The Monthly Newsletter

This newsletter will document all industry and importation-related developments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

It provides a monthly summary of all Saudi market developments and news related to regulatory changes made by the Saudi Standards and Quality Authority. This includes information on products intended for sale in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

SASO Unveils 'Manih' Platform as Digital Successor to 'Jeem1' Effective January 2026

The Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) has announced a major upgrade to its digital certification infrastructure. Effective January 2026 ,1, the current "Jeem1" platform will be officially replaced by the new "Manih" platform. This transition is part of SASO's ongoing commitment to advancing digital governance and enhancing the user experience for stakeholders.

SASO clarified that the "Manih" platform will serve as the primary gateway for all certification services. Access to the new system will be integrated exclusively via the Electronic Authorization Service for local establishments, issued by the Saudi Business Center (SBC). The Organization emphasized that obtaining this electronic authorization is a mandatory prerequisite for businesses to access the platform's services and ensure a seamless transition.

Operated under the supervision of the General Department of Certification, the "Manih" platform is a state-of-the-art digital system designed to centralize and manage all certification procedures. Key functionalities include:

- **Issuance of the Saudi Quality Mark.**
- **Provision of conformity marks and labels verifying product adherence to approved standard specifications and technical regulations.**
- **National Recognition Certificates (IECEE).**

The launch of "Manih" aligns with the Kingdom's broader digital transformation objectives. By streamlining administrative procedures and simplifying the certification journey for beneficiaries, SASO aims to increase operational efficiency, meet the evolving demands of the Saudi market, and uphold the highest standards of quality and compliance.

SFDA Mandates Country-of-Origin Conformity Certificates for Specific Food Categories

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) has issued an official circular updating the list of food products required to obtain a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) based on food category and country of origin. This measure is part of the Authority's ongoing mission to ensure the safety of imported goods and their strict adherence to approved technical regulations.

The revised mandate introduces specific compliance protocols for imports from Brazil and the United Arab Emirates:

Brazil: All poultry and poultry products must originate exclusively from SFDA-approved facilities. Importers must comply with the technical annex regarding shipment conformity certificates as outlined in the Requirements Manual for the Designation of Conformity Assessment Bodies.

United Arab Emirates: The requirement applies specifically to infant and follow-on formula. Consignments must adhere to the technical annex for food product shipment conformity in accordance with the officially approved manual.

The SFDA confirmed that these updated requirements will be strictly enforced starting April 2026 ,1. Importers and stakeholders are encouraged to review the updated lists and technical manuals available on the Authority's official website to ensure regulatory compliance before the deadline.

SFDA and Food Industries Institute Ink Strategic Training and Capacity-Building Agreement

The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) has signed a strategic Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with the Food Industries Institute (FII). This partnership aims to strengthen joint efforts to train and qualify national talent, while building specialized human capital in fields relevant to both entities' mandates.

The memorandum establishes a comprehensive framework for cooperation, designed to bolster food safety and uphold the highest quality standards within the Kingdom's food manufacturing sector. Under the agreement, the two parties will develop qualitative training programs and vocational qualification solutions tailored to the evolving needs of the industry.

The initiative aligns with the SFDA's leading role in regulating and monitoring the food and drug sectors to safeguard public health and safety. Furthermore, the collaboration underscores the Authority's commitment to:

- Enhancing the operational readiness of food industry facilities.
- Preparing Saudi job seekers with specialized skills to enter the workforce.
- Supporting the Kingdom's broader objectives for industrial growth and workforce localization.

By bridging the gap between academic training and regulatory requirements, this partnership is set to accelerate the development of a highly skilled workforce capable of maintaining Saudi Arabia's position as a regional leader in food quality and safety.

Saudi Arabia, represented by SFDA, joins the Global Committee for Food Additive

The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) has announced the appointment of Najla Al-Harbi, Head of the Chemical Risks Department at the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), to its prestigious Roster of Experts. Representing the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, this appointment underscores the SFDA's growing international leadership in establishing global food safety standards.

The selection of a Saudi representative to JECFA serves as a testament to the scientific calibre and expertise of national talents in the fields of risk assessment and food safety. It reflects the high level of professionalism achieved by the SFDA in representing the Kingdom within international scientific platforms that directly influence global food policies and benchmarks.

By joining this elite international body, the Kingdom solidifies its influential presence in global forums dedicated to food and drug safety. The role involves:

- Contributing to the rigorous scientific assessment of food additives and contaminants.
- Participating in the formulation of safety standards adopted by the Codex Alimentarius and regulatory bodies worldwide.
- Enhancing the integration of Saudi scientific research with international best practices.

This milestone aligns with the Kingdom's strategic goal of becoming a global reference point for food safety and a key contributor to public health on a worldwide scale.

هيئة الزكاة والضريبة والجمارك
Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority

ZATKA Showcases Security and Digital Milestones on International Customs Day

The Zakat, Tax and Customs Authority (ZATKA) celebrated International Customs Day today, held this year under the global theme: "Customs Protecting Society Through Vigilance and Commitment." The event was attended by high-ranking officials and key partners from across the Saudi customs ecosystem. In his keynote address, His Excellency the Governor of ZATKA, Eng. Suhail bin Mohammed Abanmi emphasized that customs operations constitute a comprehensive national system. He noted that this framework plays a dual role: effectively safeguarding society and bolstering national security, while simultaneously facilitating trade and enhancing the taxpayer experience in alignment with the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030.

Governor Abanmi highlighted ZATKA's ongoing commitment to modernizing the customs landscape through strategic integration with relevant authorities. He noted that the Authority is implementing advanced methodologies in:

- Utilizing predictive modelling to identify potential threats.
- Deploying the latest inspection and detection equipment to ensure rigorous oversight.
- Balancing strict security protocols with the need for seamless global trade flow.

The celebration underscored the Authority's transformation into a digitally-driven regulator, ensuring that Saudi Arabia remains a secure and efficient global logistics hub.