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SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Canada Establishes Carfentrazone MRL on Pears

- On November 26, 2009, Canada published an amendment establishing a new maximum residue level (MRL) of 0.1 parts per million (ppm) for carfentrazone-ethyl on the pome fruit group, which includes pears. This is equivalent to the corresponding U.S. MRL. The full document can be found at: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_decisions/emrl2009-31/index-eng.php.

AMS Buys 22,680 Cans of Mixed Fruit

- On November 25, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced the purchase of 22,680 cases of canned mixed fruit. The purchase is the result of a November 3 invitation to buy from AMS, which was reported in the November 6 edition of the *BCI Monitor*.
- The cans will be distributed to needy family and other government assistance programs from January 1 to May 15, 2010. For more information, please see: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5081137>.

Updates on the Pear Industries of Mexico, Russia, China, and Canada

- USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) recently published several reports on the fresh fruit industries in several countries, which included information on the pear trades in Mexico, Russia, China, and Canada.
 - Pear production in Mexico is expected to remain limited but stable at 20,110 metric tons (MT) in the 2009/10 marketing year (MY). U.S. fresh pear exports to Mexico are estimated to increase by 2.5% due to an expected increase in U.S. production. To view the FAS report in full, please see: http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/FRESH%20DECIDUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Mexico_Mexico_11-24-2009.pdf.
 - Although Russia does not produce pears in commercially significant quantities, it is the largest importer of fresh pears in the world. Russian imports of U.S. fresh pears increased slightly in MY 2008 to 7,880 MT, with about 30% of that figure exported to the Russian Far East (RFE). However, Argentina and Belgium remain the largest exporters by volume of fresh pears to Russia, with exports totaling 94,281 MT and 66,190 MT respectively in MY 2008. To view the FAS report in full, please see: http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/FRESH%20DECIDUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Moscow%20ATO_Russian%20Federation_11-25-2009.pdf.
 - Chinese pear production is expected to increase by only 2% to 13.8 million metric tons (MMT) in MY 2008, which is less than the 6% average growth in production for the past three years. Regardless, Post estimates indicate that Chinese pear exports will still increase 5% to 470,000 MT in MY 2009 due to growing demand from ASEAN member states and other Asian trading partners. China imports U.S. fresh pears in small quantities, with 5 MT expected in MY 2009. To view the FAS report in full, please see: http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/FRESH%20DECIDUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Beijing_China%20-%20Peoples%20Republic%20of_11-23-2009.pdf.

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(Updates on the Pear Industries of Mexico, Russia, China, and Canada continued)

- o Due to a decrease in acreage, Canadian pear production is expected to fall from 9,564 MT in MY 2008/09 to approximately 7,600 MT in MY 2009/10. Post estimates also indicate that U.S. exports to Canada will decrease by about 20% to 35,564 MT in MY 2009/10. To view the FAS report on Canada's apple and pear trade in full, please see: http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/FRESH%20DECIDUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Ottawa_Canada_11-21-2009.pdf.

UK Publishes October Results of Pear Pesticide Survey

- The United Kingdom's (UK) Pesticide Residues Committee (PRC) recently published its report on the results of the October 2009 pesticide residues survey for pears.
- None of the 18 samples of pears from various sources contained pesticide residues above the maximum residue limit (MRL). All of the samples originated from within the European Union (EU), including Italy, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the UK. For the complete results, please see: <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2819&link=%2Fuploadedfiles%2FWeb%5FAssets%2FPRC%2Fpear%5Fresults%5FOct%5F09%2Epdf>.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Results from the World Trade Organization's Seventh Ministerial Council in Geneva

- From November 30 to December 2, trade ministers representing the 153 World Trade Organization (WTO) member states gathered at the Seventh Ministerial Council in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Meetings held throughout the three-day conference primarily focused on international trade policy, with many ministers calling for the conclusion of the Doha Round of negotiations in 2010. The ministers have agreed to hold a "stock-taking" meeting in March 2010 to determine whether the round can be completed before the end of the year.
- U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ron Kirk held several talks outside of the formal WTO sessions, including bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Brazil, India, and Russia. Ambassador Kirk also met with the 25 trade ministers of the African Group to discuss the future of the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) and other trade-related aid programs, as well as key topics of the Doha Round. At the closing statements at the conference, Kirk reiterated the words of President Obama in that the Doha Round should conclude with "not just any agreement, but an agreement that will open up markets and increase exports around the world."
- Kirk stressed the importance of trade as essential to the growth and recovery of the global economy in the coming years, and echoed other trade ministers' call for the finalization of the Doha Round. However, he stressed that additional bilateral concessions should be a part of the agreement, rather than only the draft multilateral texts negotiated last year. This position was disputed by most other WTO members.

Produce Industries React to Proposed Increase in EU Import Controls

- An EU regulation establishing greater import controls for certain "high risk" foods is drawing criticism from fresh produce industry officials ahead of the regulation's January 25, 2010 implementation date.
- The regulation, which was reported in the August 7, 2009 edition of the *BCI Monitor*, includes stipulations for more frequent physical inspections as well as an increased in-port holding period for certain fresh produce. Increased monitoring is also required for pesticide residues on certain agricultural products from specific countries, a requirement which will include amitraz residues on Turkish pears.
- The Fresh Produce Consortium (FPC), a UK-based industry group, maintains that the increased import controls are excessive, punitive, costly, and not based on science. The FPC cites the disproportionate number of developing countries as well as the UK Food Standards Agency's (FSA) lack of transparency in the selection process for inclusion on the "high risk" list as unfair and problematic. Additionally, the FPC argues that the additional costs, time constraints, and in-port holding times of fresh produce (from 10 to 15 days) required by the regulation will become unnecessary burdens that provide no additional benefits for the consumer. FPC also complained about the limited time to comment prior to implementation.
- The FSA has yet to issue a response to the FPC's public comments.