



ABC GLOBAL UPDATE

APRIL 2020

New Exporter Registration Requirement in Turkey

The Turkish government has announced that foreign companies exporting to Turkey must complete an annual exporter registration. Almond exporters are included. The applicable form can be accessed on-line at: https://ithalat.ebirlik.org/impws/index_en.jsp. ABC was contacted by a handler who indicated that this requirement is being enforced by Turkish authorities.

This requirement is brand new, and ABC has requested additional information and details, particularly regarding the role of the Turkish Embassy/consulates in the review process.

China Market Access for Pelletized Almond Hulls Moving Forward

Under the Phase One agreement, China's GACC and USDA/APHIS were scheduled to conduct an on-site visit in March, with finalization of the export protocol on May 15.

Given current travel restrictions, ABC is working with the companies and APHIS to organize a "virtual visit" which would only involve USDA/APHIS rather than Chinese officials. Finding creative solutions to keep market access moving forward has been a challenge, but hopefully this approach will ensure the Chinese market for pelletized/cubed almond hulls will be open mid-May. For more information,

please contact Geoff Bogart at gbogart@almondboard.com.

India Publishes Regulation Mapping Indian Food Categorizations to HS Codes

On March 13, India's Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) published a **draft regulation** listing the HS codes and Indian Trade Clarification (ITC) codes for imported food products.

The list also categorizes products as low- or high-risk. High-risk products are inspected more frequently, according to the FSSAI's January 2020 **Frequently Asked Questions on Food Import** and a **USDA GAIN report** on the draft regulation.

Qatar Withdraws Coronavirus Certificate Requirement

On March 26, Qatar announced that it will not require a sanitary certificate for coronavirus to accompany food imports, as it had previously planned.

Qatar reversed its decision after the U.S. raised serious concerns.

Aflatoxin Rapid Alert Update for 2020

As of April 2, ABC reports **three** Rapid Alert rejections for Aflatoxins in the EU. In 2019, twelve rejections were registered for the year. In a new twist, two of the rejections were actually the result of the "company's own check," rather than a border

rejection. This usually takes place at the overseas manufacturer when there is a suspicion of damage, mold, etc.

Handlers should take notice that the Spanish Government has determined that the long-standing U.S. Goods Return Program is no longer an option in Spain; they will only allow reprocessing or destruction. ABC does not agree with this determination and is working with the U.S. Embassy in Madrid to address.

In terms of Japan, **4** rejections have been issued thus far. Last year, Japan had 28 rejections in 2019.

Ag Associations Urge FMC Action over Fees

AgTC is reporting that 80 major agriculture associations have written to the White House, Ag Secretary Sonny Perdue, and Congressional ag committee leaders to intervene with the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) over demurrage and detention charges that are being levied on agriculture businesses. A three-year investigation and public comment period have ended, but the Interpretive Rule on penalty guidance has not been published. Current conditions resulting from COVID-19 limits have only increased the pressure (and costs) that are being experienced.

India Lockdown: Ground-level Disruptions Continue

India announced a 21-day lockdown starting March 25 through April 14 in response to COVID-19. While the government assured Indians that essential services would continue, it was vague on the specifics – how to buy food and other necessary items if shops were closed, would transport continue to operate, banking/finance issues in a largely cash society, etc.

Almost daily, the Government of India is issuing notifications in an effort to clarify how measures are to be implemented – but local level implementation has experienced considerable disruptions and stoppages. One of the most challenging is the huge amount of migrant labor that has left major cities to go back to their home states/villages, resulting in the absence of labor to manage highly manual operations such as courier/delivery services, cracking units, warehouses, etc.

ABC is working closely with trade, local associations, and the U.S. government to monitor the situation.

Vietnam Notifies WTO of Updated Pest List

Vietnam notified the WTO of a draft national technical regulation on phytosanitary requirements for imported plant products, primarily an updated list of prohibited pests.

This regulation officially establishes zero tolerance for the pests listed, according to an accompanying USDA GAIN report.

The regulation is set to be adopted on May 28. Comments are due to Vietnam's SPS notification point at

spsvietnam@mard.gov.vn by May 17.

Vietnam Increases Penalties for Noncompliance

Vietnam increased fines for failures to comply with plant and animal health import regulations, such as an incorrect or missing phytosanitary certificates, according to a new USDA GAIN report.

Taiwan Notifies WTO of Food Naming Regulation

On March 20, Taiwan notified the WTO of a proposed regulation that would ban the word "health" on any food label if the food is not officially recognized as a health food by the Taiwanese government.

No date of adoption has been proposed, but if approved this regulation would go into effect at the beginning of 2022.

Comments are due to the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration at linlee7@fda.gov.tw by May 20.

Taiwan Changes Import Fees

Taiwan notified the WTO that as of March 17 it has increased its quarantine fees for plant and animal products. These changes were originally notified to the WTO as a draft measure in August.

The regulation includes standard quarantine fees (page 1 in the notified document), operation fees (page 3), handling fees (page 5) and fumigation and sterilization fees for plant product imports (page 9).

Mexico Responds to Comments on Food Labeling Proposal

On March 27, Mexico notified the WTO of its official responses (in Spanish) to comments submitted

on Mexico's draft regulation mandating nutritional labeling. Mexico officially approved the nutrition labeling law in 2019, but it has not entered into force.

In its responses, Mexico acknowledges the concerns of the food industry. No changes to the law have been proposed, although Mexico is still in the consultation phase and has not announced a date for the law to enter into force.

The law has been criticized by the Mexican food industry as well as the U.S. and the EU, which are major suppliers of processed food to Mexico.

Upcoming Travel and Events

ABC is closely following global spread of the coronavirus, and its impact on market development programs.

For the current time, ABC is limiting international travel by staff to the extent possible, and in line with guidelines issued by CDC and U.S. State Department.

Staff is working closely with industry association partners and stakeholders in other markets to maintain our trade relationships and ensure there is limited impact on engagement efforts.

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