as main challenges for EU SMEs and tips on how to overcome them.

1. Introduction

For the purposes of this report, meat products are those falling under HS codes 02, 1601 and 1602, as detailed below¹:

Bovine meat

020110; 020120; 020130; 020210; 020220; 020230; 020610; 020621; 020622; 020629; 021020

Pork meat

020311; 020312; 020319; 020321; 020322; 020329; 020630; 020641; 020649; 021011; 021012; 021019

Poultry meat

020710; 020711; 020712; 020713; 020714; 020721; 020722; 020723; 020724; 020725; 020726; 020727; 020731; 020732; 020733

Preparations of meat

16010010; 16010091; 16010099

Meat preparations

160241; 160242; 160249; 160250

¹China's CIQ codes used for inspection and quarantine purposes can be found at:
http://jckspaqj.aqsiq.gov.cn/zwgk/dzwyxspjyxk/spxz/200902/t20090211_105742.htm

2. Market Overview

In 2012, China's imports of meat products reached EUR 3 billion. The main suppliers were NAFTA countries (especially the USA), accounting for 39% of total imports, followed by EU countries (26%), Mercosur (20%) and Oceania (15%).

99,78% of all meat products imported by China fall under chapter 02 (meat and edible meat offal), and only 0,22% under meat preparations (headings 1601 and 1602). 98,68% of all EU exports are concentrated under two headings: 0203 (meat of swine) and 0206 (edible offal).

Bovine and lamb meat imports come mostly from Australia, New Zealand and Mercosur countries (Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil), since no European country has concluded an agreement with China on these specific products yet. Pork is the most widely consumed meat in China, accounting for over 64% of the country's intake, followed by poultry (23%), beef (8%) and lamb (5%)².

China is the world's largest producer of pork meat (almost 52 million tons in 2012).

3. Regulatory Framework

The Food Safety Law of the People's Republic of China was adopted on June 1 2009 after a series of food scandals that undermined consumer confidence in the food supply chain. The law resembles existing systems in Western countries by setting up regulatory bodies responsible for elaborating and implementing national food safety standards based on scientific criteria and recommendations issued by international organisms such as Codex Alimentarius, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). However, law enforcement is facing severe challenges due to Chinese food market inefficiencies: scattered and small production units without quality and safety priorities, lack of consumer awareness of food safety concerns and overlapping competencies between central and provincial governments are some of the burdens reducing its effectiveness and posing a permanent threat to an already fragile food security system.

3.1. Food Safety

The Food Safety Law defines a new approach to food safety in China by providing a legal framework for production and trade of food products. Any business dealing with the food industry and wanting to export meat products to China needs to meet the provisions of the Chinese Food Safety Law. The target of the Food Safety Law is to implement surveillance and a tracking system of food products from its origin to its consumption.

3.2. Meat Imports

The Food Safety Law states in its articles 62-68 the principles for developing regulations on food imports.

The "Administrative Measures for Inspection and Quarantine of Inbound and Outbound Meat Products", effective from June 1 2011, introduce some of the key points of the meat import procedure.

4. Who is allowed to export meat products to China?

Objective	Instrument
Country/product eligibility	Protocols
Company eligibility	Establishment Registration

² Source: www.themeatsite.com

4.1. Protocols

Protocols are bilateral agreements between the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ, see chapter 9 for more information) of China and corresponding food safety departments in the exporting countries that set up veterinary and health requirements for meat products to be exported to China. Protocols transfer the responsibility for inspection and quarantine on the meat products to be exported to the authorities in the exporting country. An export health certificate ensures compliance with these requirements.

Protocol Negotiation Steps

The exporting country submits a formal request for the export of meat products to AQSIQ. If the animal health status in the country is satisfactory, AQSIQ initiates the process by presenting a questionnaire on the SPS (sanitary and phytosanitary) control and inspection system of the applicant country.

The exporting country provides the corresponding technical documentation, including laws and regulations, structure of the veterinary health services, quality management control system, detection and monitoring of animal epidemics, waste management, etc. (see details at <http://www.cnca.gov.cn/cnca/extra/xzzq/00033.pdf>).

The Chinese authorities carry out an analysis and risk evaluation of the documentation submitted by the authorities of the exporting country. If documentation is acceptable, a delegation of experts is sent to the exporting country to conduct further in-situ investigations.

Both countries start a bilateral "Sanitary and Phytosanitary High-Level Dialogue" to negotiate the text of the "Protocol on Veterinary and Health Requirements for Meat to be Exported to China" as well as the format of the "Export Health Certificate".

Protocols have a standard content. Below a summary of the most common provisions:

- Exporting authorities provide AQSIQ with the management regulations and procedures affecting processing plants and the control system related to diseases.
- Exporting authorities officially confirm that the country is an epizootic-free area.
- Exporting authorities ensure traceability (all meat products need to originate in the exporting country) and protection against specified diseases.
- Details on the registration of exporting facilities by the Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China (CNCA).
- Detailed functions to be carried out by official veterinarians in the exporting country (ante-mortem and post-mortem quarantine and inspection and certification).
- Requirement that slaughtering and processing plants can only manipulate meat products that comply with requirements. There should be exclusive storage areas within cold store houses for products to be exported to China.
- Packaging conditions, labelling and marks.

- Transport, storage and manipulation conditions (storage temperature).
- Details on the Export Health Certificate accompanying each container. The exporting side should provide AQSIQ with signatures of veterinarians authorised to issue health certificates.
- AQSIQ has to be notified of any infectious or contagious episode and exports will be stopped immediately. Authorities in the exporting country have to work closely with AQSIQ in order to resume exports of the affected products.

