

Based on information collected up to November 2002

## 1. TARIFF MEASURES

### Structure of the tariff schedule

Saudi Arabia applies an eight-digit tariff nomenclature based on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System. The first six digits correspond to internationally recognized categories while the last two digits are specific to Saudi Arabia's own categorization of items.

### Tariff publications

International Customs Journal No. 62, 7th ed., May 2000

Current information on customs-related matters is available from:

Saudi Arabian Department of Customs  
P.O. Box 3483  
Riyadh 11471  
Saudi Arabia

### 12 MFN Duties

Most items are assessed at a 12% rate of customs duty. Pharmaceutical products, printed materials, and basic consumer products (i.e. sugar, rice, maize, tea, not roasted coffee, cardamom, barley, livestock and meat) are zero rated. Instruments and appliances for medical use are subject to a 7% rate. For the purpose of protecting the national industries, customs duties of 20% are imposed on some imported commodities including sugar confectionery, mineral waters, cooking salt, cement, paints and varnishes, soap, bodies for motor vehicles, and furniture. A tariff rate of 100% applies to tobacco and tobacco products. A limited number of items is subject to customs duties calculated on the basis of metric weight or capacity, rather than ad valorem.

### 16 Temporary reduced duties

The Law for the Protection and Encouragement of National Industry provides for customs duty exemption in the following cases: (a) machinery, tools, packaging materials and spare parts imported for newly established industries and for the extension of industries, and (b) raw materials and processing materials imported for use by the local factories. Customs duty exemptions are approved on a case by case basis, depending on the nature of materials, machinery, tools, etc. There are no trade related criteria.

### 19.1 Interregional agreements

On 19 February 1997, the Economic Council of the Arab League decided to establish an Arab free-trade area over a period of 10 years starting from 1 January 1998. During the ten-year period, member countries ought to reduce their respective tariffs by one-tenth every year. As from 1 January 2007, the free-trade area was scheduled to be fully operational. Algeria, Comoros, Djibouti and Mauritania did not join the agreement. Lebanon,

Libya, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen did not start the implementation.

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### 19.2 Regional and sub-regional agreements

As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which includes Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, Saudi Arabia participates in the GCC's free-trade arrangement, providing duty-free access to all goods produced in the GCC countries provided they meet the GCC's basic local-content requirements of not less than 40%. On 21 December 2001, the member states agreed to establish a customs union for the GCC states that would come into effect in January 2003, rather than 2005 as previously agreed. The new agreement stipulated that the standard customs tariff should be 5% on all commodities imported from outside the Customs Union.

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### 19.3 Bilateral agreements

Art. III of the Agreement Facilitating and Developing Trade among Arab States provides for member countries to enter into bilateral agreements to exchange concessions going beyond the concessions under the agreed lists of products. In pursuance with this provision, Saudi Arabia has bilateral agreements with Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia.

## 3. PRICE CONTROL MEASURES

### Administrative pricing

#### 31.1 Minimum import prices

Saudi Arabia applies minimum pricing for customs valuation purposes. Customs value of used motor vehicles is derived from applying a schedule of depreciation to the original new price. Price lists set by Saudi Customs are also used for agricultural products and medicaments, and minimum prices are used for valuation of ceramic products falling under HS 6908.90.10.

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## 6. QUANTITY CONTROL MEASURES

Licensing under the authority of  
Ministry of Commerce  
P.O. Box 1774  
Airport Road  
Riyadh 11162

### Non-automatic licensing

#### 61.1 Licence with no specific ex-ante criteria

Distillation equipment used for producing distilled water may be imported subject to an import licence from the Ministry of Commerce. Petroleum jellies and waxes require an import licence from the Ministry of Interior.

Balloons, gliders, aircraft and spacecraft and parts thereof require a prior licence from the competent Government Department.

According to international convention, imports of antiques are subject to a licence from the Ministry of Education.

**61.2 Licence for selected purchasers**

Postage or revenue stamps may be imported by competent Government Departments only and are subject to a written consent.

Night binoculars may only be imported by a competent agency.

**61.7 Prior authorization for sensitive product categories**

Chemicals imported by commercial importers require an import licence from the Ministry of Commerce. Chemicals imported by factories require an approval and import licence from the Ministry of Industry and Electricity.

