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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **USDA Announces Solicitation for Food Distribution Program**
- **Japan Accepting Scanned Customs Documents**
- **India Extends Lockdown, Releases Exemptions Amid COVID-19**
- **Countries Pledge to Avoid Disrupting Global Food Supplies**
- **USMCA To Enter Into Force July 1**

**A REPORT FOR
THE CALIFORNIA
CHERRY BOARD**

SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

USDA Announces Solicitation for Food Distribution Program

- The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) recently [announced](#) a solicitation for agricultural businesses to participate in its plan to buy \$100 million per month of produce to distribute to food banks.
- Details regarding the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box program, including responses to frequently asked questions and application material, are available on the USDA AMS [website](#).

Japan Accepting Scanned Customs Documents

- Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) has [notified](#) the WTO that it is accepting electronic versions of customs certification to facilitate trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The relevant government authority of the exporting country should contact MAFF to officially apply for use of this temporary measure. Original certification must still be submitted to Japanese officials as soon as possible. MAFF has published [guidelines](#) with additional details about this process.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

India Extends Lockdown, Releases Exemptions Amid COVID-19

- On April 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended India's nationwide lockdown to May 3. On the same day, the Government of India (GOI) released [exemptions](#) and a [subsequent addendum](#) for agricultural activities and rural areas, effective April 20.
- Activities already exempt from the lockdown, such as on-farm production, marketing activities for agricultural products, and supply chain operations, continue to be allowed. New activities permitted include operation of inland fisheries, plantations, animal husbandry, and greater freedom for trucking operations. A full list of activities allowed can be found in [USDA reporting](#).
- Amid the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown efforts, the [USDA reports](#) that operations at ports across India have been significantly hampered, with many staffed at 50 percent or less. However, local food retailers anecdotally [report](#) that ports are still running for the time being.

Countries Pledge to Avoid Disrupting Global Food Supplies

- Major agricultural exporters across the world have come together to limit measures to restrict food exports and otherwise limit agriculture trade amid the COVID-19 crisis. On April 21, agriculture ministers of the G20 [issued a joint statement](#) affirming their commitment to maintaining agriculture trade and food supply chain integrity amid the pandemic.

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Countries Pledge to Avoid Disrupting Global Food Supplies (continued)

- Recently several countries have implemented decrees restricting the export of staple crops and other agricultural products. The WTO recently published a [report](#) detailing new export restrictions, noting that barriers to agricultural exports in certain countries could trigger negative spillovers into the food security of other countries and impact other sectors.
- At the request of Canada, a group of several countries including the United States also [circulated a joint statement](#) to the WTO proposing eight best practices to combat food insecurity and maintain global agricultural trade.

USMCA to Enter Into Force July 1

- U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has [announced](#) that it has completed the necessary processes to implement the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) on July 1, 2020.
- Earlier this month, both Mexico and Canada notified the United States that they had completed their domestic ratification processes for the agreement.
- Some groups, including the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee, have cautioned that implementation will be more difficult amid the COVID-19 outbreak.