

COMPLIANCE

Halal Certification in Brazil: The Importer Handbook

A field guide for GCC importers buying from Brazil

By Ricardo Mendes

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Chapter 1 — Why halal is not optional

For GCC buyers sourcing meat, poultry, dairy, or any food product containing animal-derived ingredients (gelatin, glycerin, rennet, certain emulsifiers), halal certification is a customs requirement — not a marketing label.

Saudi Arabia's SFDA, the UAE's ESMA, and Kuwait's PAI all maintain lists of recognised foreign certifiers. A halal stamp from a non-recognised body is, at best, ignored; at worst, the entire shipment is rejected at port and re-exported at the buyer's cost.

Brazil is the world's largest exporter of halal poultry and the second-largest of halal beef. It produces more halal-certified meat than the entire Middle East consumes. So while supply is abundant, certification quality varies — and the burden of verifying it falls on the importer.

Key insight: Always cross-reference the supplier's certifying body against your destination country's recognised list before signing.

Chapter 2 — Recognised certifiers in Brazil

The most widely recognised Brazilian halal certifier is FAMBRAS (Federação das Associações Muçulmanas do Brasil). FAMBRAS is accepted by SFDA, ESMA, JAKIM (Malaysia), and MUI (Indonesia).

CDIAL HALAL is the second major player, accepted by GCC GSO standards and ESMA. Smaller bodies like Imhar and IBHAL serve regional buyers but are not on the SFDA approved list.

A common scam: a supplier shows a "halal certificate" issued by an unrecognised body, often with realistic Arabic calligraphy and a serial number that cannot be verified. Always demand the certifying body's name AND a verifiable serial number you can lookup on their website.

Recognised Brazilian certifiers by destination

CERTIFIER	SFDA	ESMA	JAKIM	MUI
FAMBRAS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CDIAL	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Imhar	No	No	No	No
IBHAL	No	No	No	No

Chapter 3 — Audit cycle and re-certification

A halal certificate is not permanent. The standard cycle is annual for plants handling animal slaughter, biannual for processed-food plants, and per-shipment for one-off custom batches.

For repeat sourcing, request a copy of the supplier's most recent audit report (not just the certificate). The report shows when the next audit is due — if the plant's next audit is within 30 days, push shipment to after re-certification to avoid a borderline-expired certificate at port.

Chapter 4 — Documentation checklist

For each shipment, the minimum document set at the destination port is:

Halal certificate (original or notarised copy), product-specific halal slaughter certificate (for meat), commercial invoice referencing the certificate serial, packing list with halal-marked carton tags, and the bill of lading describing the goods consistently with the certificate.

Discrepancies — even small ones, like "frozen chicken breast" on the certificate vs "frozen chicken parts" on the BL — are the #1 cause of customs holds at Jeddah Islamic Port.

Chapter 5 — Cost expectations

For Saudi buyers: budget USD 0.02–0.05 per kg for the halal certification overhead embedded in the supplier's pricing. For UAE buyers: similar, with ESMA-specific surcharge of ~USD 0.01/kg on top.

These are not negotiable line items — they are baked into the FOB price. Suppliers who quote significantly below market are usually shaving the certification cost, which means you should triple-check the certifier.