**61.71 To protect human health**

Pharmaceutical products, controlled substances for medical use, narcotics, psychotropics, chemicals under control which could lead to narcotics manufacturing, ethyl alcohol, certain biological products, and blood products may be imported subject to an approval from the Ministry of Health.

**61.72 To protect animal health and life**

**61.73 To protect plant health**

For human life and plant health protection reasons, the Ministry of Agriculture and Water issues import licences for the following goods: seeds and fertilizers, pesticides, veterinary drugs and vaccines, feeds additives, biological materials, pigeons, land birds, rabbits, and animal semen.

**61.78 To ensure national security**

For national security reasons, explosives and dangerous chemicals require an approval from the Ministry of Interior.

The importation of radio and electronics equipment, TV-monitoring cameras and accessories and closed circuit television, burglar or fire alarms, high quality photocopiers, arms and ammunition requires an import licence from the Ministry of Interior to ensure national security.

The Ministry of PTT is the competent authority to issue import licences for wireless sets and radio communication apparatus to ensure national security and rationalization of the use of frequencies.

**61.79 For purposes n.e.s.**

Ethyl alcohol may be imported subject to an approval from different authorities: (1) the Ministry of Health; or (2) the Ministry of Industry; or (3) the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Industry.

**61.9 Non-automatic licensing n.e.s.**

Horses of Arab breed may only be imported by air, by a direct flight from the exporting country. The Chivalry Club is responsible for issuing import licenses to ensure that the Arab breed is maintained.

All subsidized agricultural machinery and equipment require an import licence from the Ministry of Agriculture and Water.

## Prohibitions

### 63.71 To protect human health

Advertising material for tobacco products may not be imported for health protection reasons.

Imports of asbestos and materials or goods containing asbestos are prohibited.

The importation of genetically-modified food and food ingredients manufactured from animal products is not authorized.



### 63.76 To control drug abuse

Nutmeg, poppy, seeds of poppy and cannabis, black cannabis, opium, and miscellaneous herbs are prohibited for importation.



### 63.78 To ensure national security

Imports of parts for use solely or principally with radio communication apparatus and television receivers are banned for security reasons.



### 63.79 Prohibitions for purposes n.e.s.

Various items may not be imported for religious reasons. These include live swine, meat of swine and other products of swine, frogs' legs, food products made from animal blood, alcoholic beverages, leather of beasts, three-dimensional pictures and any goods which offend Sharia and public morality, as well as tools and machinery designed for gambling excluding those for innocent amusement.



### 63.8 Prohibition for political reasons (embargo)

As a member of the Arab League, Saudi Arabia applies the primary degree of the embargo decreed by this institution in 1954 with regard to products originating in Israel.



### 63.9 Prohibitions n.e.s.

Due to the intended illegal use of the products, imports of empty bags bearing trademarks of the manufacturers and bottles with origin evidence affixed thereon are banned.



## 7. MONOPOLISTIC MEASURES

### Single channel for imports

#### 71.2 Sole importing agency

The importation of balloons, gliders, aircraft and spacecraft (for military purposes) and parts thereof, as well as military weapons is authorized to military agencies only subject to a written consent.



## 8. TECHNICAL MEASURES

### Technical regulations

Standards are formulated and enforced by the Saudi Arabian Standard Organization (SASO)  
P.O. Box 3437  
Riyadh

#### 81.1 Product characteristics requirements

The International Conformity Certification Programme (ICCP) is a combined conformity assessment and pre-shipment inspection scheme. Under the ICCP, 77 regulated consumer product lines are subject to quality and safety control through the application of mandatory Saudi and international standards on the following groups of commodities: (1) toys and playground equipment, (2) electrical and electronic items, (3) automotive products, (4) chemical products, and (5) others.

Compliance with these standards will result in the issue of a certificate of conformity. The ICCP conformity assessment procedures accept the results of credible conformity assessment procedures of other countries through recognition of the suppliers' declaration of test, quality marks and certifications, as far as they satisfy Saudi requirements.

A category like gold and silver jewellery which does not have a specified standard, is assessed for conformity to the quality criteria declared by the particular exporter in order to control any deceptive practice.

A certificate of origin is required for all imports. Certificates of origin shall be attested by the Saudi Arabian Embassy or Consulate. Where no Saudi Arabian Embassy or Consulate exists, such certificate shall be attested by the Chambers of Commerce in the exporting country.