4.1.1. Where Can I Check if my Products are Eligible for Export to China?

Table 1 below provides an overview of protocols on meat products signed between EU countries and China until March 2013. An updated list of protocols is available at AQSIQ (Chinese only):

http://jckspaqi.aqsiq.gov.cn/xz/spxz/201303/t20130329_349307.htm

Table 1: Protocols on Meat Products Signed Between EU Countries and China

Country	Authority	Website	Protocol	Products included	Date of signature	Protocol info	Other relevant links
Belgium	Agence Fédérale pour la Sécurité de la Chaîne alimentaire (AFSCA, FAVV)	http://www.afsca.be/exportationpaystiers/produitsorigineanimale/	YES	Any edible part of pigs, including the offal and internal organs	07/04/2009	http://www.afsca.be/exportationpaystiers/produitsorigineanimale/documents/protocolchine07042009ENG.pdf	http://www.afsca.be/exportationpaystiers/produitsorigineanimale/documents/RLCN.03.pdf
Denmark	Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri Fødevarestyrelsen	http://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Foedevarer/Import_og_eksport/Sider/forside.aspx	YES	Pork meat and offal	15/08/2000	http://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Leksikon/Sider/Eksport---f%C3%B8devarer.aspx	https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=142620#Bil4
Finland ³	Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö	http://www.mmm.fi/	YES	All parts of the pig except offal	26/10/2011	http://www.evira.fi/portal/	http://www.mmm.fi/en/index/frontpage/animal_health_welfare/trade/export_non_eu.html
France	Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation, de la Pêche, de la Ruralité et de l'Amenagement du Territoire - France Agrimer EXP@DON	http://agriculture.gouv.fr/	YES	Any edible part of the pork including the offal and internal organs	23/10/2000	https://teleprocedures.franceagrimer.fr/Expadon/docs/admgene/069_rev4.pdf	http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/DGALN20128187Z_cle858ecf.pdf
		http://agriculture.gouv.fr/	YES	Chicken and domestic geese and duck fresh meat	23/10/2000	https://teleprocedures.franceagrimer.fr/Expadon/docs/admgene/022_rev6.pdf	http://agriculture.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/DGALN20128187Z_cle858ecf.pdf
Germany	Bundesministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Verbraucherschutz (BMELV)	http://www.bmelv.de/SharedDocs/Standardartikel/Landwirtschaft/Tier/TierHandelTransport/Tiertransport.html	YES	Any edible part of pigs, excluding the offal and internal organs	01/09/2008	http://www.v-d-f.de/	http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/107/1610758.pdf
Greece	Υπουργείου Αγροτικής Ανάπτυξης & Τροφίμων	http://www.minagric.gr/index.php	NO (under negotiation)	Pork meat			http://www.minagric.gr/index.php/el/the-ministry/grafeiotypou/deltiatypou/167-dt16052011a.html

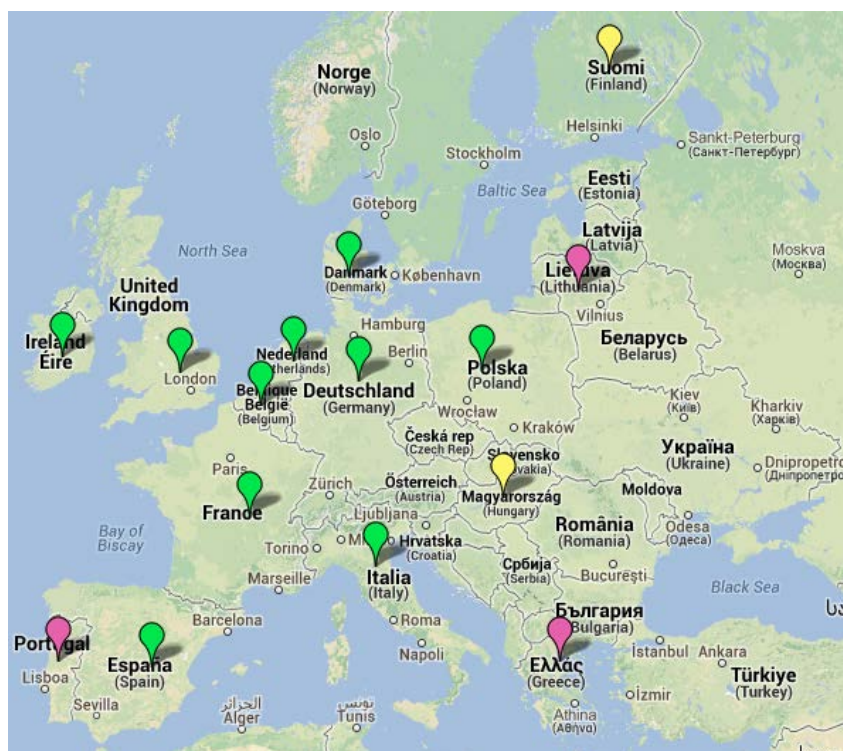
³ The protocol has not been fully developed and no establishments are registered yet

