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A REPORT FOR THE CALIFORNIA CHERRY BOARD

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

European Union New Plant Health Regulation Enters into Force

- On December 13, a new European Union (EU) [Plant Health Regulation](#) designed to strengthen plant protection measures against pests entered into force. EU Health and Food Safety Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis marked the occasion with a [statement](#) underscoring the value and importance of the new regulation, which will become fully applicable on December 13, 2019, after EU member states have fully implemented the new requirements.
- The new rules introduce preventative measures to mitigate phytosanitary risks posed by plants and plant products entering the EU. Among the new requirements are provisions which allow the European Commission to quickly identify potential pest risks and temporarily prohibit the entry of specific plants or plant products from non-EU countries. The regulation also stipulates common rules designed to consolidate EU member state policies regarding the prevention and early detection of plant pests.
- To fully implement the new regulation by December 13, 2019, the European Commission intends to adopt a number of delegated and implementing acts during the next three years. Additional information about the new regulation is available [here](#).

Philippines Recall of Agricultural Import Permits Causes Clearance Delays

- The immediate recall of import permits for all agricultural products, [ordered](#) by the Philippine Department of Agriculture (DA) on November 22, is causing clearance delays for various consignments.
- According to a recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) [GAIN report](#), the lack of official guidance regarding procedures to revalidate permits is contributing to uncertainty for importers.
- Although new permits are being issued, the process is reportedly taking five to seven days. Industry sources have cited the following reasons for continued delays and uncertainty: 1) specific commodities are being treated in a different manner; 2) some permits have been incorrectly entered into the database; and 3) the Philippine DA is working to create “green lanes” and streamline permit revalidation for the most organized and influential importers.
- In the aforementioned GAIN report, FAS noted the details of official processes have been changing almost daily. According to industry sources, the latest process requires re-certification of permits with a manual signature before consignments are released. Certain high-volume import groups are reportedly asking the DA to allow for the automatic release of cargo for “green-lane” importers.

California Department of Food and Agriculture Reduces Light Brown Apple Moth Quarantine Boundary in San Diego County

- The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) recently reduced the light brown apple moth (LBAM) San Diego quarantine zone in the Walker drive area.
- The boundary reduction occurred because there have been no additional detections in the area since July 5, 2016. The modified quarantine boundary (Grid 522) and additional information about LBAM in California is available [here](#).
- Although the commodity is recognized as a potential LBAM host, commercially-produced cherries are [exempt](#) from the conditions required in the LBAM Federal Domestic Quarantine Order for interstate movement of regulated articles because the production, harvesting, and packaging processes utilized result in a negligible likelihood of LBAM infestation.

Gulf Cooperation Council Updates Status of Guide for Control on Imported Foods

- Saudi Arabia informed stakeholders in a recent World Trade Organization (WTO) [notice](#) that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) [Guide for Control on Imported Foods](#) will be implemented on April 1, 2017 and enter into force on October 1, 2017. GCC members include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- After receiving feedback from many WTO members, the guide was modified during a review by the GCC Food Safety Committee. The guide: 1) describes the GCC's import inspection and clearance systems; 2) provides a guideline by which all imported food consignments are subject to harmonized regulatory requirements across all GCC countries; and 3) provides detailed information and templates regarding certification requirements for specific commodities.

European Commission Publishes Proposals for Modernized EU-Mexico Free Trade Agreement

- The European Commission recently [published](#) six proposals to modernize the sixteen-year-old European Union (EU)-Mexico trade agreement. The two sides launched the modernization effort in May 2016 (*BCI Monitor* 5-31-16).
- The proposals seek to: 1) increase cooperation on import requirements related to food safety as well as plant and animal health; 2) broaden protection of intellectual property (such as geographical indications); 3) define more flexible rules of origin to clarify which products can benefit from lower tariffs; and 4) reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to trade.
- The European Commission also published a [report](#) summarizing the outcomes of the second round of negotiations for the modernized agreement, which took place in Mexico from November 22-25, 2016.
- Trade in goods between the EU and Mexico has grown 180 percent since the original agreement entered into force in 2000, with bilateral trade surpassing \$55 billion in 2015. Overall, the EU is Mexico's third-largest trading partner, while Mexico is the EU's fifteenth-largest trading partner.

European Union Signs Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement with Cuba

- On December 12, European Union (EU) High Representative for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini and Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla signed the first ever agreement between the EU and Cuba, according to a European Council [press release](#).
- Negotiations for the EU-Cuba Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (PDCA) were launched in April 2014 and concluded in March 2016 (*BCI Monitor* 3-15-16). The agreement constitutes a new framework for EU-Cuba relations and is designed not only to enhance political dialogue and cooperation but also facilitate greater trade and trade cooperation. In conjunction with the PDCA signing, the EU's 1996 Common Position on Cuba—which linked deeper ties with Cuba to the country's progress toward democracy—was repealed.
- The agreement will be designated as a mixed agreement, meaning it must be approved by the European Parliament as well as all EU member states and national and regional parliaments before complete entry into force can occur, though the agreement may be applied on a provisional basis at an earlier date. The agreement must also be ratified by the Cuban National Assembly.
- Additional information about EU-Cuba relations is available [here](#).

Happy Holidays from Bryant Christie Inc.!