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SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

South Korea Amends Quarantine Pest List

- On September 15, South Korea [notified the WTO](#) regarding Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), Animal and Plant Quarantine Agency (APQA) amendments to its [quarantine pest list](#).
- The APQA is adding 51 quarantine pest species from February 2026. The list includes fungi (7 pests), bacteria (1 pest), viruses (7 pests), Lepidoptera (11 pests), Hemiptera (1 pest), Coleoptera (21 pests), Hymenoptera (1 pest), and Prostigmata (1 pest). Notably, it includes *Orthosia cerasi*, a pest that may target cherries.
- Comments can be sent to the U.S. SPS Enquiry Point at us.spsenquiry@fas.usda.gov. The WTO comment deadline is November 14, 2025.

USTR Requests Comments on Barriers to Trade for 2026 National Trade Estimate Report

- On September 15, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) published a [Federal Register Notice](#) requesting comments identifying significant foreign barriers to U.S. exports, including food and agricultural exports, for the 2026 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers (NTE Report).
- Topics on which USTR is seeking information include import policies such as tariffs and licensing, technical barriers to trade such as labeling and conformity assessment procedures, sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, agricultural export subsidies, environmental laws and regulations, and other non-market policies and practices.
- The annual report is used to facilitate U.S. negotiations to reduce trade barriers and enforce U.S. trade laws and agreements.
- Comments are due by October 30, 2025, and can be submitted through the Federal Register notice page at [regulations.gov](#).

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CCB:

Mercosur, EFTA Sign Free Trade Agreement

- On September 16, Mercosur and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) announced [the signing](#) (in Portuguese) of a free trade agreement.
- The agreement will now need to be ratified by the constituent member countries before entering into force. After entering into force, it is projected to provide improved and free access to over 97 percent of goods over the next decade.
- EFTA member states include Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- Mercosur's full members include Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, as well as a number of associated members throughout South America.

A REPORT FOR
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Taiwan Notifies Amendments to Imported Food Inspection Regulations

- On September 15, Taiwan [notified the WTO](#) that it promulgated the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) [Regulations of Inspection of Imported Foods and Related Products](#). The regulations were notified as a draft in May 2025 (*BCI Monitor 5-13-25*).
- The regulations include:
 - Revising application and inspection procedures
 - Adjusting the scope of products subject to batch-by-batch verification
 - Modifying the rules for preferential treatment
 - Clarifying applicant cost responsibilities
 - Updating prior release and deposit rules
 - Enabling electronic notifications
- Inspection rates are based on the MOHW's risk classification of products and an annual inspection plan and may be adjusted based on a product's recent history of regulatory compliance.
- According to the promulgated Regulations, Chapter 6 (Prior Release) provisions were implemented September 1, while all other articles will be implemented on January 1, 2026.