Hungary ⁴	Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium	http://www.kormany.hu/hu/vidékfejlesztési-minisztérium	YES	All parts of the pig except offal	16/10/2009	http://www.kormany.hu/hu/vidékfejlesztési-minisztérium	http://www.husszovetseg.hu
Ireland	Dep. of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (DAFM), Animal Health and Welfare Division	http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/tradeexports/	YES	Any edible part of the pork including the offal and internal organs except for stomachs or sausage casings	18/01/2005	http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/tradeexports/	Trader Notices MH 30/2012 and MH 03/2011 http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/foodsafetyconsumerissues/foodsafetycontrolsonmeat/tradernotices/
Italy	Ministero della Salute	http://www.salute.gov.it/veterinariaInternazionale/veterinariaInternazionale.jsp	YES	Cured pork: deboned pork meat, cured for at least 313 days (only products under Protected Designation of Origin - PDO)	06/12/2004	http://www.salute.gov.it/veterinariaInternazionale/paginaInternaMenuVeterinariaInternazionale.jsp?id=1623&lingua=italiano&menu=esportazione	http://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pagineArree_1155_listaFile_itemName_4_file.pdf
		http://www.salute.gov.it/veterinariaInternazionale/veterinariaInternazionale.jsp	YES	Cooked pork meat products: cooked hams and similar, deboned and cooked at 70° for at least 30'	06/12/2004	http://www.salute.gov.it/veterinariaInternazionale/paginaInternaMenuVeterinariaInternazionale.jsp?id=1623&lingua=italiano&menu=esportazione	http://www.vet.unipi.it/system/files/DSVETO_C+2635+26042012+Cina.pdf
Lithuania	Lietuvos Respublikos žemės ūkio ministerija	http://www.zum.lt/index.php?-116149915	NO (under negotiation)	Pork meat			
Netherlands	De Nederlandse Voedsel- en Warenautoriteit (NVWA)	http://www.nvwa.nl/	YES	Any edible part of the pork including the offal and internal organs	23/10/2008	http://www3.vwa.nl/werkwijzer/Roodvlees/RL-032%20China.pdf	http://www3.vwa.nl/werkwijzer/Roodvlees/RL-032%20China.pdf
Poland	Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi. Inspekcja Weterynaryjna	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/	YES	Poultry meat and poultry meat products	25/05/2007	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/files/2625_chinski_protokol_drobiowy_pl.pdf	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/index.php?action=art&a_id=2625
	Ministerstwo Rolnictwa i Rozwoju Wsi. Inspekcja Weterynaryjna	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/	YES	Any edible part of pigs including offal and internal organs	24/05/2010	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/files/2625_chinski_protokol_wieprzowina_pl.pdf	http://www.wetgiw.gov.pl/index.php?action=art&a_id=2625

⁴ In 2012, 10 companies were submitted to approval and were inspected by the Chinese authorities. Because non-conformities were found, they are currently making corrections to obtain their registration

Portugal	Ministério da Agricultura, do Mar, do Ambiente e do Ordenamento do Território.	http://www.portugal.gov.pt	NO (under negotiation)				http://www.gpp.pt/GlobalAgriMar/Docs/2012/QuadroBarreiras.pdf
Spain	Ministerio de Agricultura, alimentación y medio ambiente MAGRAMA - Comercio Exterior Ganadero CEXGAN	http://cexgan.mapa.es/Modulos/Default.aspx	YES	Any edible part of pigs including offal and internal organs as well as boneless cured pork products treated a minimum of 313 days with specific procedures	15/11/2007	http://cexgan.mapa.es/Documentos/NotainformativasobreexportacionporcinoChina.pdf	Notes on pork feet exports http://cexgan.mapa.es/Documentos/DirectricesprocesadopatascerdoChina.pdf Notes on casings exports http://cexgan.mapa.es/Documentos/NOTAINFORMATIVAEXPORTACIONTRIPASCHINA.pdf Food Regulations in China http://cexgan.mapa.es/Modulos05/publico/legislacion.aspx?proc=8&pais=240&excl=0
United Kingdom	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)	http://www.defra.gov.uk/	YES	Any edible part of pigs including offal and internal organs	22/08/2008	http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/exports-non-eu/export-health-certificates/	Food Exporters Register: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/2012/cin-2012-50/ Note 1: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/2012/cin-2012-30/ Note 2: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/2011/pigmeatchina-e-cer/ Note 3: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animal-trade/2011/cin-2011-72/

By clicking the map below⁵ you can view a dynamic map showing all products included in protocols signed by each single EU country with China:



Countries with signed protocols and registered companies



Countries with signed protocols but no registered companies yet



Protocols under negotiation

4.2. How Can I Obtain an Approval for my Company?

As a way to ensure a desired level of food safety and in addition to inspection and quarantine procedures for import clearance, establishment approval is a prerequisite to identify foreign firms eligible to sell meat products to China (more in section 5.2.).

The “Regulation on Registration for Foreign Establishments Intended to Export Foods to China” (Order No16 2002) gives the CNCA the authority to register and supervise foreign establishments wishing to export to China.

Once the country of origin has signed a protocol with China for specific meat products, the steps for a firm to be registered by CNCA are as follows:

General requirements

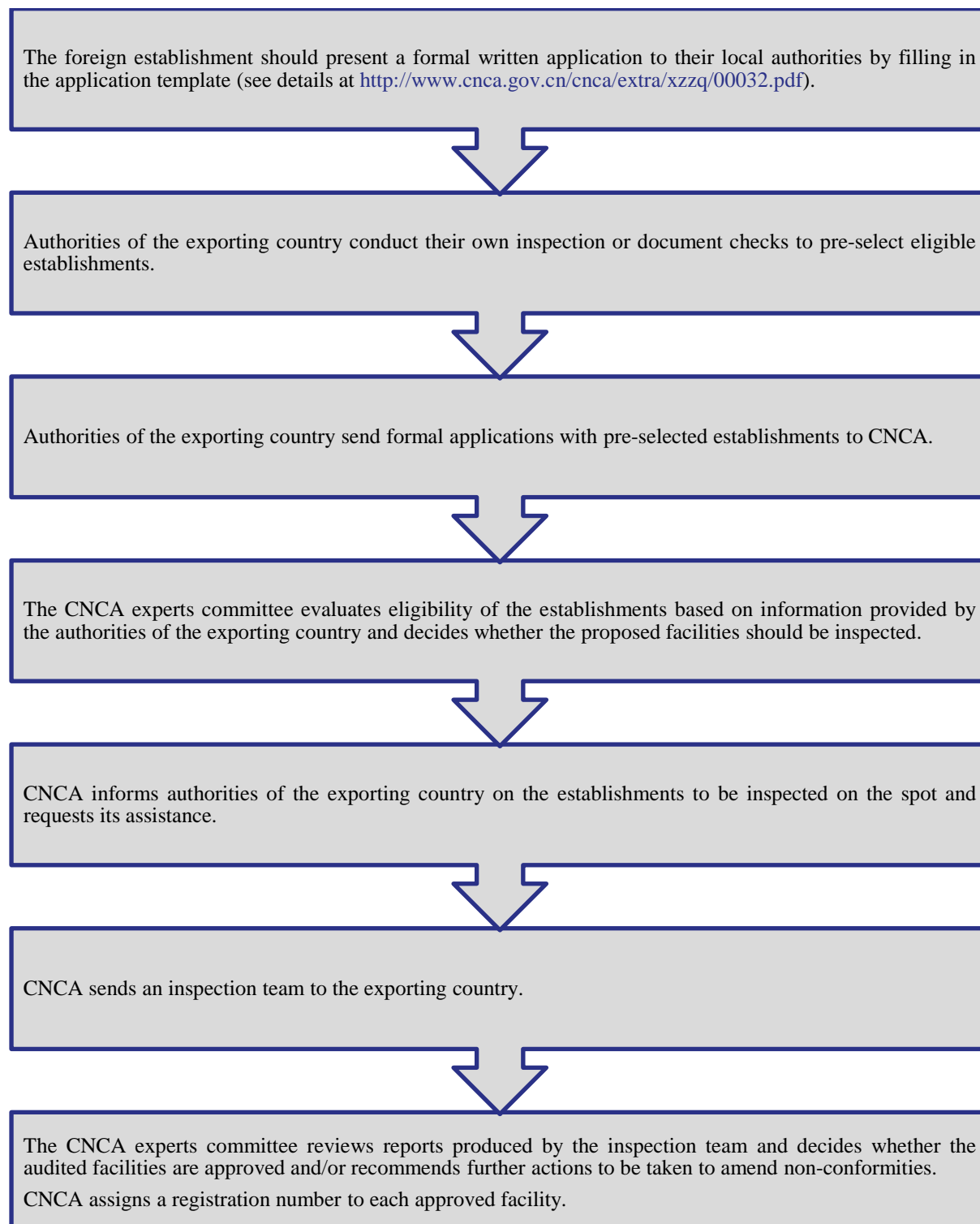
- The veterinary system, plant protection system and public health control system of the country of origin has passed the assessment conducted by CNCA.
- The country/region where establishment facilities are located should be an epizootic-free area.

⁵ or following this link:

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=209745941186974752255.0004de5a7a98a8979dd1a&hl=en&ie=UTF8&t=m&z=4&vpsrc=1>

- The foreign establishment should be approved and under effective supervision of local authorities and comply with Chinese safety laws and standards (see section 6).

Registration Process



Each establishment in the supply chain must be registered and must be included in the current list of approved establishments maintained by the Chinese veterinary authorities (slaughterhouses, cutting plants, cold stores, meat processing plants).

As a general rule, the establishment's approval is valid for four years, but Chinese authorities show flexibility for countries and establishments that have implemented a consistent and steady SPS management system.

Further inspections will be required when an already approved establishment wants to be registered for new products included in the same protocol or an additional memorandum (e.g. trotters, stomachs and casings for human consumption).

5. Import Procedures

5.1. What are the Requirements for Local Meat Importers in China?

Business Registration: A document certifying that a company has been registered according to the Chinese legal provisions and approved to start operations. Administered by the Registration Bureau of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC, <http://www.saic.gov.cn/english/>).

- The processing time is 15-30 working days.
- The processing fee varies depending on the total sum of registered capital.

Import and Export Business Licence: A document certifying that a company qualifies and has been registered as an import/export business. Administered by the Ministry of Commerce of the P.R. of China (MOFCOM, <http://www.ft.cq.cn/Uploadfile/200804071525401471.doc>).

- The processing time ranges from 45 to 60 working days.
- There is no processing fee.

Customs Registration: A document certifying that importers and exporters have been registered with the General Administration of Customs of the P.R. of China. Administered by the General Administration of Customs of the P.R. of China (GAC, also referred to as China Customs, <http://www.customs.gov.cn/Default.aspx?Tabid=2556>).

- The processing time is three working days.
- There is no processing fee.

Registration with the Filing Management System: Applies to consignees of foodstuffs as well as exporters / agents of imported food. Once exporters of foodstuffs are registered, they are required to provide and update information on their current Chinese trading partners for the purpose of traceability of each consignment (<http://ire.eciq.cn>).

- The processing time is five working days.
- There is no processing fee.

The list of registered meat importers can be checked at <http://www.bjblx.cn/html/2015.html>.

Automatic Import Licence: A document providing statistical information on the goods to be imported to the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM). Only required for products included in the 2013 goods catalogue, accessible at <http://www.mofcom.gov.cn/aarticle/b/e/201212/20121208496384.html>.

- The processing time is approximately ten days.
- The processing fee is CNY 20.
- The licence is valid for a single importation within six months from the date of issue.

