

# **A QUESTION & ANSWER GUIDE FOR FIRST TIME FOOD IMPORTERS**



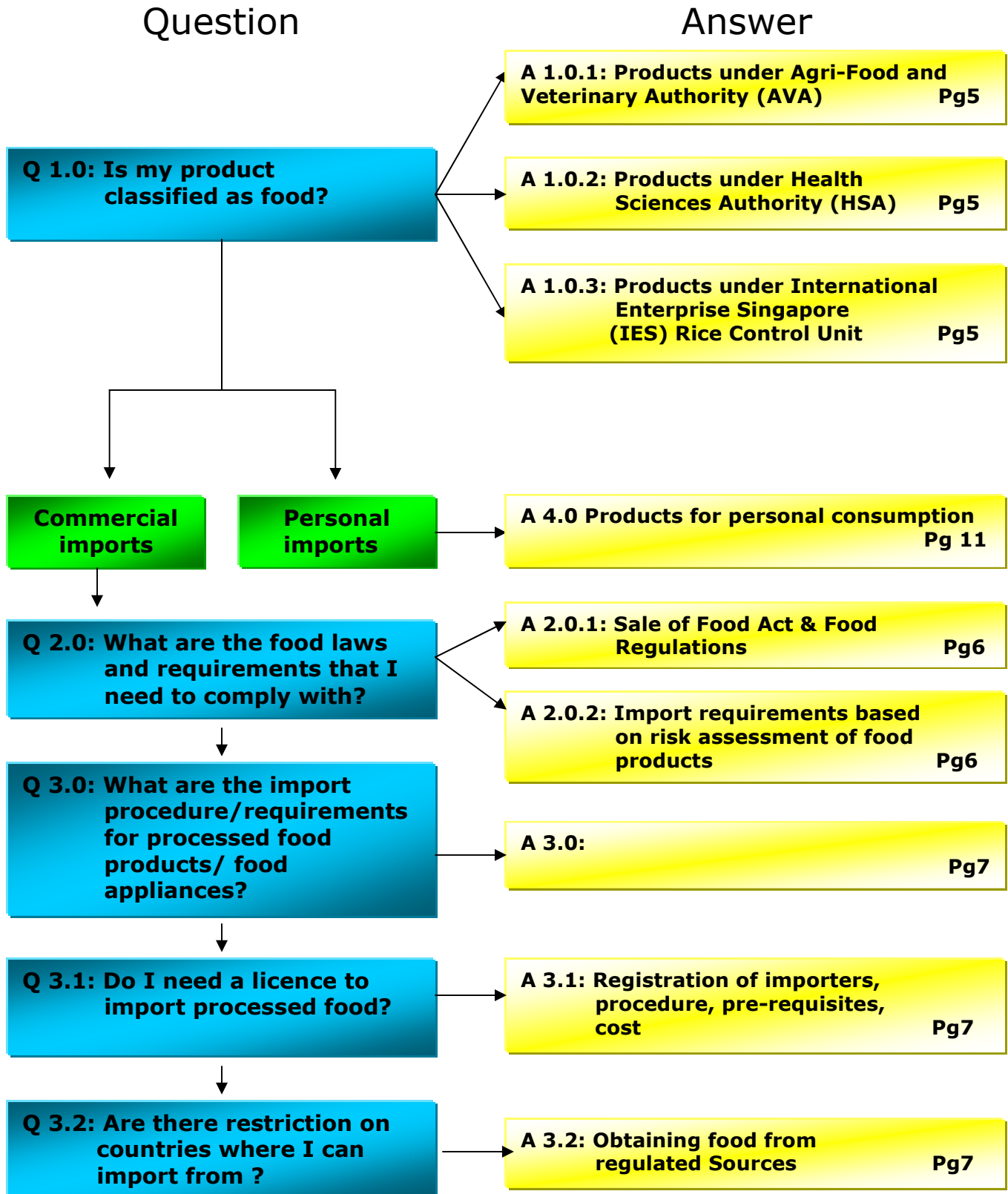
Quarantine & Inspection Department

Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of  
Singapore

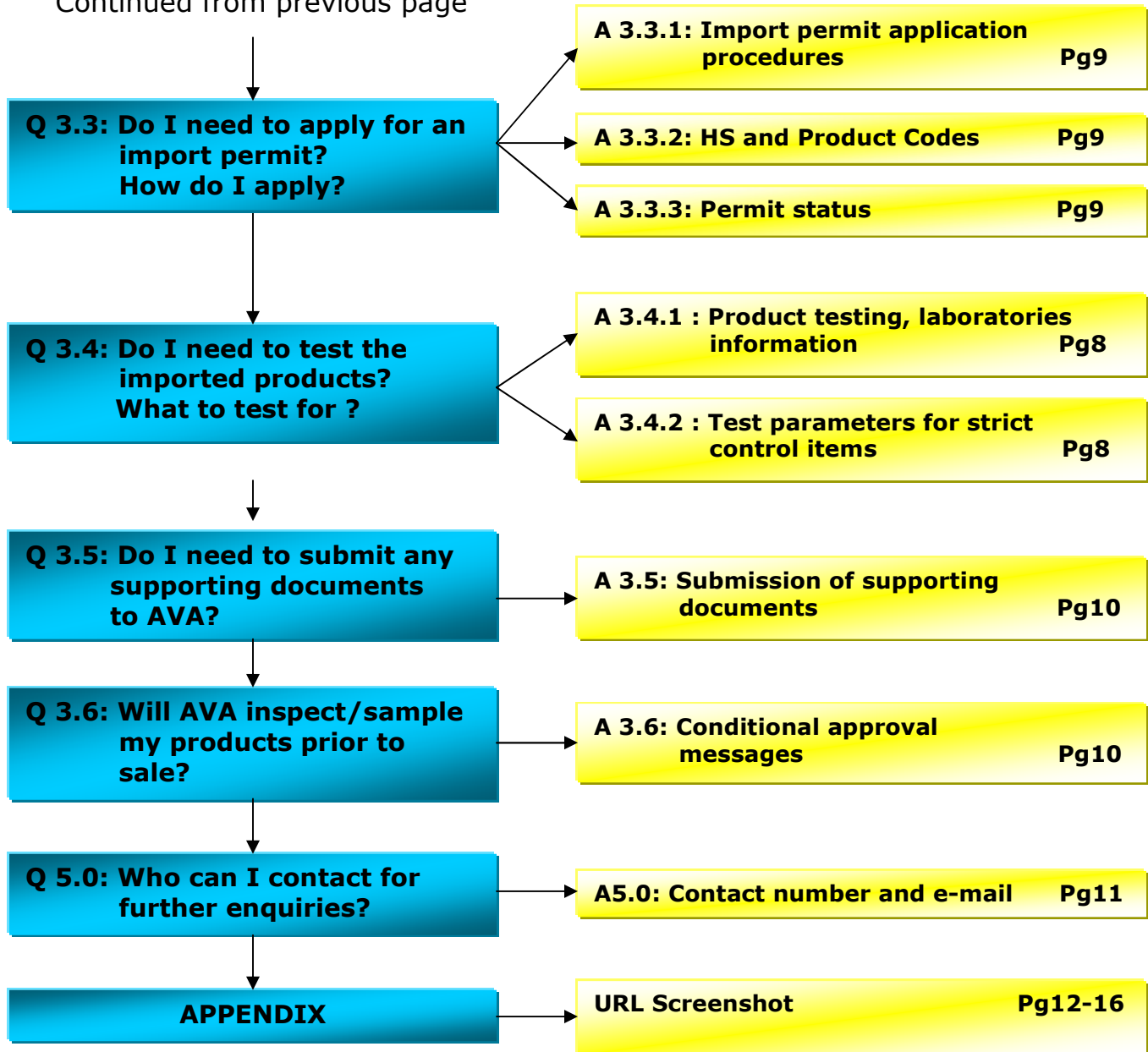
# Content

Article	Page
Food Import Control Workflow	3 – 4
Q 1.0: Is my food product classified as processed food	5
Q 2.0: What are the food laws and requirements that I need to comply with?	6
Q 3.0: What is the import procedure and requirements for processed food products and/or food appliances?	6
Q 3.1: Do I need a licence to import processed food? What is the cost?	7
Q 3.2: Are there restrictions on the countries I can import from?	7
Q 3.3: Do I need to apply for an import permit? How to apply?	8
Q 3.4: Do I need to test the products imported?	9
Q 3.5: Do I need to submit documents?	10
Q 3.6: Will AVA inspect/sample my products prior to sale?	10
Q 4.0: For personal import, do I need to register with AVA and apply for an import permit?	11
Q 5.0: Who can I contact for further enquiries?	11
Appendix 1	12
Appendix 2	13

# FOOD IMPORT CONTROL WORKFLOW



Continued from previous page



**Q 1.0: Is my food product classified as processed food?**

**A 1.0.1: Products under Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA)**

Processed food products (e.g beverages, grains, fats and oil, noodles), food supplement and food appliances.

