Dill From Israel

The United States imported 1,828,359 pounds of dill in 1993 (trade records do not clearly indicate whether the dill was fresh or dried). The major sources were India (68 percent), Pakistan (13.2 percent), Egypt (10 percent), Sweden (3.2 percent), and Turkey (2.5 percent). The United States is a net importer of dill. Israel produced about 520 metric tons (1,146,000 pounds) of dill in 1994 and exported about 46 metric tons of dill during the same period. Israel expects that it will export about 30 metric tons of dill to the United States within the next 3 to 5 years. Both producer prices and consumer prices will likely be unaffected by the importation of dill from Israel.

Lettuce From Israel

Total U.S. production of head, leaf, and romaine lettuce in 1993 was 3,756,350 metric tons (or 8,279 million pounds). There are approximately 2,660 producers of lettuce in the United States, about 97 percent of which are considered to be small entities according to SBA size standards.

The United States is a net exporter of lettuce. It imported 32,738,000 pounds of lettuce in 1993, mainly from Mexico and Canada, which together accounted for 99.2 percent of the imports. The United States exported 693,354,000 pounds of lettuce in 1993. Canada received approximately 82 percent of those exports, while the remaining destinations were highly varied.

Israel produced about 10 million pounds of insect-free lettuce, which is grown inside insect-proof screenhouses, during 1993. About 10 percent of the production is exported to Europe and the rest is consumed domestically. The amount of lettuce that will be exported to the United States is expected to be about 1,600,000 pounds, which represents less than 0.02 percent of U.S. production. This amount will not have a significant impact upon U.S. market supply. Additionally, the marketing target for this lettuce, both in Israel's domestic market as well as in the export market, is the ultra-orthodox religious community, members of which will not consume lettuce produced in any other way. Importation of this specialty product is not expected to compete with domestic production. Both producer prices and consumer prices will likely be unaffected by the importation of insect-free lettuce from Israel.

Radishes From The Netherlands

The United States produced about 122.4 million pounds of radishes in 1993. Radishes are produced on about

760 farms, all of which are considered to be small entities. The United States is a net importer of radishes and it imported 35,121,976 pounds of fresh and chilled (the proportion of fresh to chilled cannot be ascertained) radishes in 1993. Over 94 percent of these imported radishes came from Mexico and 5.5 percent from Canada.

The Netherlands currently produces about 68 million pounds of radishes. Exports are expected to increase in stages, from 1.1 million pounds in the first year, to 2.2 million pounds during the second year, to about 4.4 million pounds (about 3 percent of U.S. supply) the third year and thereafter. Exports of radishes are expected to be spread equally over a 12-month period, with no significant peak period.

Oca From New Zealand

There is no known commercial production of oca in the United States. Additionally, there is no record of oca imports into the United States. Oca is a specialty crop and only minor production is carried on in New Zealand. Most production occurs between the months of March and October. Annual production is about 110,000 pounds. Current oca exports from New Zealand to the rest of the world equal about 440 pounds. Allowing the importation of oca from New Zealand into the United States will provide additional choice to vegetable consumers.

Apricots, Peaches, Plums, and Nectarines From Zimbabwe

In 1993 the United States produced 87,430 metric tons (192.7 million pounds) of apricots on 3,353 farms; 1,130,00 metric tons (2,490.6 million pounds) of peaches on 19,106 farms; 182,395 metric tons (402 million pounds) of nectarines on 2,488 farms; and 176,710 metric tons (390 million pounds) of plums on 8,006 farms. About 98 percent of these farms are considered to be small entities according to SBA size standards.

The United States is a net exporter of all four of these commodities. Imports of these four commodities into the United States are largely from Chile, while most of the U.S. exports are destined for Canada, Mexico, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United Kingdom. Although relevant volume data is not available, the addition of Zimbabwe as a new trading partner in apricots, peaches, plums, and nectarines is unlikely to shift the favorable balance of trade that the United States currently enjoys for these four commodities.

Summary

The United States produces large amounts of grapes, cantaloupes, pears, papayas and radishes. The importations of these and other listed commodities will likely increase supply. However, since potential imports will represent a very small proportion of the total domestic production of each product, no significant negative impact on U.S. producers is expected from such importations. Although increased supply generally results in lower prices, no information is currently available about the magnitude of price responses to changes in supply. Overall, the benefits to consumers of any resulting price decline will likely outweigh the small losses to producers. Additionally, importation of oca and pak choi will increase the availability of new products. Both oca and pak choi have a limited market and are unlikely to compete with other products. Similarly, the Ya pears and cantaloupes for importation are also unlikely to compete with other products. Ya pears are a different variety than any domestically produced pear, while cantaloupes from Brazil will be imported during the off season for U.S. cantaloupes. Other products such as basil and dill are very minor products. Some of these products are grown to supplement other farm income.

The aggregate economic impact of this rule is expected to be positive. U.S. consumers will benefit from a greater availability of fruits and vegetables. U.S. importers will also benefit from a greater availability of fruits and vegetables to import.

The alternative to this final rule was to make no changes in the fruits and vegetables regulations. After consideration, we rejected this alternative since there was no pest risk reason to maintain the prohibitions on the affected produce.

In the course of rulemaking, we came across evidence that indicated that the importation of grapes from India posed a significant risk of plant pest introduction, and, therefore, we are continuing to prohibit the importation of grapes from India. If we had come across evidence indicating that the importation of any of the other concerned fruits or vegetables would pose a significant risk of plant pest introduction, we would have considered either developing alternative requirements regarding that importation or continuing to prohibit the importation of that fruit or vegetable. However, our pest risk assessments and our review of public comments on the proposal indicated that importation of