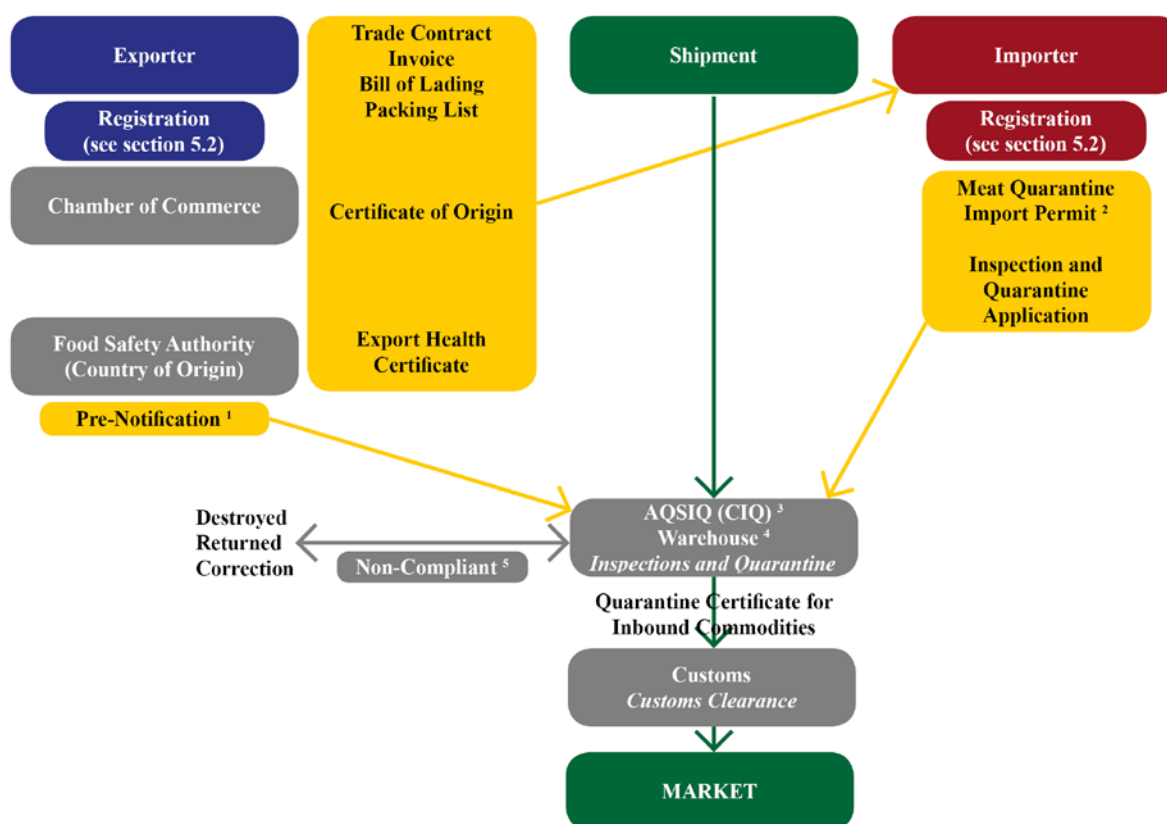
5.2. What are the Requirements for Foreign Meat Exporters in China?

Establishment Approval: Meat producers must be registered with the AQSIQ on an intergovernmental level. Registration is administered by CNCA (See section 4.2., <http://www.cnca.gov.cn/rjwzcyjgb/bmgz/images/20061016/470.pdf>).

Registration with the Filing Management System: A document confirming that foreign exporters of foodstuffs have been registered with AQSIQ. To be submitted electronically via the Filing Management System for Exporters/Agents and Consignee of Imported Food at <http://ire.eciq.cn>.

- The processing time is five working days.
- There is no processing fee.
- If the exporter is already registered, there is no need to register for new exports.
- The list of registered meat exporters can be checked at <http://www.bjblx.cn/html/1995.html>.

Meat Products Import Procedure Scheme



Notes

(1) **Pre-Notification:** AQSIQ requires advanced electronic notification of all scheduled meat and poultry shipments. Pre-notification, including health certificate details, shall be electronically transmitted from the food authority of the exporting country to AQSIQ, which will forward it to the local CIQ office at the port

of entry. Each country has established a document processing system in accordance with the protocol signed with China. In some countries (e.g. Belgium, Denmark) the exporter is required to fill in a specific form and transmit it by e-mail to his food safety authority in order to be forwarded to AQSIQ. In other countries (Spain) the pre-notification is generated automatically during the process of issuing the health certificate and doesn't demand any further formality from the exporting firm.

(2) Meat Quarantine Import Permit: The importer will have to apply for an import licence (MQIP Meat Quarantine Import Permit) covering the contract amount (volume of the shipment). It can cover multiple containers or shipments and is valid for six months. The processing time is 30 working days. Only one outstanding permit is allowed with a particular foreign firm. The importer should utilise at least 75% of the declared value of the MQIP before applying for a new permit.

(3) AQSIQ (CIQ): AQSIQ has set up 35 Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaus (CIQ) in China's 31 provinces, with nearly 300 branches and more than 200 local offices across the country and a staff of 30.000 employees.

The list of 44 AQSIQ (CIQ) designated ports for meat and poultry imports can be found at http://jckspaaj.aqsiq.gov.cn/zwgk/dzwyxspjyxk/spxz/201106/t20110607_186590.htm (click [here](#) for English version).

(4) Warehouse: A list of cold storage warehouses authorised by AQSIQ is available at http://jckspaaj.aqsiq.gov.cn/zwgk/dzwyxspjyxk/spxz/201106/t20110607_186593.htm <http://www.bjblx.cn/html/2035.html>.

(5) Non-Compliant: If inspection and quarantine results are compliant, the local CIQ office will deliver an "Inspection and Quarantine Certificate for Inbound Commodities" granting the approval for manufacture, processing, sale and use.

If results are non-compliant, the CIQ office will issue a notice of inspection and quarantine actions requiring the products to be returned or destroyed. For minor non-compliances (not affecting personal safety, health or environmental protection) technical treatment is allowed under supervision of the local office to remedy the situation before a second inspection.

