

MAY 12, 2020

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**A REPORT FOR
THE CALIFORNIA
CHERRY BOARD**

SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

Argentina Switching to Electronic Phytosanitary Certificates

- On April 24, Argentina **notified** the WTO that its National Agriculture and Food Quality and Health Service (SENASA) would begin providing electronic phytosanitary certificates for exports with delayed paper documents.
- Furthermore, Argentina may now waive the requirement for paper-based phytosanitary certificates for imports.
- Digital certificates will require authentication mechanisms, such as a QR code, barcode, or validation through an exporting country's NPPO. SENASA will be able to use electronic phytosanitary certificates for countries connected to the IPPC central hub.
- These measures will remain in place indefinitely until normal air transport and courier services resume.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

UAE Notifies of Temporary Measures to Facilitate Imports of Food & Agricultural Goods

- On May 4, the United Arab Emirates **announced** several measures to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on agriculture and food trade in the country.
- The UAE will coordinate with other countries to accept electronic health forms and certificates, extend validity of some expired certificates and licenses, and extend the validity of some import permits.
- The UAE will suspend request of some documents for fruit and vegetable consignments that have become difficult for exporters to obtain; will temporarily increase the number of random samples from consignments to ensure compliance with health and technical requirements; and will increase the capacity of Ministry laboratories to conduct testing to support the increased sampling.
- The UAE will also suspend technical regulations regarding labeling requirements for pre-packaged foodstuffs, nutritional labeling, and health and nutritional claims.
- Extended validity of certificates, licenses, and permits will be for three months. The announcement does not specify the duration of the other measures.

Saudi Arabia Raising VAT in July

- On May 11, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy and Planning **announced** an increase in VAT taxes from 5% to 15% as of July 2020.
- The VAT increase is one of a number of measures taken by Saudi Arabia to support government finances in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and declining oil revenues.

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Saudi Arabia Raising VAT in July (continued)

- The government will also cancel or postpone planned expenditures, discontinue cost-of-living allowances, and audit other spending in the coming months.

Brazil to Implement New Positive List for Additives in Plastic Food Packaging

- Effective June 1, 2020, Brazil is implementing a new positive list system regarding the use of additives in plastic food contact materials.
- [Resolution No. 326/2019](#), published (in Portuguese) in December 2019 by the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), replaces [Resolution No. 17/2008](#) (in Portuguese).
- The positive list specifies more than 1,000 substances and relevant limits, including restrictions for nine metals, five phthalates, and certain solvents.

U.S. and China Discuss Implementation of Phase One Trade Deal

- Officials from the U.S. and China participated in a conference call on May 7 regarding economic and trade issues, according to a [press release](#) published by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.
- Continued implementation of the Phase One agreement between the two countries was discussed, with both sides expressing confidence that obligations under the deal will be met despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The agreement does include a force majeure clause stating the two sides will consult each other if a natural disaster or unforeseeable event outside of their control delays timely compliance with obligations.
- China has committed to significantly increase purchases of U.S. agricultural goods under the terms of the agreement. However, imports from the U.S. are down slightly from 2019 through the first four months of 2020. Trade press have reported concerns about the availability of sufficient shipping capacity if very large volumes are to be shipped in the second half of 2020.