For more information on processed food products, please refer to:  
<http://www.ava.gov.sg/FoodSector/ImportExportTransOfFood/ProcessedFood/>

For more information on meat & meat products, fish & fish products, fresh fruits, please refer to:

<http://www.ava.gov.sg/FoodSector/ImportExportTransOfFood/Meat/>  
<http://www.ava.gov.sg/FoodSector/ImportExportTransOfFood/Fish/>  
<http://www.ava.gov.sg/FoodSector/ImportExportTransOfFood/VegAndFruits/>

**A 1.0.2: Products under Health Sciences Authority (HSA)**

Health supplements, Western and Chinese medical products and Cosmetic Products.

For more information please visit HSA website at [www.hsa.gov.sg](http://www.hsa.gov.sg), or call Tel: 68863400

**A 1.0.3: Products under International Enterprise Singapore (IES) Rice Control Unit**

All uncooked rice grains.

For more information on products under IES, please visit  
[http://www.business.gov.sg/EN/Industries/FoodNBeverage/LicencesNPermits/ImportingUsingCertainIngredientsNEquipment/fnb\\_lp\\_rice.htm](http://www.business.gov.sg/EN/Industries/FoodNBeverage/LicencesNPermits/ImportingUsingCertainIngredientsNEquipment/fnb_lp_rice.htm)  
or call: Tel: 64334792 / 64334000

## Q 2.0: What are the food laws and requirements that I need to comply with?

### A 2.0.1: Sale of Food Act & Food Regulations

Importers and all processed food products intended to be imported into Singapore for sale are required to comply with the Sale of Food Act (SFA) and the Food Regulations (FR) including the labelling requirements.

Softcopy of the SFA and Food Regulations is available at AVA website: <http://www.ava.gov.sg> (Please refer to screenshot in Appendix 1)

### A 2.0.2: Import requirements based on risk assessment of food products

#### ➤ **High Risk**

AVA adopts a risk-based approach towards ensuring food safety. Food products identified through trend studies to be of high potential health risk, or have a history of poor safety record are placed under strict import control (high risk). These products require pre-market assessment such as the submission of health certificates or laboratory reports to certify the safety of the products, or inspections and/or sampling, at the points of import. Some examples of strict control item include mineral water, coconut milk, infant formula, ready-to-eat fruits and vegetable etc.

For a list of high risk strict control items, please visit AVA website at <http://www.ava.gov.sg/NR/rdonlyres/B911AC69-7E1C-45FC-93D7-5992E06A8C5E/15401/ImportRequirementsofSpecificFoodProducts1.pdf>

#### ➤ **Low Risk**

Low risk food products are auto-approved by AVA. AVA conducts post-market surveillance at retail outlets to ensure that these products comply with the food laws.

## Q 3.0: What are the import procedures and requirements for processed food products and/or food appliances?

### A 3.0:

Under Singapore Food Laws, importers are required to obtain an import permit from AVA before importing processed food and food appliances into the country for sale. Only AVA registered importers are allowed to apply for processed food and food appliances import permits. For more details please refer to Q3.1 – 3.6

### **Q 3.1: Do I need a licence to import processed food?**

#### **A 3.1: Registration of importers, procedure, pre-requisites, cost**

Although a licence is not required, importers are required to apply to AVA (QID) in order to obtain a Registration Number.

Importers are required to fulfill the following pre-requisites prior to application:

- Applicant must first be a company or business that is registered with the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) and obtain a Unique Entity Number (UEN) from ACRA
- Applicant must register their UEN with Singapore Customs (SC)
- Applicant may then apply for an AVA Registration Number online through Online Business Licensing Service (OBLS) and need to pay an upfront application fee for each new application submitted. However, the annual renewal of the Registration Number is currently free of charge.