The exporter must ensure all documents indicated above are received by his importer three to five days prior to arrival of the shipment at the port of entry in order to have enough time to make the necessary arrangements for inspection and quarantine as well as customs clearance.

The importer needs to apply for inspection of inbound goods at the local CIQ office of the port of entry by submitting all relevant documents (MQIP, Health Certificate and commercial documents).

Depending on the HS code or in episodic disease situations there might be other documents needed to complete the import procedures.

5.3. Timeframes and Costs of Import Procedures after Arrival at Chinese Port (Example Qingdao)

Before shipment arrival: If the import agent receives complete documentation, he will begin inspection procedures to shorten the clearance time. This usually takes 1-2 days.

When cargo arrives at Qingdao port, clearance process steps are as follows:

After the shipment arrival, the containers will be stored in Qingdao port yard.

1. Commodity inspection..... RMB200/BL*

The import agent delivers the container to the warehouse authorised by “Qingdao Entry - Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau”:

2. Quarantine inspection fee..... 0.8 ‰ of total value of goods

The import agent will go to the shipping company to obtain the D/O (delivery order), after paying the necessary fees and charges (this usually takes about 1 day):

3. D/O (delivery order)..... RMB300-350/BL

4. THC (terminal handling charge)..... RMB1280/40RF*

5. Documentation fee..... RMB100-400/BL

6. Handling charge..... RMB200-400/40RF

7. Mechanical fee..... RMB100-200/40RF

The import agent submits D/O and other documents to Customs to begin customs clearance (this usually takes about 3-5 days):

8. Customs declaration RMB200/BL

9. Import tariffs..... %* on the CIF* price of the goods

The import agent pays port charges to Qingdao port, and handles delivery procedures (this usually takes about 1 day):

10. Port charge RMB500/40RF + storage charges

11. Refrigeration charge..... RMB600/40RF (within 5 days) + RMB100/40RF/per day (if more than 5 days)

Empty container will return to yard specified by the shipping company (takes about 2 days):

12. Delivery at cost

13. Inspection agency fees..... RMB300/BL

14. Handling charge..... RMB200/BL

15. Storage charges, demurrage charges, container maintenance fee, cleaning fee at cost..... at cost

Import agent fees: approximately 1.5% of cargo value, minimum USD 250

Finally, goods are released to the importer

Notes:

- **BL** = Bill of lading
- **RF** = Refrigerated (reefer) containers
- **CIF** = Cost, Insurance and Freight, the price of the goods including insurance and freight
- Tariffs applying to any particular HS code can be checked at:
http://madb.europa.eu/madb/datasetPreviewFormATpubli.htm?datacat_id=AT&from=publi
- Cost and timeframes might vary depending on the port of entry, the kind of product imported, if the company imported its products via this port before or if it is the first time, among other reasons.

6. Laws and Standards

- Food Safety Law of the People's Republic of China. (June 1, 2009)
http://www.gov.cn/flfg/2009-02/28/content_1246367.htm (Chinese)
<http://www.fas.usda.gov/gainfiles/200903/146327461.pdf> (English translation by the United States Department of Agriculture)

6.1. Current Entry-Exit Laws and Regulations on Inspection and Quarantine

- The Import and Export Commodity Inspection Law of the People's Republic of China and its implementing regulations (February 21 1989), amended on April 28 2002
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Entry and Exit of Animal and Plant Quarantine and its Implementing Regulations (October 30 1991)
- Law of the People's Republic of China on the Entry and Exit Health Quarantine and its Implementing Regulations (December 2 1991), amended on December 29 2007
- Food Hygiene Law of the People's Republic of China (February 8 2009)
- Regulation on Inspection and Quarantine of Entry-Exit Meat Products (June 1 2011)
<http://www.aqsiqccc.com/en/news/news-3.html>
- Regulation on Registration for Foreign Establishments Intended to Export Foods to China, Order NO.16 (AQSIQ)
<http://www.cnca.gov.cn/rjwzcyjgb/bmgz/images/20061016/470.pdf>

6.2. Standards

The following are among the most relevant standards foreign establishments must comply with in order to be eligible for export to China. More information can be found on www.chinafoodsafety.net.

- GB 2707-2005: Hygienic Standard for Fresh (Frozen) Meat of Livestock
- GB 16869-2005: Poultry National Standard
- GB 9959-2-2001: Fresh and Frozen Pork Muscle Cuts Standard
- GB 16869-2000: Fresh and Frozen Poultry Product Standard
- GB/T 17238-2008: Fresh and Frozen Beef Cuts Standard
- GB/T 20094-2006: Hygienic Practice for Meat Processing Establishments

- GB 2760-2011: National Food Safety Standards for Uses of Food Additives

7. Challenges

Control of the meat supply chain at an international level is one of the priorities of the Chinese government to ensure the safety of one of the main protein sources for the local population. China has developed a strategy based on one-by-one negotiations with exporting countries, which keeps these countries in permanent competition with each other, combined with selective direct foreign investment in major international players as a way to find alternatives to internal market inefficiencies (in spite of public subsidies, as in the case of pig breeding, the domestic production system is still dominated by a large number of small farmers and food processors with little access to technology, making it difficult for the government to fully implement a food safety system).

As explained in section 2 (market overview), while the beef and lamb subsectors remain closed to EU producers, EU exports are concentrated in the pork meat subsector in strong competition with the USA. US firms are currently exempt from the plant-by-plant registration process since all federally inspected establishments are eligible for export to China, with the exception of plants identified as “plants not eligible to export”. Recent events, such as the acquisition of US Smithfield, one of the world’s larger pork producers, by the Chinese corporation Shuanghui International, may reinforce the US’s position regarding exports to China while proving to be a new step in China’s strategy to build a safe global network for food sourcing.

