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SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Canada Proposes New MRLs for Saflufenacil

- On December 30, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) announced its proposed maximum residue limits (MRLs) for the new pesticide saflufenacil.
- The proposed regulation includes MRLs for saflufenacil in or on all pome fruits, including pears, at 0.03 parts per million (ppm). This is identical to the current U.S. MRL.
- To view the consultation document for the proposed regulation, please see: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pest/part/consultations/_pmrl2009-23/saflu-eng.php.

EU Adjusts Duty Triggers for Imports of Fresh Pears

- The European Union (EU) recently announced adjusted duty triggers for pears.
- From January 1 to April 30, the pear duty trigger will be set at 224,927 metric tons (MT), and from July 1 to December 31, the new trigger will be set at 38,957 MT.

GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

Senate Approves Extensions for Two Trade Preferences Programs

- On December 22, the Senate approved one-year extensions for both the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Andean trade preferences programs.
- The programs, which would have expired December 31, were passed by the House of Representatives last week but were stalled in the Senate pending the resolution of several other unrelated issues. Both programs will face an extensive review by Congress within the next year.
- President Obama recently announced the reinstatement of the Maldives as a country eligible for GSP benefits, and removed Croatia and Equatorial Guinea due to their new status as "high income" countries.
- In related news, Guinea, Madagascar, and Niger are being terminated as beneficiary countries under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) due to the countries' failures to meet the eligibility requirements. Mauritania will become an AGOA beneficiary.

Serbia Submits Application for EU Membership

- On December 22, Serbia officially submitted its application for membership in the EU. Serbian president Boris Tadic handed over the application documents to Swedish Prime Minister Frederik Reinfeldt, who currently holds the EU's rotating presidency, in Stockholm. Serbia is the last of the states that made up the former Republic of Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia) to apply for EU membership, although only Slovenia has formally joined.
- This announcement comes three days after the EU removed travel visa requirements for citizens of Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia traveling to the EU. Going forward, Serbia must fully align its legal, economic, and political, structures with the EU to be considered for membership.

U.S. Publishes Report on Barriers to Trade with India

- The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) released a report earlier this month describing many barriers that U.S. agricultural product exporters face when trading with India. The report was requested by the Senate Finance Committee to determine why the U.S. has such a relatively small share of the Indian market for agricultural products. Specifically, the U.S. share of agricultural imports to India was only six percent in 2008, despite being the largest agricultural exporter. Earlier in the year, ITC accepted comments on the issue.
- The ITC report reviews Indian production, trade, and consumption of agricultural products for the years 2003 through 2008. It also examines trade barriers, such as tariffs and technical restrictions, and the general infrastructure of the Indian food and agriculture industry. ITC notes that India has some of the highest bound tariff levels of any World Trade Organization (WTO) member, far higher than other large developing countries. Applied agricultural tariffs averaged 34 percent in 2007. Due to the importance of the domestic agricultural industry, India frequently intervenes to revise taxes, subsidize farmers, or restrict competition.
- To review the entire report, please see: <http://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub4107.pdf>.

EU Publishes Agenda for January 2010 Controls and Import Conditions Meeting

- The European Commission's Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCFCAH) recently released a draft agenda for the Controls and Import Conditions meeting scheduled for January 12, 2010.
- Scheduled discussion items include a review of Russia's export certification requirements, among other miscellaneous topics. To view the agenda in full, please see: http://ec.europa.eu/food/committees/regulatory/scfcah/controls_imports/ag_12012010_en.pdf.

New Zealand Releases Results of Food Testing Programs

- On December 21, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) published the most recent results of its seasonal Food Residue Surveillance Program (FRSP), which tests for chemical residues on imported and domestically-grown food.
- This round of FRSP tests focused on celery, spinach, garlic, and ginger, with a significant number of results exceeding the respective maximum residue limit (MRL) for several pesticides. Eight of 27 celery samples, four of 24 spinach samples, and eleven of 39 ginger samples had excessive pesticide residues. None of the 50 samples of garlic tested over residue limits.
- For more information on the FRSP or to view the latest results in full, please see: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/science/research-projects/food-residues-surveillance-programme/>.
- The third quarterly results for the Total Diet Study, another NZFSA food monitoring program, were also recently published. The study tests over 120 commonly-consumed foods to assess the average consumer's exposure to roughly 243 different chemical residues and contaminants. Unlike the FRSP, which tests foods right after harvest (as produced), the Total Diet Study aims to measure chemical intake in food as prepared for consumption (as consumed).
- This round of testing included 61 different foods, with approximately 16 samples of each food analyzed for a total of over 976 samples. Of these samples, only eight tested for residues over the corresponding MRL: two for imported table grapes; five for bread; and one for celery. The origin of the table grapes is not clear.
- Additionally, there were nine detections of very low levels of endosulfan, a pesticide which has been banned from use in New Zealand since January 2009. The presence of the chemical is believed to be derived from imported foods from countries which still allow the use of the chemical. The residues did not present any risks to consumer health.
- For more information on the Total Diet Study or to view the latest results in full, please see: <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/science/research-projects/total-diet-survey/2009.htm>.
- In related news, the NZFSA announced the conclusion of a survey searching for illness-causing bacteria on over 900 samples of fresh fruits and vegetables. Only two instances of bacterial contamination were found, and both were for *Salmonella* on lettuce from one grower.