For more information, please refer:

- ACRA - <http://www.acra.gov.sg/>
- OBLS - <https://licences.business.gov.sg> (Please refer to screenshot in Appendix 2)

### **Q 3.2: Are there restrictions on the countries from which I can import food?**

#### **A 3.2: Obtaining food from Regulated Sources**

Food exported to Singapore must be produced under sanitary conditions in a properly regulated establishment. Importers are advised to maintain documentary proof that the products they import are produced in an establishment under proper supervision of the competent food authority in the country of origin or which has a quality assurance program acceptable to AVA.

Some examples of documents that are acceptable include:

- Business licence or registration of the premises
- Health Certificate
- Certificate of HACCP or equivalent quality assurance system
- Certificate of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)

### Q 3.3: Do I need to apply for an import permit? How do I apply?

#### A 3.3.1: Import permit application procedures

An import permit is required for every import consignment of processed food products or food appliances. Importers can apply the permit either through:

- **TradeNet System or**  
For more information, please refer to <http://www.tradexchange.gov.sg>
- **Declaring Agent or Freight Forwarders**  
You may engage an SC registered declaring agent or freight forwarder to declare your food products through TradeNet for an import permit. The list of declaring agents and freight forwarders may be obtained from the following websites:  
<http://www.customs.gov.sg/leftNav/trad/dir/Local+Forwarding+Agents.htm>

#### A 3.3.2: Import permit declaration

Each food item should be declared accurately with

- a) Correct HS and product codes;
- b) Product description
- c) Correct quantity and unit of measurement;
- d) Correct brand in the brand name field (The term "unbranded" is not allowed. If there is no brand at the time of import, the manufacturer's name or the intended brand should be declared);
- e) Country of origin

When applying for import permit. The list of HS and Product Codes, can

#### A 3.3.3: Permit status

Importers are reminded to check the approval message code in the permit after the declaration has been processed and approved by AVA and act according to the message given. A pending message may be issued if clarification is required on the declaration or if submission of supporting documents is required.



**Q 3.4: Do I need to test the imported products?  
What tests should I do?**

**A 3.4.1: Product testing, laboratories information**

It is the responsibility of the importers to ensure that the products imported by them comply with the SFA and the Food Regulations. It is therefore, advisable that prior to importation, the importers initiate some quality control checks and due diligence checks on the products by sending their products to accredited laboratories for analysis. The list of accredited laboratories is available at:  
<http://www.sac-accreditation.org.sg/Directory/Directory.asp?Type=2>

**A 3.4.2: Test parameters for strict control items**

For import of food products that placed under strict control programme, importers are required to send the products for testing. The test parameters (not exhaustive) for each strict control products is available at:  
<http://www.ava.gov.sg/NR/rdonlyres/B911AC69-7E1C-45FC-93D7-5992E06A8C5E/15401/ImportRequirementsofSpecificFoodProducts1.pdf>

**Q 3.5: How do I know whether or not I need to submit supporting documents and when to submit the supporting documents?**

**A 3.5: Submission of supporting documents**

Additional requirements and supporting documents such as health certificates and/or laboratory test reports may be required for the import of strict control food products such as mineral water, infant formula etc when applying for import permits. (Refer to A 2.0.2)

When submitting the documents, importers are reminded to state the Unique Reference Number (URN) of the permit declaration and the AVA Registration Number on the top right hand corner of each document and fax to AVA at 62215091.

For more information, please contact Tel: 6325 0783 or 6325 0784.

**Q 3.6: Will AVA inspect/sample my products prior to sale?**

**A 3.6: Conditional approval messages**

All imported processed food products and food appliances are subjected to AVA inspection. Samples may be taken from a consignment for laboratory analysis. In certain cases, a conditional approval message will be posted on the import permit to require traders to contact AVA for arrangement of inspection of food products at Tel: 6325 0783 or 6325 0784.

**Q 4.0: For personal import, do I need to register with AVA and apply for import permit?**

**A 4.0.1 : Food products for personal consumption**

**Import permit required?**

a) NO, no permit is required if:

Food products for personal consumption do not exceed 5 kg and/or SGD100

b) YES, an import permit is required if:

Food products for personal consumption exceed 5 kg and/or SGD100.