Most of the criticism directed at the Chinese food safety system focuses on its lack of enforcement. Administrative overlapping and the scattering of responsibilities among different government levels generate inconsistencies in the interpretation of laws and regulations, influenced by factors such as location, personal relationships or political issues.

Inspection criteria and verification procedures are not sufficiently transparent, which opens the door to arbitrary discrimination, generating confusion and uncertainty among foreign food exporters.

Despite the progress made in the harmonisation process, safety standards are still poor in quality and quantity. China applies trade restrictions based on import requirements that do not agree with internationally-accepted scientific standards (see examples in section 8 below) .

Approval procedures are usually expensive and time-consuming. SMEs need to carefully evaluate the investment required to obtain CNCA’s approval and the expected returns. The main costs a company may incur to be registered relate to adapting their facilities to specifications and standards required by Chinese authorities as well as the costs related to factory inspections by a delegation of Chinese experts (which are usually shared with the rest of the establishments inspected).

The establishment registration process may take quite some time (the most optimistic previsions indicate one year as the minimum time required to obtain the approval from CNCA). In case the Chinese inspection team notices any shortcomings requiring the implementation of a correction plan and follow-up inspections, the timeframe for successful registration can become even more unpredictable. Furthermore, establishment approval can be interrupted at any time because of high-risk events such as the sudden outbreak of a disease.

8. Final Recommendations for EU SME Exporters

Due diligence on potential partners is essential before engaging a local importer to verify that they are legally established and registered and have a good history of operations⁶.

Your importer will be your permanent connection with relevant government offices and therefore needs to be a trustworthy source of information for updated import procedures, especially as regulations might be modified and implemented without prior notice in China. Signing a favourable sales and purchase contract is essential as well. For more information on these, please see a guideline on the topic at www.eusmecentre.org.cn/content/guideline-sales-contracts-when-exporting-china-0.

Importing through the same Chinese port and inspection point will help to cut down the time needed for the import procedures. Please also note that timeframes and costs might vary from port to port.

Export documents, packaging and labelling require meticulous pre-shipment preparation to lower the risk of non-conformity when going through AQSIQ and customs in China. If a shipment is found not to conform with any requirements, the export company will be included in a list of “companies to be inspected”, which will slow down customs clearance in future shipments.

Be aware of public communications by Chinese food safety authorities on unauthorised establishments for import or export as well as epidemic outbreaks that may lead to the closure of Chinese borders or the need for additional certifications accompanying the shipments (risk alerts and unlisted companies can be found at <http://english.aqsiq.gov.cn/SpecialTopics/ImportandExportFoodSafety/DataService/>).

A network of contacts at various levels and organisations may be a key factor to solve import problems and succeed in the Chinese market.

The examples below illustrate some of the problems caused by bilateral discrepancies an exporter might face when going through import procedures in China.

- Recently, China has required US pork exports to be certified to be ractopamine-free (ractopamine is a beta agonist used in pork, beef and turkey production) but the exact “certification” requirements are still unclear. Moreover, there is a concern that “certification” will not be sufficient to meet China’s demand, since the product may be tested when it arrives in China, and Chinese testing methods do not coincide with those approved by authorities in the exporting country. Additional alarm is caused by the fact that a detection threshold below a certain rate will determine that no meat at all is ractopamine-free.
- In May 2013, up to USD 100 million worth of frozen mutton, lamb and beef exports from New Zealand were held up at the border due to a certification dispute: New Zealand officials used new forms, not yet approved by China, to certify the chilled and frozen meat "and in doing so caused confusion for Chinese inspectors". The "confusion" related to the change of name of New Zealand's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) to the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) a year ago. For some analysts the incident was purely political, suggesting the Chinese Government was trying to slow the entry of New Zealand's fast growing beef and mutton imports.
- The omission of temperature requirements for chilled meat led to some confusion by Chinese port officials, with chilled meat from Australia being refused entry at some ports. To address this issue, in October 2009 Australia proposed amendments to the existing protocols to clarify the eligibility of chilled meat.

⁶ “Knowing your partners in China”, a guide to due diligence regarding potential business partners in China, is available on the EU SME Centre website at <http://www.eusmecentre.org.cn/content/knowning-your-partners-china>

9. Resources

Chinese Administration

General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ)

www.aqsiq.gov.cn

AQSIQ is a ministerial-level department under the State Council of the PRC that is in charge of supervising national quality, metrology, entry-exit commodity inspection, entry-exit health quarantine, entry-exit animal and plant quarantine, import-export food safety, certification and accreditation, standardisation, as well as administrative law enforcement. AQSIQ directly administers the CNCA, the SAC and local CIQs with 35 entry-exit inspection and quarantine bureaus and 31 provincial level quality and technical supervision bureaus.

China Inspection and Quarantine Services (CIQ)

<http://en.ciqcid.com>

The China Inspection and Quarantine Services are responsible for the administration of entry-exit inspection and quarantine at ports, including personnel, animals and plants and commodities. Its basic functions are to protect human health and safety, animal or plant life and health, the environment, prevent fraud and safeguard national security. Specific tasks include: the prevention of the spread of epidemic diseases, harmful organisms, toxic and hazardous substances, and defective import and export commodities.

