



**CHEESE IMPORTERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

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CIAA Bulletin

An Exclusive CIAA Member Update

CIAA Looking Back - Looking Ahead

As we begin a new year, we wanted to share some highlights from 2016 and review many of the accomplishments the Cheese Importers Association achieved over the past year. We thank you for your continued participation and look forward to great year ahead.

On the legislative front, CIAA undertook several important activities in 2016.

Trade Policy:

- Established a Trade Committee that refined CIAA's position statement on trade. The policy includes the following statements:
 - CIAA supports significant reductions in tariffs and the expansion of tariff rate quota volumes en route to their virtual elimination and the resulting fully free trade;
 - CIAA believes the best approach to quota allocation is use of the current licensing system under which the right to import products which are subject to tariff quota restrictions are fully, fairly and equitably allocated among importers and users with a proven track record, and rejects first-come, first serve allocations;
 - CIAA prefers combining the various import licenses into commodity neutral versus cheese type, particularly for any new quotas;
 - CIAA supports a 4-way split for any new access under a new quota system through the structure of the current four sub-parts;
 - CIAA recommends that any license that cannot be used by the license holder for actual imports would have to be surrendered as early as possible, but no later than May 30 of each year with reallocation by June 30; and
 - CIAA supports the enhanced engagement in international standard setting bodies, to ensure the development of international standards which are appropriate for the United States dairy sector, work that promotes the adoption of international standards by trading partners and, the fair and equal treatment of products, and ingredients, that are imported from

Countries with System Recognition Agreements ("SRA"), without exclusion in any form.

Washington Visits:

- On May 2, CIAA met with nine representatives of the EDA, including Michel Natalis, EDA's current president. We discussed EDA's concerns about the paperwork requirements being imposed by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), and EDA's interest - shared by CIAA - in establishing some levels of equivalency between the European Union's food safety standards and those required by FDA as a result of the rules being implemented as required by FSMA. We also discussed the Accredited Third-Party Certification rule, ongoing negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the US and the EU, and imposition of additional tariffs last year after the Special Agricultural Safeguard Measures (the trigger) was imposed on butter due to the high volume of imports.
- On May 3, CIAA met with senior officials of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), to discuss its microsurveillance program. In response to our question, we were told that FDA does not at this time expect to change the current 60 day rule for importing raw milk cheese. We also discussed the various FSMA rules, including Preventive Controls for Human Foods, Foreign Supplier Verification, and Accredited Third-Party Certification. We also raised the issue of EU equivalency for food safety standards.
- On May 3, CIAA met with senior staff at USTR including George York, Deputy Assistant for Intellectual Property and Innovation; Bill Moeller, Director for Europe and North Africa, Sharon Bomer Lauritsen, Assistant US Trade Representative for Agricultural Affairs, and Becky Rasdall, Deputy Director, Office of Agricultural Affairs. We provided USTR with CIAA's priorities for TTIP, and expressed our view that it should be a framework for any additional trade negotiations.

Other regulatory matters:

- CIAA worked with the Foreign Agricultural Service to help CIAA members who encountered problems using DAIRIES in submitting their 2017 license applications.

SIAL Show:

- EDA Meeting - CIAA leadership met with the leadership of the European Dairy Association and Eucolait to discuss a wide range of issues, including an Overview of US elections and changes in the Administration, TTIP progress, impressions from both sides of the Atlantic, TPP outlook, Brexit, Safeguard Triggers, our Qualified Importer Program (QIP) including bringing retailers to SIAL and efforts to call consumer attention to imported cheeses, FSMA implementation (Food Supply Verification Program), and an overview of plans for 2017/2018 consideration of the Farm Bill, along with EU Common Agricultural Policy.

- Over 80 members participated in the 2016 SIAL Trip that included evening events sponsored by CIAA members, and a day-trip to Loire Valley to tour the Cointreau Factory and Brissac Castle.



CIAA Members enjoying Dinner at Alcazar restaurant in Paris

As part of the trip, CIAA QIP sponsored 11 retailers to participate in the SIAL program. The retailers experienced a special excursion to Fort des Rousses prior to the start of SIAL. In Fort des Rousses, they learned about comte cheese and toured caves in the Jura Mountains. While visiting, the retailers were inducted into the guild in a unique ceremony that included entertainment and a special dinner.



Retailers touring Rungi International Market during SIAL

FSMA Seminar:

CIAA, through its Qualified Importer Program, (QIP) hosted a Preventive Controls for Human Food course for the cheese import industry on November 10 and 11 at the Saddle Brook Marriott, Saddle Brook, NJ. Forty Eight people attended the course. Training was provided by OFW Law's [Jolyda Swaim](#) and [Betsy Booren](#). Successful completion of the course resulted in attendees being certified as a "[Preventive Controls Qualified Individual \(PCQI\)](#)."

