

LEBTRADE PORTAL A GOLDMINE FOR EXPORTERS



Creating Export Opportunities by
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY & TRADE

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AVOCADOS HS CODE: 08044000 – POTENTIAL MARKET IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA (KSA)

1. PRODUCT DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION

Harmonized System (HS) code

08044000 Avocados, fresh or dried

Top varieties found in Lebanon

- Hass (Guatemalan)
- Fuerte (hybrid)
- Ettinger (hybrid)
- Pinkerton (hybrid)

2. THE SAUDI BODIES

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which also includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (KSA). Within this framework, food safety and import requirements are largely harmonized under the Gulf Standardization Organization (GSO), which issues unified technical regulations for food imports across GCC member states.

GSO standards form the primary reference framework for regulating imported food products, including fresh fruits and vegetables such as avocados

a. International Standards and Regulatory References

KSA and GCC food regulations are developed with reference to internationally recognized food safety frameworks:

- Codex Alimentarius Commission (FAO/WHO)
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Official GCC technical regulations found at the [Online Standards Store](#).

b. Saudi Regulatory Bodies

The primary regulatory bodies overseeing this pipeline are the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA), the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA), and Faseh Food System portal.

i. The Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA)

The [Saudi Food and Drug Authority \(SFDA\)](#) is the primary independent regulatory and supervisory body in Saudi Arabia, responsible for protecting public health by ensuring the safety, quality, and efficacy of food, drugs, medical devices, and cosmetics. All foreign exporting establishments (farms/packhouses in Lebanon) and their products must be logged into active digital accounts on the [SFDA Platform](#)

ii. The Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture (MEWA)

The Saudi importers must submit an electronic application through the [Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture's portal](#) to receive an import permit. Licensing is divided into Class A (10-year validity) and Class B (3-year validity) depending on cold-storage ownership.

iii. Faseh Food System Portal:

A customs declaration must be submitted via the [Faseh Services System](#) at least 48 hours prior to the shipment's arrival at the Saudi port.

c. Import Control System Overview

LEBTRADE PORTAL

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

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3. FOOD IMPORT PROCEDURE

a. Food Product Registration

Before exporting avocados to Saudi Arabia (KSA), exporters and importers must complete the required digital registrations through Saudi platforms. This ensures that products meet Saudi food safety, quality, and labeling requirements.

Key Requirements for Users

- **MEWA Import Permit:**
The Saudi importer must obtain an import permit through the [MEWA Digital Portal](#) before shipment departure.
- **SFDA Registration:**
Exporters and importers must have active accounts on the [SFDA GHAD Platform](#) and register the avocado products.
- **Fasah Customs Declaration:**
The import declaration must be submitted electronically through the [Fasah Services System Platform](#) at least **48 hours before shipment arrival**.
- **Required Documents:**
Each shipment must include the required documentation:
 - o Bill of entry
 - o Delivery order
 - o Phytosanitary/health certificate
 - o Certificate of origin
- **Product Compliance:**
Avocados must meet KSA requirements for:

- o Product quality
- o Pesticide residue limits (MRLs)
- o Packaging and labeling standards

b. Border Controls

Avocado shipments may be subject to:

- **Security Screening:** X-ray and physical inspection at Saudi borders.
- **Laboratory Testing:** Random samples may be tested for pesticide residues, chemical contaminants, or heavy metals.

FOOD PRODUCT REGISTRATION

Avocado Exports to Saudi Arabia (KSA)





Before exporting avocados to KSA, exporters and importers must complete the required digital registrations through Saudi platforms. This ensures compliance with Saudi food safety, quality, and labeling requirements.

Key Requirements

- 1



MEWA Import Permit
Saudi importer obtains the import permit through the MEWA Digital Portal before shipment departure.
- 2



SFDA Registration
Exporter and importer must have active accounts on the SFDA GHAD Platform and register the avocado products.
- 3



Fasah Customs Declaration
Import declaration must be submitted electronically through the Fasah Platform at least 48 hours before shipment arrival.
- 4



Required Documents

 - Bill of entry
 - Delivery order
 - Phytosanitary / health certificate
 - Certificate of origin
- 5



Product Compliance

 - Product quality
 - Pesticide residue limits (MRLs)
 - Packaging and labeling standards

Border Controls



Security Screening
X-ray and physical inspection at Saudi borders.



Laboratory Testing
Random samples may be tested for pesticide residues, chemical contaminants, or heavy metals.



KEY MESSAGE

Complete registration, accurate documents, and product compliance help reduce border delays and rejection risk.



c. Food Import Documentation

Each shipment of fresh Lebanese avocados entering KSA must be supported by the following documents:

Document	Purpose
Phytosanitary Certificate	Issued by the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture to confirm that the avocados are inspected and free from quarantine pests

Certificate of Origin	Confirms that the product was grown and exported from Lebanon
Commercial Invoice & Packing List	Must match shipment quantities, weights, and exporter/importer details
Traceable Labels	Labels must include product name, variety, origin ("Lebanon"), net weight, packing date, and packhouse traceability information
Organic Certificate (if applicable)	Required only when the product is marketed or labeled as organic in KSA
Certificate of Analysis (CoA)	Recommended to provide evidence of product testing and support buyer confidence

Exporter Tip:

Prepare and verify all documents, labels, and registrations before shipment to reduce delays and rejection risks.