In such instances, importers are required to apply for an import permit using the miscellaneous personal CR number 9999990000C. A copy of the invoice of the items to be imported and a letter of undertaking that the products are for personal consumption are to be faxed to AVA at Fax: 62215091 for consideration.

**A 4.0.1 : Food products as gifts, prizes, samples etc**

If the product exceeds 5 kg and/or SGD100, it will be classified as commercial import.

Importers are required to register with AVA to obtain the Registration Number and apply for import permit. (refer to A3.1, A3.3.1 & A3.3.2)

**Q 5.0: Who can I contact for further enquiries?**

<b>Answer 5.0</b>		
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>	<b>Email Address</b>
Import of processed food and food appliances	6325 7333 6325 0783/4 6221 5056	AVA_Import&Export_Foodstuff@ava.gov.sg
Registration of processed food importers	6325 8496 6325 3016	AVA_Import&Export_Foodstuff@ava.gov.sg

## **Appendix 1**

Step I: Select "Legislation" and click on "List of Legislation"



Step II: Scroll down to "Sale of Food Act" and click "Food Regulations"



## Appendix 2

Step I: Click on "Apply new Licence(S)"



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### ONLINE BUSINESS LICENSING SERVICE (OBLS)



Online Business Licensing Service (OBLS) allows you to submit one or multiple licence applications to the relevant government agencies for their approval. Please read the options available below.

I want to apply for new ...

**New Applications** **Click Here**

- Apply new Licence(s)  
*Eg. Central Registration (CR) Number, Home Office Scheme, Liquor Licence, Employment Agency Licence, Temporary Change of Use & more ...*
- Register a New Business, LLP or Company (Bizfile)

Step II: Click on "Government Agencies"



**Industries / Business Activities** **Government Agencies**

Industries / Business Activities >

- Entertainment, Recreation and Sports
- Events and Exhibition Services
- Food and Beverage Outlet
- Hotel and Accommodation
- Manufacturing **Click Here**
- Retail
- Services
- Wholesale (Import, Export and Distribute)
- Others

## Appendix 2 Continue

Step III: Click on "Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore"

Industries / Business Activities

Select Government Agency >

- Accounting & Corporate Regulatory Authority
- Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore**
- Board of Architects
- Building and Construction Authority
- Central Provident Fund Board
- Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore
- Composers and Authors Society of Singapore

Click Here

Step IV: Scroll down. Check the box of "Registration to Import Processed Food Products and Food Appliances (Excluding Meat and Fish Products, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)" and click "Next"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Pet Shop Licence</b> For setting up a shop to sell aquarium fishes, pet birds, or animals.  Estimated Processing Time if applied online here: 3 working days... [Read more...]</li></ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Registration to Import Processed Food Products and Food Appliances (Excluding Meat and Fish Products, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)</b> For importing processed food products and food appliances. Processed food products including raw spices, raw or semi pr... [Read more...]</li></ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Report of Arrival/Application for Port Clearance</b> For applicants to report that their vessels (Only Fishing Vessels allowed) are arriving at Jurong Fishing Port or Senoko... [Read more...]</li></ul>	<a href="#">Go to Agency Website</a>

Check Box & Click Next

< Back Next >

## **Appendix 2 Continue**

Step V: Click on "Proceed" for registration of licence

### **Confirm Licence Selection**

Please Note: You will not be able to modify your choice of licences after proceeding.

You have chosen to apply for the following licences:

Licence Name	Agency	Fee <sup>1</sup>	Amt (S\$)	Remove?
Registration to Import Processed Food Products and Food Appliances (Excluding Meat and Fish Products, Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)	AVA	Administrative Fee	20.48	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Total (excluding GST) : S\$ 20.48**

<sup>1</sup> The actual fees may vary depending on your application.

**Payment modes**  
Payment by Visa, MasterCard, Direct Debit through Internet Bank Account and FlexiPay

- To continue to fill in the form, please click the "Proceed" button.
- To remove any of the licences, please tick the box beside the licence and click the "Proceed" button.
- To add more licences, please click the "Re-select Licence(s)" button.

**Click Proceed** ————— **Re-select Licence(s)** | **Proceed**

*This content is correct as of 12/07/2010*