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**A REPORT FOR
THE CALIFORNIA
CHERRY BOARD**

SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

Sri Lanka Revises Special Levy on Imported Fruit

- Sri Lanka's Ministry of Finance has further increased its Special Commodity Levy (SCL) on imported fruit as part of broader efforts to counter the economic impact of COVID-19.
- The new SCL revision entered into effect on May 22 and is effective for 6 months. A previous SCL increase on imported fruit was announced April 17 with an effective period of two months (*BCI Monitor 5-5-20*).
- Although the revision in April raised the SCL on cherries (HS 0809.29) from Rs.250/kg to Rs.315/kg, the latest revision announced in May does not include cherries. Therefore, the SCL of Rs.315/kg on imported cherries is expected to remain in effect until June 17, 2020.
- Additional information is available via USDA GAIN [reporting](#).

Thailand Delays Implementation of Pesticide Residue Testing Policy

- The Thai Food and Drug Administration (FDA) delayed until August 1st implementation of its newly proposed pesticide residue testing on imported produce. The original requirements were due to be implemented on June 15, 2020 (*BCI Monitor 6-9-20*).
- The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) helped secure the delay through discussions with the Thai FDA by highlighting the potential trade impact of the new protocol.
- USDA will engage Thai FDA over the next six weeks to seek to adjust the proposed policy to a more trade facilitative approach.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

More Countries Join Request for EU to Temporarily Suspend MRL Reductions

- A larger group of countries has recirculated a World Trade Organization (WTO) [communication](#) requesting for the temporary suspension of maximum residue level (MRL) reductions in the EU.
- The group, which is largely made up of African, Central American, and South American countries, has grown from 13 to over 30 in the past month.
- The communication notes the negative affect of trade barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulty for developing countries to comply with additional phytosanitary restrictions under the current circumstances.
- The group requests that the EU suspend review processes currently underway for MRLs as well as the entry into force of MRL reductions planned for 2020.

U.S.-UK Seek to Complete Trade Deal Before November

- The U.S. and the United Kingdom (UK) have noted “a shared ambition” to complete a trade agreement before the U.S. elections in November, according to UK Trade Commissioner for North America Antony Phillipson.
- Talks began in May and are being undertaken on an expedited schedule, with concurrent negotiations on all chapters of a potential agreement.
- Among its negotiating priorities, the Trump administration is seeking comprehensive UK tariff concessions for U.S. agricultural exports.
- Prior to the commencement of talks, senior officials in Congress stated that only a comprehensive agreement covering agricultural market access would gain the required Congressional approval.

Update on UK-EU Trade Negotiations

- The United Kingdom (UK) and European Union (EU) officials issued a [joint statement](#) following June 15 meetings regarding trade arrangements post-Brexit.
- Both sides confirmed the UK decision to not seek an extension of the transition period, meaning the UK and EU will begin trading on World Trade Organization (WTO) terms as of January 1, 2021 unless the two sides ratify a new trade agreement sooner.
- Although both sides express that a deal would be in their mutual interest, the top negotiator for the EU [has noted](#) that “there was no substantial progress” during early June negotiations.

International Organization Supports Electronic Certification Procedures in Developing Countries

- A recent [WTO notification](#) provides key updates regarding the work of the [Standards and Trade Development Facility \(STDF\)](#). The STDF is an international organization designed to support food safety and animal and plant health capacity in developing countries.
- To address the impact of COVID-19, the STDF has led the creation of an eCert Advisory Committee (ECAC) to facilitate further development of efficient electronic certification protocols. According to the WTO notice, a summary report of the first ECAC meeting in March 2020 will be available soon via the STDF [website](#), and the next ECAC meeting is scheduled for the end of June 2020.