

March 15, 2016

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GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

U.S. and EU Officials Meet to Discuss Progress on Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership Negotiations

- European Union (EU) Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström visited the U.S. from March 9-11 to assess the status of negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The visit occurred amid continuing efforts to accelerate TTIP negotiations and finalize the agreement this year. During her visit, Commissioner Malmström met with U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Robert Califf, [spoke](#) at the Peterson Institute, and met with U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman.
- During their meeting, Commissioner Malmström and Ambassador Froman revisited issues related to regulatory cooperation, following in-depth discussions on the topic during the 12th TTIP negotiating round in late February (*BCI Monitor* 3-1-16).
- While the two sides exchanged government procurement offers on February 29, both sides expressed disappointment with the scope of the other's offer during meetings in Washington, D.C. from March 7-9. According to Commissioner Malmström, revised procurement offers will be exchanged this summer. The EU is seeking a more substantial offer from the U.S. regarding procurement, while the U.S. wants more flexibility from the EU regarding geographic indicators and tariffs for sensitive agricultural products.
- Commissioner Malmström and Ambassador Froman will meet again on March 18 in Brussels, Belgium to discuss the status of negotiations covering market access issues. The two officials have agreed to meet at least once a month to assess the progress of TTIP negotiations, according to media sources.
- The next official TTIP negotiating round is scheduled to take place in April. This round is expected to coincide with a planned visit to Germany by U.S. President Barack Obama. According to a White House [announcement](#), President Obama will address efforts to advance TTIP negotiations during the visit.

Health Canada Publishes Work Plan on Pesticide Re-Evaluations and Special Reviews

- Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently published its [Re-evaluation and Special Review Work Plan 2015-2020](#). The report identifies currently registered active ingredients to be re-evaluated through the year 2020.
- PMRA reviews a pesticide's registration every 15 years to reassess the current scientific information. A special review may be initiated if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the health or environmental risks of a pesticide is no longer acceptable.
- Compounds used in the industry such as carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, fludioxonil, glyphosate, imidacloprid, lambda-cyhalothrin, and permethrin are included in this review.
- Re-evaluations under this work plan may lead to the modification of maximum residue levels (MRLs) in the future. Growers should work with the registrants of compounds undergoing re-evaluation to ensure registrations and MRLs will be maintained in Canada. Any proposed MRL change will be announced publicly for comment.



**A Report for
the California
Cherry Board**

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau Meets with U.S. President Obama

- Canada's newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Washington, D.C. on March 10 for an official state dinner with U.S. President Barack Obama. The two leaders discussed issues related to bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and Canada.
- Trade-related issues were the focus of discussions. Regarding the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), both sides stated they are working to complete their respective domestic processes. While the Trudeau administration has not formally supported the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was negotiated by Canada's previous administration, both leaders acknowledged that the TPP would advance shared objectives of promoting economic prosperity and sustainable economic development.
- The two sides also noted that they are looking forward to the North American Leaders Summit, which will be hosted by Canada this summer. In addition to Prime Minister Trudeau and President Obama, the summit will include Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto.
- Additional information on the visit is available in a fact sheet shared by the White House [here](#), as well as in a similar fact sheet published by Canada [here](#).

EU and U.S. Extend Sanctions on Russian Individuals and Companies

- Both the United States and the European Union (EU) recently extended restrictive measures on various Russian individuals and companies in response to the ongoing crisis in eastern Ukraine. The EU has [extended](#) these particular measures for 6 months while the U.S. has [extended](#) the restrictions for one year.
- These restrictions form part of a larger set of sanctions imposed on Russia by the U.S. and EU beginning in March 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. In response to the U.S. and EU measures, in August 2014 Russia banned the import of a variety of agricultural products from the U.S. and EU (*BCI Monitor* 8-12-14). This embargo, which includes cherries from the U.S., is scheduled to remain in effect until August 2016, and may be extended.
- In December 2015, the EU extended a separate set of economic sanctions on Russia until July 31, 2016 in response to the continuing crisis in Ukraine. Despite ongoing issues in Ukraine, some European officials have expressed a desire to end the sanctions, noting that they have been politically ineffective and economically harmful for both the Russian and European Union economies. Additional information on the status of EU sanctions is available [here](#).
- According to media sources, Russia's Minister of Agriculture Alexander Tkachev recently stated that lifting Russia's embargo could help Russian agricultural producers access additional financial resources, but that the embargo would only be removed on the condition that sanctions against Russia were also cancelled.

EU and U.S. Continue Efforts to Normalize Relations with Cuba

- On March 11, European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini met with Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez to witness the signing of a deal designed to improve diplomatic relations between the EU and Cuba.
- The deal establishes a framework for increased cooperation between the EU and Cuba regarding economic and political issues. Although the deal must now be ratified by the 28 EU member-states—a process which could take months—the signing event signifies a notable improvement in EU-Cuba diplomatic relations.
- The restoration of economic and political ties between the EU and Cuba follows a similar improvement in relations between the U.S. and Cuba in 2015. U.S. President Barack Obama will visit Cuba on March 21-22 to continue the effort to improve the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. According to a recent USDA [press release](#), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack will join President Obama during the visit to promote increased agricultural cooperation between the two countries.

World Bank Publishes Report on Trade Developments in 2015

- The World Bank recently published a [report](#) assessing international macroeconomic trends in 2015. According to the report, trade growth was slow after experiencing a notable decline in the first half of 2015. This downturn and subsequent rebound in trade is primarily attributed to emerging economies, especially in Asia as the import decline in emerging Asian economies accounted for 94 percent of the global contraction in import volumes. China's economic rebalancing and gradual transition from investment to consumption was a key factor behind these developments.
- The report notes that recent developments should be reviewed in the context of decelerating trade growth in recent years, particularly following the global financial crisis in 2008. In 2015, the diminished trade growth was largely a result of cyclical, short-term factors such as weak demand. Long-term, structural factors—such as the slower pace of trade liberalization and the maturation of global value chains—had a more limited impact on the overall trend in 2015.