

IMPORT LICENSING SYSTEM OF COLOMBIA

Questions from Chile to Colombia

The following communication, dated 18 October 2010, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of Chile.

In document G/LIC/N/3/COL/6, Colombia states that import registration (known as automatic licensing) with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (MCIT) is required for imports subject to prior authorization from government bodies. This is the case for cuts of fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus* (Harmonized System heading 0207) which are subject to prior authorization from the Food and Drug Surveillance Institute (INVIMA) and the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA).

According to document G/LIC/N/3/COL/6, neither automatic licensing (paragraph I.4) nor non-automatic licensing (paragraph II.4) is "intended to restrict the quantity or value of imports"; rather, they are intended to facilitate foreign trade operations. And apparently, it takes no more than five days to issue these documents.

However, according to the information received from the Chilean export sector, no applications for import licences for cuts of fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus* of Chilean origin filed over the past year have been granted by the Colombian authorities. The reason given is that the licensing system has been "temporarily suspended".

The licensing restrictions do not comply with the requirements of the WTO Agreement on Import Licensing Procedures and clearly limit access to the Colombian market for our exports.

We would therefore ask Colombia to provide detailed replies to the following questions:

1. What procedures and time-frames currently apply to the licensing system for the above-mentioned cuts of fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus*?
2. How do you justify the "temporary suspension" of import licensing for the products from Chile?
3. Does the "temporary suspension" of licensing:
 - (a) Apply to other countries in the case of cuts of fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus*? If so, what countries?
 - (b) Apply to other products (i.e. products other than cuts of fowls of the species *Gallus domesticus*)? What products and what countries?

4. Are there countries that have been exempted from the import licence application process for these products? If so, which countries?
