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**SPECIFIC ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:**

**Greek Canned Mixed Fruit Production to Decrease by 25 Percent in 2009/10**

- A recent U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) report indicates Greek production of canned mixed fruit has been steadily decreasing since 2005, as growing exports from China have increased competition on the international market. Greek canned mixed fruit production was 25,000 metric tons (MT) in 2008, and is expected to fall to 20,000 MT in 2009/10. Greek production of fresh pears reached 60,600 MT in 2008, a 17% increase from the previous year. FAS did not release estimates for Greek production of fresh pears in 2009/10.
- Greece imported 6,792 MT of canned pears in 2008, which represents a 4% increase from the previous year. The majority of Greek canned pear imports originated in China (4,594 MT), followed by Argentina (850 MT) and Italy (806 MT). Greece did not import any U.S. canned pears in 2008. FAS year-to-date estimates for 2009 indicate that Greek imports will slightly decrease.
- Greek exports of canned pears grew by 239% from 2007 to 2008, reaching 786 MT. However, figures released for the first half of 2009 (January through June) indicate that canned pear exports will likely return to their 2007 levels.
- To view the FAS report in full, please see: [http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/CANNED%20DECI%20DUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL\\_Athens\\_Greece\\_1-20-2010.pdf](http://gain.fas.usda.gov/Recent%20GAIN%20Publications/CANNED%20DECI%20DUOUS%20FRUIT%20ANNUAL_Athens_Greece_1-20-2010.pdf).

**USDA Plans Additional Pear Purchases**

- A recent USDA press release indicates that the department will purchase \$4.9 million of fresh and canned pears, as well as several million dollars of canned peach and mixed fruit products.
- The purchases are intended to alleviate surpluses of pears and other commodities, as well as to provide additional food for federal nutrition programs. The full details of the purchases have not yet been published on the Agricultural Marketing Service's (AMS) website. Further information will appear in the *BCI Monitor* when it becomes available.
- The California pear industry, along with other commodity groups and processors, is actively working to encourage USDA to purchase more pears and to announce its purchase plans earlier in the season to increase the actual benefit to growers.

**EU Rapid Alert Update Regarding Pears**

- The EU recently published several notifications of pesticide violations on imported food via its Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF). Five notifications applied to pears.
- In five separate occasions on January 26, Bulgaria reported excessive amounts of amitraz on fresh pears from Turkey, with test results ranging from 0.39 parts per million (ppm) to 1.26 ppm. The EU MRL for amitraz on pears is 0.05 ppm. Most of the product has already been distributed and consumed. The remaining product will be destroyed.
- Amitraz residues on Turkish pears have been a recurring problem in the EU, and EU regulators have imposed additional testing requirements on Turkish pears for that reason.

## GENERAL ISSUES OF INTEREST TO THE CPAB:

**Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan Plan to Form Joint Customs Body**

- Under an agreement that entered into force on January 1, 2010, Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan began the process of forming a customs union with harmonized import tariffs and regulations. The three countries are currently discussing plans to create a new customs body to oversee or replace their independent national customs services.
- Although its exact nature has yet to be defined, the supranational customs agency will either absorb each country's separate customs agency or oversee the existing bodies as a watchdog agency.
- Beginning in April, a trial tariff distribution system will be enacted under which Russia will receive approximately 90% of all collected customs duties, with Kazakhstan and Belarus receiving 6-7% and 3-4% respectively.

**APHIS Implements New Process for Establishing Phytosanitary Treatments for Imports**

- USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) recently published a final rule revising the approvals procedure for its quarantine treatment regulations.
- The final rule implements all of the proposed regulatory changes outlined in a draft rule issued last year (see the May 15, 2009 edition of the *BCI Monitor*). Under the final rule, quarantine treatment schedules will solely be listed in the APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine Treatment Manual and will not be subject to the full rulemaking process. Proposed treatment changes will be submitted by APHIS and made available for public comment through a notice in the *Federal Register*. APHIS also removed country-specific references in the quarantine treatment schedules, indicating that specific treatments should be effective for a particular pest regardless of the country of origin.
- The new rule will be implemented February 25, 2010. To view the final rule in full, please see: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-1375.pdf>.

**Canada Issues Update on Status of Crop Group Revisions**

- Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Authority (PMRA) recently published Regulatory Directive DIR2010-01 updating the status of continuing revisions to Canada's Residue Chemistry Crop Groups. This is the second in a series of planned crop group updates expected during the next several years in cooperation with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the International Crop Grouping Consulting Committee. PMRA expects these revisions to promote more extensive use of crop groupings for MRL setting purposes and facilitate the availability of pesticides for minor crop uses.
- The revised crop groups include *Crop Group 11-09: Pome Fruits Group*, which expands the original Crop Group 11 from the seven existing commodities to twelve commodities. For more information on the PMRA's crop group revisions, please see: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/\\_pol-guide/dir2010-01/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_pol-guide/dir2010-01/index-eng.php).

**EPA To Issue Cancellation Order for Spirotetramat Products, Requests Comments on Provisions for Existing Stock**

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced its intent to issue a cancellation order for the pesticide spirotetramat. The order will establish provisions concerning the continued sale and use of existing stocks of spirotetramat pesticide products. The announcement follows a December 23, 2009 U.S. district court order requiring the EPA to rescind approval of all spirotetramat products (see the January 8, 2010 edition of the *BCI Monitor*).
- Per the court ruling, all registrations issued by EPA for pesticide products containing spirotetramat will now be invalidated as of February 16, 2010. After that date, the EPA proposes to issue the cancellation order and to establish provisions on how to regulate the sale, distribution, and use of existing stocks of spirotetramat pesticide products.
- The EPA has requested comments from all interested parties concerning the sale, distribution, and use of remaining stocks of spirotetramat product. Comments are due by February 8, 2010. For more information or to issue a comment, please see: <http://www.epa.gov/opprd001/factsheets/spirotetramat-canc-order.pdf>.

**Obama Announces National Export Initiative, Pledges Support for Small Business**

- In the State of the Union address on January 27, President Obama pledged to help the agricultural industry increase exports through the establishment of a National Export Initiative. The president's speech focused on increasing exports as a method for increasing jobs in the U.S. He specifically mentioned the Doha round and hinted at pending FTAs with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea as areas that offer opportunity for the U.S.
- In recent weeks, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has focused on increasing opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses by increasing market access and encouraging export-oriented growth. A January 21 conference event hosted by the USTR highlighted the commitment of the USTR and other partner agencies, such as the Department of Commerce and Small Business Association, in identifying and tackling export and market access issues.
- USTR has also announced the designation of an Assistant United States Trade Representative (AUSTR) for Small Business, Market Access, and Industrial Competitiveness. The position will be filled by Jim Stanford, whose present position as AUSTR for Market and Industrial Competitiveness will be expanded accordingly.
- For an outline of President Obama's 2010 initiatives, including details of the National Export Initiative, please see: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/01/27/putting-washington-service-middle-class>.