Agricultural pesticides registration is required for pesticides (finished products and technical active ingredients), before they could be used. Pesticides have to be evaluated under local conditions in the field and laboratory for a minimum of two years. After approval, the pesticide registration is valid for five years.

Imports of seeds require a seed analysis certificate stating the degree of purity of the seeds.



#### 81.11 To protect human health

The approved standards issued pursuant to decree No. M/10 on 3/3/1392H and developed by SASO cover sanitary measures of food products and the following sanitary elements: (1) measures following the standards and guidelines of Codex Alimentarius, and (2) measures not covered by the Codex Alimentarius based upon scientific studies or the most appropriate measures of other WTO member states.

Some products such as fresh meat, chilled and frozen meat should be accompanied by a Halal certificate, a health certificate and a certificate of origin.

Imported poultry products require a sanitary certificate stating that the chickens were not fed animal proteins, fats, or animal by-products.

A consumer protection certificate is required for food products. This certificate must confirm the healthiness of the various ingredients, their safety and fitness for human consumption.

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**81.12 To protect animal health and life**

Veterinary quarantine bylaw issued by the decree of the Council of Ministers No. 208 dated 26/1/1396H covers sanitary and veterinary requirements and measures pertaining to animal and animal products conforming to the ruling of the International Zoo-sanitary Code specifying the regulations recommended for international trade with regard to animals and animal products issued by the International Office of Epizootics.

Veterinary drugs and products must be registered with the Ministry of Agriculture & Water, Animal Resources Department, Division of Registration and Control of Veterinary Drugs and Products.

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**81.13 To protect plant health**

Agricultural quarantine bylaw issued by the decree of the Council of Ministers No. 207 dated 26/1/1396H covers the phytosanitary requirements and measures conforming to the rules issued from IPPC initially based on FAO publications.

A phytosanitary certificate is required for all shipments of flour, rice, agricultural seeds, lumber, plants and plant products.

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**81.1 Product characteristics requirements**

**81.3 Labelling requirements**

Under decree No. 1666 of 11 December 2000, genetically-modified foodstuffs must be accompanied by a health certificate stating that the products are approved in the country of origin for human consumption. In addition, mandatory labelling requirements for the presence of genetically-modified ingredients became effective on 1 December 2001.

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**81.3 Labelling requirements**

Labelling requirements for all imported pre-packaged foodstuffs and additives are satisfied through SASO's mandatory standard No. SSA/1995 which is identical to Gulf standard No. 9/1995 and is based on the CODEX guidelines.

The stipulation of SSA 702/1993 "Expiration Periods for Food Products" agrees in content with the stipulation CAC 1/1991 "Labels of Pre-packaged Foodstuffs" and international legislation with respect to necessity of showing the date mark on labels of food products together with proper storage instructions. The following products are excluded from showing the date of minimum durability on the label: fresh fruit and vegetables, table salt, vinegar, solid sugar, confectionary products containing sugar with colour or flavour, and bakery which are consumed as per the ingredients within 24 hours of production.

Saudi Arabia imposed a half-life/shelf life date requirement on imported food products to allow enough time for the exporter to ship and for the importer time to facilitate the distribution and marketing to all regions of the Kingdom.

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**81.4 Packaging requirements**

Packaging requirements for imports by sea are in conformity with decree No. SPA-1740/82 of 4 May 1982.

Jute made packaging materials to be used for packing of food articles must conform to the specifications for such products laid down by the country.

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**81.5** Testing, inspection and quarantine requirements

All cuttings and seedlings imported into Saudi Arabia are subject to visual inspection in the quarantine area.

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**81.9** Technical regulations n.e.s.

Imports of wheat require to be denatured with a dye to avoid the risk that the imported products will be presented as domestic for the purpose of obtaining a subsidy.

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**82** Pre-shipment inspection

The International Conformity Certification Programme (ICCP) uses pre-shipment inspection as a tool of conformity assessment on shipments valued at US\$5000 and more. Pre-shipment inspection varies with the status of the particular product vis-à-vis the programme, ranging from full pre-shipment inspection and pre-shipment testing for unknown/unregistered products, to pre-shipment inspection plus occasional pre-shipment testing for registered products, to occasional random pre-shipment inspection only for type-approved products. On behalf of SASO, the Intertek Testing Services administer the ICCO on a global basis.