

December 18, 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Canada Proposes Harmonized Maximum Residue Levels for Etoxazole
- UK Pesticide Residues Committee Reports on Recent Monitoring Efforts
- New Zealand Organization Publishes “Dirty Dozen” List
- Russian Pear Imports Decrease 20 Percent in Marketing Year 2008/09
- Appropriations Act May Provide Opportunity for Mexican Trucking Resolution; Restrictions on Exports to Cuba Eased
- USTR Announces Intent to Join Negotiations for Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement



SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Canada Proposes Harmonized Maximum Residue Levels for Etoxazole

- Heath Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) recently published proposed maximum residue levels (MRLs) for etoxazole that are harmonized with U.S. MRLs.
- The proposal includes an MRL for etoxazole on pome fruit (including pears) at 0.2 parts per million (ppm), which is the same as the U.S. MRL.
- PMRA is accepting comments on the proposal until February 23, 2010. For additional information, please see: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/consultations/_pmrl2009-21/etoxazole-eng.php.

UK Pesticide Residues Committee Reports on Recent Monitoring Efforts

- The United Kingdom’s (UK) Pesticide Residues Committee (PRC) recently published its report on residue monitoring for the second quarter of 2009. According to the results, 12 samples out of 933 were found to contain residues above the relevant MRL.
- A total of 22 types of food were tested, including pears. Of the 39 pear samples taken, two had residues of chlormequat that exceeded the MRL. Both were from Belgium. The two samples were determined to be unlikely to cause a health effect.
- For additional information on this report, including complete details of MRL violations and health risk assessments, please see: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2791>.
- PRC also published the results of its summer 2009 monitoring of pesticides in school fruit. A total of 78 samples were taken of school fruit, in which no MRL violations were detected. The residues detected were determined to be unlikely to cause any health concerns. Complete details are available at: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=826>.

New Zealand Organization Publishes “Dirty Dozen” List

- The independent lobbying organization SafeFood Campaign recently published a “dirty dozen” list of foods most likely to contain pesticide residues in New Zealand. Celery topped the list, with over 98% of samples tested containing up to 21 different pesticides. The list also included strawberries, grapes, peaches, apricots, and other fruits among the most pesticide-laden foods. Although not included under the “dirty dozen” label, pears were named as one of the close contenders for foods with the highest and most concentrated pesticide count.
- The list, which is limited to New Zealand foods, differs in a number of ways from another “dirty dozen” list published earlier this year by the Washington, D.C.-based Environmental Working Group (EWG). Most notably, the New Zealand list covers all types of food product, with wine, bread, and butter named as pesticide-heavy foods, while the EWG list only applies to fruits and vegetables sold in the U.S. For this reason, there are numerous variations between the two lists.
- To view the organization’s New Zealand “dirty dozen” list in full, please see: <http://www.safefood.org.nz/>.

Russian Pear Imports Decrease 20 Percent in Marketing Year 2008/09

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) recently published a report on Russia's deciduous fruit industry, which included updates on pear import and production figures.
- Despite the recent downturn in the global economy, the devaluation of the ruble, and declining imports, Russia remains the largest importer of apples and pears in the world. However, although apple sales remained steady, Russian consumers purchased 17 percent less pears in marketing year (MY) 2008/09. Despite this decrease, pears remain one of the most popular fruits among consumers, and demand for U.S. fruit is expected to continue to grow as importers diversify their product lines. The Russian Far East (RFE) remains a stable market for U.S. fresh fruit imports, accounting for 30 percent of total volume imported into Russia in 2009.
- Russian production figures were revised for MY 2007/08 and new figures for MY 2008/09 were also included. Without explanation from Russian authorities, pear production in MY 2007/08 was revised from 170,000 metric tons (MT) up to 190,000 MT, while production for MY 2008/09 was reported at 180,000 MT. FAS estimates indicate that production will remain stable at 180,000 MT in MY 2009/10.
- Russia reported pear imports for MY 2008/09 at 316,000 MT, which represents a 20 percent decrease from the previous year. Imports are expected to slightly increase to 320,000 MT in the upcoming year. Russian exports of pears are expected to remain minimal.
- To view the report in full, please see:
http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/FRESH%20DECIDUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Moscow%20ATO_Russian%20Federation_12-11-2009.pdf.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Appropriations Act May Provide Opportunity for Mexican Trucking Resolution; Restrictions on Exports to Cuba Eased

- The Omnibus Appropriations Act, recently signed by President Obama, removes language preventing the Department of Transportation from funding a program to allow Mexican trucks to operate in the U.S. The language was included in last year's appropriations, and forced the government to cancel a Mexican trucking pilot program. In response, Mexico imposed tariffs on a long list of U.S. commodities, including a 20 percent tariff on pears.
- Progress on the issue has been stalled since early 2009. Industries affected by the tariffs hope that the change in the appropriations legislation will encourage the Administration to quickly implement a program that is acceptable to the U.S. Congress and Mexico. It is expected that a short window of opportunity exists in the early part of 2010. If progress is not made, Mexico may choose to impose tariffs on more sensitive products.
- Also in the appropriations legislation is a provision that allows Cuba to purchase U.S. agricultural goods using direct cash payments to farmers upon delivery. For the past several years, a rule required Cuba to pay for U.S. agricultural goods before the items left the U.S. port, effectively halting trade.

USTR Announces Intent to Join Negotiations for Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement

- On December 14, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) notified Congress of its intent to enter into negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. The USTR announcement reinforces the U.S. commitment to the TPP, and comes after President Obama's pledge to promote a greater Asia-Pacific trade bloc at the APEC summit last month.
- The TPP, a regional Asia-Pacific trade agreement, already includes Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore as members, with Australia, Peru, the U.S., and Vietnam joining the discussions. USTR has expressed interest in expanding the TPP to incorporate several other Asian nations, including Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea.
- The first round of TPP negotiations took place earlier this year, and the next round of negotiations — the first with U.S. participation — will occur in March 2010. At this point, the structure of such a large multilateral agreement remains unclear, especially in light of existing U.S. agreements with several participants.
- USTR Ron Kirk recently stated that fast-track authority is not considered necessary for domestic cooperation. Previous fast-track bills have helped the administration set out specific objectives for FTA negotiations, and stipulated that Congress would only be allowed to vote for or against the final text of an agreement. The most recent fast-track bill expired in 2007. However, Ambassador Kirk noted that as long as Congress supports a finalized TPP agreement, it will likely grant fast-track authority.
- USTR has requested public comments on all issues within the scope of the TPP agreement. Comments are due by January 25, 2010. For more information or to submit a comment, please see:
<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-29841.pdf>.