

Peru must adapt to new US food safety law

The new US Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), that imposes new regulations on the export community, came into force on September 18, stated the US Market Intelligence newsletter of the Department of Commerce Foreign Trade and Tourism (Mincetur).

According to the Mincetur, if exporters don't take adequate preventive measures, the regulations of the FSMA could become an obstacle to Peruvian exports to the United States .

Currently, the US market is the main destination for Peruvian agricultural exports, accounting for nearly 31%. Thus, it is important that the country be prepared so that these regulations don't have a negative effect on exports.

The stricter FSMA rules refer to: prevention controls for food intended for human consumption; production safety; food protection against intentional adulteration; prevention control for animal feed; supervision of foreign suppliers; accreditation by a third party, and sanitary safety in food transportation.

This means that the entire Peruvian export chain will be evaluated and regulated so that the country can continue having a business relationship with companies in the United States.

The FSMA has implemented a new procedure for the registration of companies related to the production and logistics of food. In this new procedure, the companies must register, or renew their registration, with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) every two years, between October 1 and December 31, in even years.

When they register, they will have to provide the company's name, address, phone number, and the establishment's emergency contact information; the name and address of the owner of the establishment; the name and address of the owner of the company, and the data of the company's representative in the United States, in the case of foreign establishments.

The technical information must specify in what food category the company works.

Finally, the companies must assure the FDA that they can inspect the property when required.

This law was signed by President Obama in October 2011, and different institutions of the Peruvian state, such as Peru's commercial offices (OCEX) in the United States, have been working and informing the Peruvian companies of the need to take steps to comply with these regulations.

It's very important for Peruvian exports that all Peruvian companies operating in the United States comply with the requirements and register before the deadline set by the FDA. Otherwise, this could have a negative impact on exports of products such as avocado, asparagus, coffee, and quinoa, among others.

The Mincetur said the companies had to take appropriate measures to be compliant with all the requirements so that they can go through this new process easily and effectively.

To facilitate the process, the companies need to be trained and informed of the new rules, imposed by the FSMA, so that Peruvian exports can adopt these regulations successfully.

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