Links to some of the most active CIQ Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaus:

- Shanghai Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.shciq.gov.cn/english
- Guangdong Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.gdcic.gov.cn/Eng/index.aspx
- Tianjin Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.tjciq.gov.cn/tjjyji/tblm/english/200906/t20090624_20821.html
- Beijing Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.bjciq.gov.cn/ywb/Channel_1321.htm?ChannelID=1321
- Zhejiang Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.ziq.gov.cn:8081/gate/big5/www.ziq.gov.cn/portal/English.jsp?catalog_id=20080903000002
- Shenzhen Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.szciq.gov.cn/
- Liaoning Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.lnciq.gov.cn/en/
- Shandong Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau
www.sdciq.gov.cn/english/

The Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China (CNCA)

www.cnca.gov.cn/cnca/

The Certification and Accreditation Administration of the People's Republic of China administers the compulsory product certification system and the Chinese compulsory CCC certifications. The certification categories include certification of animal feed, good agricultural practices, safe agricultural products, organic products, food quality, and the management system of risk analysis and critical control points (HACCP).

The Standardization Administration of China (SAC)

www.sac.gov.cn/

The Standardization Administration of China unifies control, supervision and coordination of the quality standards of products in China. It is responsible for organising activities for the Chinese National Committee and the ISO, approving and organising the implementation of international cooperation and for exchanging standardisation projects.

The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (MOFCOM)

<http://english.mofcom.gov.cn/>

The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China is in charge of formulating strategies, guidelines and policies for the development of domestic and foreign trade and international economic cooperation; drafting laws and regulations governing domestic and foreign trade and harmonising domestic legislation on trade as well as bringing Chinese economic and trade laws into conformity with multilateral and bilateral treaties and agreements; working out measures for the regulation of import and export commodities and processing trade, and compiling catalogues of import and export commodities and technologies.

The Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China (MOH)

www.moh.gov.cn

The major mandates of the Ministry of Health of the People's Republic of China are: to draft health laws, regulations and policies; to propose health development programmes and to formulate technical protocols, health standards and to supervise their enforcement.

The State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA)

www.sfda.gov.cn/WS01/CL0001/

The State Food and Drug Administration was founded on the basis of the State Drug Administration. The State Food and Drug Administration is directly under the State Council of the People's Republic of China and is in charge of the comprehensive supervision on the safety management of food, health food and cosmetics as well as drug regulation in mainland China. Its main responsibilities are: to organise relevant authorities to draft laws and regulations on the safety management of food, health food and cosmetics; to exercise comprehensive supervision on the safety management of food, health food and cosmetics in accordance with laws; to organise and carry out investigations and impose punishment on serious safety accidents in food, health food and cosmetics.

The State Administration for Industry and Commerce of the People's Republic of China (SAIC)

www.saic.gov.cn/english/

The State Administration for Industry and Commerce of the People's Republic of China is responsible for food control in domestic commerce and for protecting the rights and interests of consumers in the Chinese market.

EU Organisations

The EU SME Centre

www.eusmecentre.org.cn

The EU SME Centre is a European Union funded initiative helping SMEs get ready to do business in China. Located in Beijing, the Centre provides practical information, confidential advice, and training in the areas of business development, legal issues, standards and HR to facilitate market access for European SMEs. The Centre also acts as a platform to facilitate coordination amongst Member State and European public and private sector service providers to SMEs.

European Chambers of Commerce and Industry in China

Chambers of Commerce and Industry are non-governmental, voluntary organisations representing companies of different sectors. The aim of the chambers is to create favourable business environments, represent economic interests of enterprises and offer business promotion services.

- European Union Chamber of Commerce in China

www.euccc.com.cn

- Benelux Chamber of Commerce in China

www.bencham.org

- British Chamber of Commerce in China

www.britishchamber.cn

- China-Italy Chamber of Commerce

www.cameraitacina.com

- Danish Chamber of Commerce in China

www.dccc.com.cn

- French Chamber of Commerce in China

www.ccifc.org

- German Chamber of Commerce in China

<http://china.ahk.de>

- Irish Chamber of Commerce in china

<http://irishchamberchina.com>

- Spanish Chamber of Commerce in China

www.spanishchamber-ch.com

- Swedish Chamber of Commerce in China

www.swedishchamber.com.cn

Commercial Offices

Commercial offices of the European countries in China offer valuable assistance to businesses exporting goods and services to the country. Their specialists, usually based in their respective country's embassy, are dedicated to assisting their country's commercial interests in China.

The China IPR SME Helpdesk

www.china-iprhelpdesk.eu/en

The China IPR SME Helpdesk is an EU funded project providing EU SMEs with free training, materials, online resources and first-line, confidential advice on intellectual property in China.

Meat Websites in China

- **China Meat Association**

www.chinameat.org

Voluntary association with 285 members including state-owned meat companies, meat slaughtering/processing/refrigerating firms, scientific research institutes, colleges, social bodies, press, and others.

- **Meat Food Technology Net**

www.wmeat.com

Network for meat processing technology and the development of new marketable products.

- **Meat Net**

www.meatnet.cn

Marketplace for the meat industry with relevant market news and a business directory.

- **Food Business Network**

www.21food.cn

Marketplace for food products, food additives and food machinery and equipment.

- **China Food Science and Technology Network**

<http://rzpzx.p.tech-food.com/>

Marketplace for food products, food additives and food machinery and equipment.



The EU SME Centre assists European SMEs to export to China by providing a comprehensive range of free, hands-on support services including the provision of information, confidential advice, networking events and training. The Centre also acts as a platform facilitating coordination amongst Member State and European public and private sector service providers to SMEs.

The Centre's range of free services cover:

- Business Development – provision of market information, business and marketing advice
- Legal – legal information, 'ask the expert' initial consultations and practical manuals
- Standards – standards and conformity requirements when exporting to China
- HR and Training – industry and horizontal training programmes
- Access to a service providers directory and information databases
- Hot-desking – free, temporary office space in the EU SME Centre to explore local business opportunities
- Any other practical support services to EU SMEs wishing to export to or invest in China.

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