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EXPORTER TIP:

Prepare and verify all documents, labels, and registrations before shipment to reduce delays and rejection risks.



4. QUALITY REQUIREMENTS

Lebanese avocado exporters must comply with GCC quality standards. These standards define avocado quality, classification, sizing, pesticide limits, packaging safety, and hygiene requirements;

- **GSO 123:1990** – General Requirements for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- **GSO 2131:2015** – Requirements for Commercial Varieties of Fresh Avocados

a. General Quality Requirements

Avocados exported to KSA must be:

Healthy and clean

- Whole, fresh, and free from pests, diseases, damage, foreign smell, or taste
- Free from rotting, deterioration, and chilling injury

Properly harvested and matured

- Stalk must be cleanly cut and not exceed **10 mm**
- Fruit must be fully developed and mature
- For **Hass avocados**, minimum **24% dry matter** is recommended to ensure proper ripening after transport

Uniformly packed

- Fruits must be sorted by size and packed consistently by weight or count

b. Avocado Classification

Under **GSO 2131:2015**, avocados are classified into three quality classes:

Class	Requirements
Extra Class	Highest quality. Uniform fruit with almost no visible defects
Class I	Good quality. Minor shape, color, or skin defects are allowed
Class II	Acceptable market quality. Some defects are allowed, but flesh must remain sound

Exporter Rule:

All cartons within the same shipment must have the same quality class and consistent quality.

c. Size and Weight Requirements

Avocados must be sorted according to standardized sizes.

Key requirements:

- Fruit sizes range from:
 - o **Size 10:** Large fruit (>375 g/fruit)
 - o **Size 30:** Small fruit (125–145 g/fruit)
- Fruit weight variation within the same carton must be limited:
 - o Maximum difference: **25 g for smaller sizes**
 - o Maximum difference: **50 g for larger sizes**
- Cartons must have consistent fruit size to avoid buyer rejection.

d. Pesticide Residues and Contaminants

Avocados exported to KSA must comply with pesticide residue limits (MRLs) according to:

- **GSO 382/2020** – Maximum Levels of Pesticides Residues in Agricultural and Food Products
- **GSO 2532/2016** – Maximum limits for pesticide residues in organic food
- **Codex Alimentarius MRL standards** (when applicable)

Important Rules

- Any banned pesticide detection may lead to shipment rejection.
- If a pesticide is not listed in approved standards, a default limit of **0.01 mg/kg** applies.
- Non-compliance may result in:
 - o Shipment rejection
 - o Destruction of products
 - o Re-export at exporter's cost

Indicative MRL Examples (Avocados)

Active Ingredient	Use	Maximum Limit
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Thiabendazole	Fungicide	15 mg/kg
Bromide Ion	Fumigation residue	75 mg/kg
Azoxystrobin	Fungicide	3 mg/kg
Bifenthrin	Insecticide	0.5 mg/kg
Imidacloprid	Insecticide	1 mg/kg
Boscalid	Fungicide	2 mg/kg
Acetamiprid	Insecticide	0.2 mg/kg
Glyphosate	Herbicide	0.2 mg/kg
Abamectin	Insecticide	0.01 mg/kg

e. Packaging Chemical Safety

Packaging materials must:

- Be food-grade and safe
- Prevent chemical migration to fruit
- Comply with food-contact material requirements (Codex Standard 193/1995)

Any post-harvest treatment must be:

- Approved by authorities
- Declared in documentation
- Within GCC permitted limits

f. Organic Avocados (If Applicable)

If avocados are marketed as **organic** in KSA:

- Product must comply with **GSO 2532/2016**.
- Organic certification must be valid and recognized.
- Maximum total pesticide residue: **0.01 mg/kg**.
- Products exceeding this limit cannot be sold as organic.

g. Microbiological Requirements

KSA applies Codex-based hygiene requirements to protect food safety. Relevant standards:

- **GSO 1694/2005** – General Principles of Food Hygiene
- **GSO 1016/2017** – Microbiological Criteria for Food Stuffs

Exporters should apply:

- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)**
- **Good Hygienic Practices (GHP)**
- **Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)** during handling and packing

Exporter Tip:

Consistent quality, correct pesticide management, and proper hygiene practices are key to avoiding rejection at the Saudi border.

5. PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS

Packaging must keep avocados **safe, fresh, and protected** during transport to Saudi Arabia (KSA). All packaging materials must comply with:

- **GSO 839/2021** – Food Packages
- **GSO 1863/2021** – Plastic Packages
- **GSO 2231/2012** – General Requirements for Food Contact Materials

Key requirements

- Must be **food-grade, safe, and non-toxic**
- Must not transfer chemicals, odor, or taste to avocados
- Must protect fruit from **damage, moisture, and contamination**
- Must allow **air circulation to prevent mold and overheating**

a. Approved Packaging Materials

Recommended materials include:

- Corrugated cardboard cartons
- Solid cardboard boxes
- Food-grade plastic crates

Important Rules

Exporters must ensure that packaging:

- Is strong enough to prevent crushing and fruit damage.
- Does not use strong-smelling wood or chemically treated materials.
- Uses only food-safe inks, adhesives, and coatings.
- Uses recycled materials only when they are certified food-grade.

b. Optional Packaging Solutions

To improve shelf life and transport quality:

- **Perforated films:** Improve airflow and moisture control.
- **Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP):** Helps slow avocado ripening.

Exporter Tip:

Good packaging protects fruit quality, maintains freshness, and prevents rejection during transport and inspection.

6. For

Correct
is



labeling

essential for exporting avocados to Saudi Arabia. Labels must be **clear, accurate, easy to read, and approved before shipment** to avoid delays or rejection at the Saudi border. All labels and packaging must comply with:

- **GSO 9:2022/Amd1:2025** – Food Labeling
- **GSO 839:2021** – Food Packaging Requirements

Before shipping, Lebanese exporters should confirm with the Saudi importer that all label information meets KSA requirements.

a. General Label Requirements

Each outer carton or crate must have a clear label in **Arabic** or **Arabic and English**. The label should include:

- **Product name:** Fresh Avocados
- **Variety:** Hass, Fuerte, Lamb Hass, etc.
- **Country of origin:** Product of Lebanon
- **Exporter and packer details:** Name and full address of the packing facility in Lebanon
- **Packing date:** DD-MM-YYYY format
- **Net and gross weight**
- **Storage conditions:** For example, cold-chain or temperature instructions
- **Quality grade:** Extra Class, Class I, or Class II

Important Note

Fresh avocados must not include added ingredients. If avocados are mixed with other items or processed, they may no longer be treated as fresh produce and may need to follow additional labeling rules.

b. QR Code and Traceability

A **QR code or barcode** is recommended on the label or master pallet label. This can help Saudi authorities and buyers quickly verify:

- Farm or supplier information
- Packing house details
- Batch or lot number
- Export documents
- Traceability records

Quick Checklist for Exporters

Label Component	What to Check
Carton/crate material	Clean, strong, ventilated, and food-grade
Label language	Arabic or Arabic/English
Origin statement	Clearly states "Product of Lebanon"
Weight	Net and gross weight are accurate
Packing date	Clearly shown in DD-MM-YYYY format
Traceability	Barcode or QR code matches the shipment details

c. Dates, Barcodes, and Label Approval

For fresh fruits and vegetables, labels should include:

- Production date or harvest year, where required
- Packing date
- Product barcode, where applicable

An **expiry date is usually not required** for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Important Rules

- Labels must be approved before shipment.
- Labels cannot usually be corrected after arrival.
- Any change in label, barcode, packaging, or weight may require new approval.
- Each barcode should be linked to one product only.

d. Sticker Rules

If stickers are used, they must:

- Not cover mandatory label information
- Match the approved label information
- Be applied before export
- Be permanent and not easily removable
- Not be used to add or change production or expiry dates
- Be approved by KSA authorities, where required



e. Marketing and Nutrition Claims

Exporters should be careful when adding marketing or nutrition claims to avocado labels. Claims must comply with:

- GSO CAC GL 1/2008 - General Claims Guidelines
- GSO 2333/2019 - Nutrition and Health Claims
- GSO 2233/2021 - Nutrition Labeling Requirements
- GSO 2576/2021 - Marketing Terms on Labels

Avoid using claims unless they are true and supported by documents. Examples of claims that need proof:

- "Premium"
- "Healthy Fats"
- "High Fiber"
- "Organic"
- "GMO-free"
- "Natural"

Claim Examples

Label Statement

Status

"Fresh Avocado – Product of Lebanon"	Acceptable for fresh, unprocessed avocados
"High in Potassium & Fiber"	Allowed only if supported by the required nutrition information
"Prevents Heart Attacks" or "Lowers Cholesterol"	Not allowed, because these are medicinal/health claims

f. Organic Labeling

Only use the word **"organic"** if the avocados are officially certified organic. If avocados are labeled or marketed as organic in KSA, they must comply with:

- **GSO 2374/2014** – Labeling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods

Organic avocados must:

- Come from certified organic farms
- Have a valid organic certificate
- Show the approved organic logo, where required
- Be supported by documents recognized by KSA authorities

If the product is organic but the word **"organic"** is not used on the label or in marketing, an organic certificate may not be required for labeling purposes.

Exporter Tip

- Keep the label simple, accurate, and easy to verify.
- Do not add marketing claims unless you have official proof.
- Do not write **"organic"** unless you have a valid organic certificate.