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Approved By:

Morgan Haas

Prepared By:

Staff

Report Highlights:

The Presidents of the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus Customs Union (CU) and the CU supreme regulatory body, the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), met in Moscow on March 19, 2012. Summaries of relevant developments and decisions from these meetings and regular weekly meetings of the EEC working body, the EEC Collegium, that impact CU food and agriculture policy are contained in this report. In particular, one of the decisions implements a CU import tariff raise for tropical oils effective late April 2012.

General Information

The Presidents of the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus Customs Union (CU) and the CU supreme regulatory body - the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), met in Moscow on March 19, 2012. Summaries of relevant developments and decisions from these meetings and regular weekly meetings of the EEC working body - the EEC Collegium, that impact CU food and agriculture policy follow. In particular, one of the decisions implements a CU import tariff raise for tropical oils effective late April 2012.

The decisions are hyperlinked via Google Translate for readers seeking further details. Select “refresh” on your browser if the page does not translate to the end. Please note that the CU is often delayed when publishing attachments to decisions. If there is an attachment in a decision that is not yet linked, please check back again.

Meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the Heads of State Level, March 19, 2012

The meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council at the Heads of State Level, which included the Presidents of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, was held in Moscow on March 19th, 2012, as part of a summit of a broader group - Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). In addition to the three CU countries, the EurAsEC summit included the two remaining EurAsEC members Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as EurAsEC observers Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The summit discussed next steps in plans for closer Eurasian economic integration. According to Russia’s President Medvedev, summit participants charted a detailed integration strategy that would reshape EurAsEC into a fully-fledged economic union by 2015. Medvedev also announced that EurAsEC leaders would meet again in May this year.

2nd Meeting of the Eurasian Economic Commission Board, March 19, 2012

Publication Date: March 23, 2012

Decision 8. *On Amending the Unified Commodity Nomenclature of Foreign Economic Activity of the Customs Union and the Unified Customs Tariff of the Customs Union in respect of Coconut (Copra) Oil, Palm Kernel Oil and Babassu Oil.*

Summary: New CU HS codes are introduced for coconut (copra) oil, palm kernel oil and babassu oil in primary packaging of not more than 1 kg and bulk packaging of up to 19,000 kg. The import tariff rate for these new CU HS subheadings is 0.4 EUR per kg. This compares to the current import tariff of 5% for these tropical oils in packages of up to 200 kg and 0% for bigger packages. The decision will come into effect 30 days after its official publication.

3rd Meeting of the Eurasian Economic Commission Collegium, March 7, 2012

Publication Date: March 16, 2012

Decision 1 of March 7. *On Some Issues of Application of Special Safeguard, Antidumping, and Countervailing Measures on the Unified Customs Territory of the Customs Union.*

Summary: The authority for conducting investigations is delegated to the EEC Department of Protection of Domestic Market. The decision also approves the Regulations on use and protection of confidential and restricted use information, as well as the Regulations for decision-making and drafting EEC decisions on special safeguard, antidumping, and countervailing measures.

Decision 6 of March 7. *On Consultative Committee on Trade.*

Summary: The decision establishes the Consultative Committee on Trade and approves its membership and Regulations. According to the Regulations, the Committee will consist of the following two sub-committees:

- a sub-committee on customs-and-tariff, non-tariff regulation and safeguards (in charge of import tariffs, lists of sensitive goods, TRQs, tariff preferences, non-tariff measures, import bans and restrictions and exceptions from them, imposition and application of special safeguard, antidumping, and countervailing measures)
- sub-committee on trade policy (in charge of harmonization and establishment of trade regimes with third countries, coordination of positions in trade negotiations, cooperation with international organizations and third parties on trade issues, coordination of positions in the process of WTO accession negotiations, market access to third countries, trade dispute resolution between the Parties as well as between the Parties and third countries).

Publication Date: March 22, 2012

Decision 11 of March 7. *On Consultative Committee for Technical Regulations, Application of Sanitary, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Measures.*

Summary: The decision establishes the Consultative Consultative Committee for Technical Regulations, Application of Sanitary, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Measures and approves its membership and Regulations. According to the Regulations, the Committee's goals are:

- coordination of activities and analysis of issues which arise from implementation of SPS and technical regulation policies;
- analysis of status and potential improvement of application of SPS measures in the CU and Single Economic Space (SES);
- analysis of cases of violation of mandatory requirements established by CU and SES legislation which cause damage or pose threat to life of health of humans, animals, property and environment;
- preparation of analytical materials and proposals on SPS and technical regulation issues;
- development of recommendations on introduction, implementation, change or termination of SPS or technical regulation measures;
- analysis of unsettled disagreements between the Parties in drafts of technical regulations and SPS measures within the CU and SES;

- expertise of legal documents of the CU and SES in SPS and technical regulations areas

The Committee shall establish sub-committees in the following areas:

- turnover of medicines and medicinal products
- technical regulations
- veterinary-sanitary measures
- phytosanitary measures

Draft EEC decisions approved by the Committee shall be posted on the official EEC website for a 60-days public discussion period, offering all interested parties including foreign governments, an opportunity to comment and propose amendments.

4th Meeting of the Eurasian Economic Commission Collegium, March 15, 2012

Publication Date: March 22, 2012

Decision 12 of March 15. *On Establishment of Working Group for Drafting International Agreement on Circulation of Alcohol Products on the Unified Customs Territory of the Customs Union.*

Summary: The decision implements the EEC Board decision #7 of January 25, 2012, by establishing a Working Group for drafting an international agreement on circulation of alcohol products on the unified customs territory of the Customs Union and approving its membership.