Branding Program:

- A new branding initiative began under the Qualified Importer Program. A firm was hired to help define the CIAA QIP brand, with a goal to use social media and other methods to promote imported cheese and advance the imported cheese industry. We plan to continue our Branding efforts in 2017.

CIAA members had several opportunities throughout the year to gather together, learn and network.

Fancy Food Show Reception:

- Over 200 members, customers and retailers gathered at the Thirsty Bear Brewery in San Francisco to mingle with their colleagues after the first day of the show. Ten CIAA members showcased their raw milk cheeses to help promote Raw Milk Cheese Day.



CIAA members relax after a long day at the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco

Member Meetings:

- On April 28, featured speaker Amelia Tetterton, Safety Officer from FDA provided an overview of FSMA Rules as they relate to Foreign Supplier Verification and Third Party Audit. In place of Ron Lord, Roger Szemraj provided an update from the USDA/FAS/Office of Trade Programs on FAS operations of the Import Licensing Program.
- On November 3, Tom Bailey, Executive Director, Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisor from Rabobank provided an update on the Global Dairy Industry and Charles Bertsch, Assistant Deputy Administrator in the Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs in USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) educated members on "Safe Guard Triggers".

Dinner Dance:

- Outgoing president Dominique Delugeau was honored for his accomplishments during his term as President and we welcomed new president Ken Olsson during the Dinner Dance held April 29th.

Looking ahead to 2017:

New Administration, New Congress, New Directions -

In the year ahead, CIAA plans to meet with newly appointed top ranking officials at the United States Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, and the United States Trade Representative once all of these appointments are completed in the coming months. CIAA will also work to meet with key Congressional leadership dealing with issues of importance to our membership. Those matters include:

- **The Farm Bill** - Both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees plan to begin work on the 2018 Farm Bill in the coming weeks. Representation of imported dairy interests on the National Dairy Board is likely to be a key topic, along with other matters impacting our ability to import product.
- **Regulations** - There has been a great deal of discussion about the possible rollback of regulations adopted in recent years. While the precise agenda is yet to be determined, there have been suggestions that FSMA rules may be reviewed, along with requirements for the Nutrition Facts Panel required on food items. GMO labeling will also be of special interest as the new rules required by the [National Bioengineered Disclosure Law](#) are promulgated. We will also begin efforts to encourage the Trump Administration to eliminate §6.25(b) because it threatens the business of importing high-quality specialty cheeses.
- **Trade Policy** - As noted above, our Trade Committee has developed a strong policy statement. With TTIP negotiations being resumed by the new Administration, we will make sure they understand our concerns and that we remain an active partner with the Administration and other related industry groups to develop a trade agreement that reflects these concerns.
- **Upcoming Events**

Mark your calendar now for the CIAA's 2017 Calendar of Events

- Sunday, January 22, Fancy Food Show Reception, San Francisco, CA
- Thursday, May 4 - Member Meeting, Saddle Brook Marriott
- Friday, May 5 - Annual Dinner Dance, Macaluso's

We also plan to offer a FDA-recognized training session regarding the Foreign Supplier Verification Program prior to the May 30, 2017 implementation date. We will provide more details in the near future.

We look forward to another successful year!

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 22, 2017

CIAA Fancy Food Show Reception
5:00 pm- 7:30 pm
Thirsty Bear Brewery
San Francisco, CA

March 1, 2017 (approximately)

FAS issues final notice of calendar year 2017 licenses to licensees.

March 15, 2017

The license fee for each license issued is due and payable in full no later than March 15 of the year for which the license is issued. Licenses issued after March 15 of any quota year are payable in full no later than 10 days from the date of issuance. Fee payments are payable to the Treasurer of the United States and shall be made solely utilizing the electronic software designated for the purpose by the Licensing Authority.

May 1, 2017

Calendar year 2017 license fee payments must be transmitted no later than this date. Last transmission date for a licensee to notify FAS that it will not accept a calendar year 2017 license.

May 4, 2017

Member Meeting
9:30 am - 11:30 am
Saddle Brook Marriott, Saddle Brook, NJ

May 5, 2017

CIAA Dinner Dance
Macaluso's, Hawthorne, NJ

July 1, 2017

Last day for an exporting country that is not designating importers for calendar year 2017 to notify FAS.

August 31, 2017

Last day to Enter dairy products into U.S. Customs territory that may be used to qualify and establish eligibility for a calendar year 2017 license.

* If a deadline date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the deadline will be the next business day (Section 6.36(a) of the Dairy Tariff-Rate Import Quota Licensing Regulation). This does not apply to dates of entry for eligibility.

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