

Article notes: July 26, 2013
Citizen Trade Policy Commission

DeLauro: Food Safety Critical Issue in Upcoming Trade Talks (Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, CT, letter to USTR; 9/7/11)

- In a past letter to former USTR Ron Kirk, US Congresswoman Rosa LeLauro from CT, raised significant concerns about the issue of food safety concerns and urged that these issues be adequately addressed in the TPPA;
- Congresswoman DeLauro stated that at the time the US joined the WTO in 1994, 50% of the seafood consumed in the US was imported; in 2011, that figure stood at 84%;
- In spite of the increase in consumption of imported seafood, US regulatory efforts for food safety have been relatively static and have fallen significantly behind that of other countries;
- In 2011, the FDA tested only 0.1 % of all seafood imports for 16 different drugs whereas other countries test for up to 57 drug residues;
- Transshipment of food and seafood products is a common practice designed to circumvent existing US import regulations pertaining to food and seafood safety;
- Past FTAs have resulted in significant increases of imported seafood and agricultural products without a concomitant increase in food safety regulation and inspection efforts;
- Past FTAs have also resulted in a harmonization of food safety standards to the detriment of the efforts to safeguard the US food supply; and
- Past FTAs have also made extensive use of ISDR mechanisms to the detriment of food safety regulations in the US.

U.S., Europe Trade Deal A Challenge for Agriculture (Farmfutures.com; 7/18/13)

- As the first round of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP, aka TAFTA) negotiations begin, prominent agricultural trade experts are predicting that this potential agreement could be the largest trade deal in history;
- Currently, the US and EU have about \$2.7 billion in daily trade with about \$4 trillion in investments in each other's economies;
- The current breadth of the existing trade relationship provides a unique opportunity for an expansion of agricultural trade;
- Current obstacles to an expansion of agricultural trade include the regulation of biotech crops, food safety issues, and differences in agricultural production and processing methods. Each of these obstacles could be described as non-tariff barriers to trade;
- The elimination of tariffs and regulatory barriers are the primary goals of the dairy industry;
- The use of biotech in US agriculture is growing with more than 17 million farmers using some form of biotech agriculture; this statistic demonstrates the need for an accommodation in international agricultural trade; and
- Differences in agricultural technology from one trading partner to another create the need for a management of the global regulatory process.

TAFTA: Corporations Express Fear of Democracy (Public Citizen; 7/19/13)

- Although TAFTA (aka TTIP) negotiations have only just begun, multinational corporations are likely to have a disproportionate influence on the proposed trade treaty, resulting in an agreement which will "favor the interests of corporations over consumers";
- Large international corporations tend to favor the use of "science-based regulation" over "political", regulatory based standards;

- The use of the word “political” by international corporations in the context of international trade agreements tends to impute the following statement, “...the “political” bodies the corporations fear are the democratically elected representatives of the people”; and
- The formulation of regulations designed to protect the public should never be dictated solely by the use of science; instead, science should be used as one tool to help inform the proper regulatory standards adopted by elected representatives of the people in a democracy.

Statement on the 18th Round of Trans-Pacific Partnership Negotiations (USTR; 7/25/13)

- USTR reports progress on latest round of TPP negotiations which concluded on 7/25/13 in Malaysia;
- The various negotiating groups on such areas as market access, rules of origin, technical barriers to trade, investment, financial services, e-commerce and transparency have reached agreement on a large list of technical issues; further progress has been made on issues pertaining to intellectual property, competition and the environment;
- Additional progress has been made regarding market access for industrial, agricultural, textiles, services and government procurement;
- The negotiations were temporarily suspended on 7/20 to allow input and information exchanges with more than 200 TPP stakeholders;
- On 7/23, Japan was welcomed as the 12th nation member in the TPP negotiations; and
- The next round of TPP negotiations will be held from August 22 to August 30 in Brunei.

United States and Vietnam Agree to Intensify TPP Engagement. Aim to Reach Comprehensive Agreement This Year; (USTR; 7/25/13)

- USTR Michael Froman met with Vietnamese President to Truong Tan Sang and both confirmed the mutual commitment of their nations to finalizing the TPP in 2013; and
- Both leaders anticipate that the TPP will strengthen economic ties, promote economic growth and result in the creation and retention of jobs for both countries.