

# ABC Global Update

## France Calls for Suspension of U.S.-EU Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) Negotiations

France will request a cessation of negotiations for the U.S.-European Union (EU) Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) when EU trade ministers meet to discuss the status of the talks in Bratislava, Slovakia in late September 2016, according to media sources.

In public comments, French Trade Minister Matthias Fekl announced France will deliver a formal request to the European Commission to immediately suspend TTIP negotiations with the U.S. A growing number of officials from France, Germany, and other EU member states have asserted that TTIP negotiations are failing – attributing the unwillingness of U.S. negotiators to compromise with EU negotiators on certain outstanding issues.

EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman—who continue to hold biweekly discussions on the status of TTIP negotiations—responded by saying talks are progressing and that negotiations would continue unabated.

That said, upcoming elections in the U.S., Germany, and France—as well as Britain’s recent decision to leave the EU—are complicating attempts to advance TTIP negotiations.

The next round of talks has not been officially scheduled as EU representatives prepare to assess the

future of the negotiations in Bratislava, Slovakia from September 22-23, 2016

## Almond Board Continues to Monitor China’s Zika Requirement

China has been rigorous in their application of import restrictions to address concerns related to the spread of the Zika virus. In a recent development, China has taken a regionalized approach, focusing requirements for disinsection to those vessels which originate in Florida.

The Board will continue to liaise with the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) offices in DC and China. If you have questions, please contact Beth Van Meter at [bvanmeter@almondboard.com](mailto:bvanmeter@almondboard.com).

## Impact of Hanjin Bankruptcy Still to be Determined

Hanjin Shipping company filed for bankruptcy in South Korea on August 31, 2016, and in Newark, New Jersey on September 2, 2016. Hanjin has ceased accepting new cargo and many ports have begun rejecting ships. Ports that are unloading cargo from Hanjin will not release it until full payment has been made.

The full implications of the bankruptcy for almond consignments is yet to be known; the ABC has surveyed handlers to assess the impact, but many shippers are still trying to sort out the details.

For the most up to date information, please read the AgTC updates on their members’ portal. Please [click here](#) to be taken to the AgTC member login page.

## U.S.-Mexico Joint Study Explores Opportunities to Increase Bilateral Agricultural Trade

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Mexico’s agricultural secretariat recently published a joint study exploring opportunities to facilitate greater bilateral agricultural trade between the two countries.

The tariff and quota elimination measures under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have helped U.S. agricultural exports to Mexico increase from \$3.6 billion in 1993 to \$17.7 billion in 2015. That said, the trade-liberalizing provisions of NAFTA—including the elimination of tariffs and quotas—were fully implemented in 2008. As a result, new means of trade facilitation are needed to facilitate further growth of U.S.-Mexico agricultural trade.

The joint study identifies six areas of opportunity for enhancing bilateral agricultural trade, which are believed will improve the ease and efficiency of cross-border ag trade without compromising regulatory standards: 1) increasing the consistency of agricultural-related aspects of border crossings and inspections; 2) further developing risk-based inspection systems; 3) augmenting pre-clearance and pre-inspection systems as well as joint inspection facilities; 4) preparing for new transportation infrastructure and shipping routes; 5) streamlining complementary activities for Single Window Environments; and, 6) creating formal avenues for regulatory innovation.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture Updates Agricultural Trade Outlook**

The outlook for U.S. agricultural exports is expected to improve in 2017, according to the latest U.S. agricultural trade outlook report published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS). This update includes revised fiscal year (FY) 2016 estimates as well as the first forecast for U.S. agricultural exports in FY 2017.

Agricultural exports in FY 2017 are forecast to reach \$133 billion. This would amount to an increase of \$6 billion compared to revised FY 2016 estimate of \$127 billion. High-value consumer-oriented items are expected to account for a significant portion of export growth in FY 2017. As a result of improving exports, the U.S. agricultural trade surplus is forecast to rise to \$19.5 billion in FY 2017, a 40 percent increase compared to FY 2016.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack issued a statement in support of the improved outlook, noting that implementation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would further strengthen the position of U.S. agricultural exporters in upcoming years.

**U.S. International Trade Commission Launches Tool to Track Imports**

The U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) recently launched a [tool](#) designed to allow the public to track imports into the United States. The creation of this tool was required by the 2015 Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act.

The online system allows users to track changes in the volume and value of U.S. imports for specific items, categorized through the

Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS). Users may also observe percentage changes in imports over a certain period of time and view figures by trading partner.

The tool uses monthly data retrieved from the U.S. Department of Commerce and is updated as quickly as possible after each calendar year quarter. Data for the latest eight quarters will be available in the system.

**Save the Date! Two AgTC Shipper Workshops in February**

The AgTC will be organizing its annual California regional workshops in February. The workshops provide an opportunity for candid discussions about current shipping concerns; the meetings are open to all agriculture and forest products exporters and their service providers.

Following are the confirmed dates:

- Fresno -- Weds. February 8
- Sacramento -- Thurs. February 9

Both workshops will be held from 9:30-2:30pm, and will include a Working Lunch. The cost is \$25 for members, \$125 for non-members.

[Click Here](#) to reserve your spot!

**AgTC: Port of Oakland's Extended Gate Program Wants Your Feedback**

The Port of Oakland continues to work with stakeholders to restructure terminal operations and cut down on congestion. Several AgTC members serve on the Port Efficiency Task Force which spearheads this work and they would like your feedback. Please click [here](#) to take the survey on the OICT Extended Gate Program.

**2017 Conference Not that Far Off...**

**Reminder!** Many of the issues that we are following will be covered during the Almond Conference, which is being held December 6-8, 2016 in Sacramento. **Be sure to register now**, the Almond Conference is expected to be the largest ever, attracting over 3,500 attendees and 250 exhibitors. Among the sessions of interest:

- Update on global technical and trade issues
- California legislation and regulatory environment
- Session on when do commercial issues become trade barriers
- Shipping panel

And much more! Be sure to register at: [www.Almondconference.com](http://www.Almondconference.com)

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**Upcoming Travel**

- **September 11-16, 2016**  
Beth Van Meter and Dariela Roffe-Rackind will be in Berlin and Hamburg, Germany for the USDA Foreign Agriculture Service Regional seminar and various trade meetings.
- **September 12-16, 2016**  
Richard Waycott and Bunnie Ibrahim in Washington, DC for the United Fresh Washington Public Policy Conference.
- **September 25-October 1, 2016**  
Emily Fleischmann in India for agency and stakeholder visits.

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The Global Update is a publication by the Almond Board of California. For more information, please contact the Almond Board at 209.549.8262 or [staff@almondboard.com](mailto:staff@almondboard.com). The information reported in this document is correct to the best of our knowledge.

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