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**A REPORT FOR
THE CALIFORNIA
CHERRY BOARD**

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

Australia and United States Sign Food Safety Recognition Agreement

- Australia and the United States signed a bilateral Food Safety Recognition Agreement earlier this month which recognizes the food safety and regulatory systems of Australia and the U.S. as being comparable. Australia will be the third country to be recognized as comparable after New Zealand and Canada.
- Not all food exports are covered in the agreement as both nations regulate higher risk items such as meat, egg products, and shellfish more stringently. However, exports of fresh fruit and vegetables, fruit juices, confectionary, baked goods, and dairy products will be greatly simplified. Additionally, this agreement allows FDA to be more risk-based in its oversight of imported food. Inspection activities such as foreign facility inspections, import field exams, and import sampling can be more strategically planned. Through the Food Safety Recognition Agreement, the number of in-country audits will be reduced and compliance will be managed by the exporting country.
- The full agreement has not yet been published; however, a press release from the Australian Department of Agriculture and Water Resources can be found [here](#).

India Invites Comments on Draft Standards for Organic Food

- On March 31, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published a [notification](#) calling for suggestions and comments on the draft "Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulation, 2017." The draft regulation aims at strengthening the labelling and certification for organic food products so that full and accurate information on the organic status of a product is conveyed to consumers.
- Any food promoted or sold as 'organic' must comply with India's National Programme of Organic Production (NPOP), Participatory Guarantee System of India (PGS-India), and any other standards implemented by FSSAI. All organic foods shall comply with existing packaging and labelling requirements, and must convey complete and accurate information on the organic status of the product. Additionally, the product must have the FSSAI logo as well as a certification or quality assurance mark from NPOP or PGS-India.
- Furthermore, all organic foods imported into India must be accompanied by a transaction certificate issued by an Accredited Certification Body. Organic food imported under bilateral or multilateral agreements on the basis of equivalence of organic standards will not be required to be re-certified on import to India.
- The comment period for the draft regulation concludes on April 30, 2017.

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Russia Notifies WTO of Eurasian Economic Union Phytosanitary Requirements

- On April 3, Russia [notified](#) the WTO of draft amendments to the "The Common Quarantine Phytosanitary Requirements of the Eurasian Economic Union." The public comment period ends June 2, 2017.
- The original quarantine requirements regulation was first approved in November 2016, and the regulation is scheduled to come into force on July 1, 2017. The WTO was [notified](#) of this approval on March 29, 2017. The goal of the regulation is to establish phytosanitary requirements for imported and movement controlled goods within the Eurasian Economic Union.
- General provisions include marking requirements for wood packaging, product disinfection, and restrictions of imports infested with regulated quarantine objects (pests). A translation of the regulation, with the new amendments highlighted, is available in the following USDA FAS gain [report](#).
- Specifically, cherry imports should be free from the oriental fruit moth - *Grapholita molesta*, peach fruit moth - *Carposina niponensis*, Bactrocera dorsalis, *Cacoecimorpha pronubana*, apple fly – *Rhagoletis pomonella*, spotted wing drosophila - *Drosophila suzukii*, *Aonidiella aurantii*, Mediterranean fruit fly - *Ceratitis capitata*. In addition, cherries cannot originate from sites with a presence of brown rot of stone fruits - *Monilinia fructicola*. However, it is important to note that since August 2014 Russia has banned imports of cherries from the United States.

China to Implement Food Contact Material Regulations

- In October 2016, the National Health and Family Planning Commission of China (NHFPC) released the [National Food Safety Standard of General Safety Requirements of Food-Contact Materials and Articles](#) after [notifying](#) the WTO in May 2015. The standard outlines general requirements, limitation requirements, compliance principles, testing methods, traceability, and product information for food contact materials and articles (FCMs).
- Notably, under the standard producers are required to establish a traceability system for FCMs from production to distribution; FCMs and food contact additives must comply with restriction conditions in relevant food safety standards; and FCMs and food contact additives cannot transfer their constituents into food or change a food's composition, taste, or odor. The standard applies to all types of food contact materials and articles.
- An unofficial translation of all requirements can be found in this USDA FAS Gain [report](#). The standard will be implemented on October 19, 2017.

British Prime Minister Calls for Early General Election

- On April 18, British Prime Minister Theresa May called a surprise early general election to be held on June 8.
- PM May is hoping that this election will allow her Conservative Party to consolidate power in the House of Commons, which in turn will strengthen her position in negotiations with the European Union (EU) according to media sources. Holding a general election now versus waiting until the next scheduled election will allow PM May to not rely on the more radical lawmakers who are pushing for a more abrupt break from the EU.
- PM May triggered Article 50 in March, officially initiating the U.K.'s withdrawal from the EU. Withdrawal talks will begin once the 27 EU governments have set their own negotiation positions, which is expected in late May at the earliest (*BCI Monitor* 4-4-17).