



CHEESE IMPORTERS
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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CIAA Bulletin

An Exclusive CIAA Member Update

Developments on Food Safety and Trade Policy in Washington Legislation, Trade Negotiations Have Impact on Cheese Importers

By Katey Price, The Tipton Group

Food Safety Vote Not Expected Before November Elections

Last Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced that a vote on the Food Safety Modernization Act (S. 510) will not occur before the midterm elections on November 4. However, as recently as Wednesday afternoon, the Majority Leader was still discussing ways to reach an agreement with Senator Tom Coburn, a Republican who opposes a bill that does not pay for the costs of the legislation.

A vote on the food safety bill by the Senate has been delayed numerous times, yet in August there appeared to have been a breakthrough on several key provisions in the bill, with Democrats and Republicans reaching a bipartisan agreement. However, since that time, issues surrounding other provisions in the bill have further delayed the vote. Senator Coburn (R-OK) has expressed concerns regarding the cost of the bill and the burdens it places on small businesses. Additional amendments have been proposed by two Democratic senators. A ban on the use of BPA in baby bottles has been offered by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), while Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) has proposed an amendment exempting small producer and farmer's market vendors from certain requirements in the legislation.

The House passed their version of food safety legislation in June 2009, but the legislation has long been stalled in the Senate. Should any new developments arise involving the food safety legislation, the CIAA will keep members informed.

Geographic Indicators at Issue in Potential EU-Korea FTA

In recent negotiations between the European Union and South Korea on a new free trade agreement, the use of "geographic indicators" has been raised. Such terms restrict certain product names to particular countries or regions. Having geographic indicators in place could restrict U.S. producers of cheese from using terms such as "mozzarella", "feta", and "Swiss" to label their cheese products.

The Europeans argue that the names protect products that come from specific regions; geographic indicators are already in place for products such as burgundy wine and champagne. U.S. food industry interests, including representatives of the dairy sector, and their allies in Congress have expressed concerns that limiting the use of these popular product names would redound to the detriment of consumers familiar with these terms. The domestic industry also fears that geographic indicators could ultimately harm American exports. USTR has long fought these policies, but if they become enshrined in an increasing numbers of trade agreements, it could hamper the U.S. position around the world.

CIAA members may have varied interest in this issue, depending on the country from which they import different products, but we wanted to ensure members were aware of these new developments.

EU Set to Lower Tariffs on High-Tech Products

In a recent announcement, the EU said it has agreed to lower tariffs on high-tech products rather than appeal a ruling from the World Trade Organization (WTO). The U.S. had argued that the EU violated the Information Technology Agreement by imposing new duties on certain high-tech products, and the WTO agreed in ruling against the EU.

The imposition of these high tariffs and a subsequent appeal by the Europeans could have affected CIAA members. Had the EU kept the elevated tariff rates, the U.S. would have been able to levy tariffs on goods made in Europe, which could have had implications for cheese importers, as has previously been the case for Roquefort importers under trade disputes.

The CIAA will keep members apprised of further developments regarding food safety and other issues. For further information, please contact [Brandon Partridge](#), CIAA Executive Director, or [Katey Price](#) at 202.675.8470.

2010 DATES TO REMEMBER

September 1 - October 15

Application period for historical, nonhistorical and designated licenses for the following quota year

October 1

Last transmission or postmark date to temporarily surrender all or part of unused license

October 15-21

SIAL Trip

Paris, France

Register Here: [CIAA SIAL Registration](#)

October 17-21

SIAL Show

Paris, France

October 31

Last day to select designated importers for the following quota year

November 4

Membership Meeting

Saddle Brook Marriott

Saddle Brook, NJ

Cheese Importers Association of America

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