

Trade Notes...

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U.S. and Morocco Reach Agreement on FTA

In March, the United States and Morocco reached agreement on a comprehensive FTA (Free Trade Agreement) designed to strip away barriers and facilitate trade and investment between the two countries. The agreement is expected to expand a \$206-million, two-way trade relationship in agricultural, forest and fish products. The United States currently exports mostly wheat, soybeans and corn to Morocco. The agreement will reduce and eliminate barriers to trade and investment, and improve market opportunities for U.S. agricultural products, goods and services. The FTA will give U.S. agricultural exporters the same or better access to Moroccan consumers as other countries have, including Canada and the European Union. With Congressional approval and the enactment of implementing legislation, the FTA will provide America's farmers, ranchers, food processors and the businesses they support with improved, and in many cases new, access to Morocco's 32 million consumers. Morocco is an emerging market at the geographic and cultural crossroads of Europe, Africa and the Middle East that imports \$11 billion worth of goods each year. The continuing liberalization of Morocco's economy and trade is leading to rising demand for consistent, high-quality products. This will present new opportunities for U.S. agricultural exporters.

BioFach 2004 Generates Sales for U.S. Organic Products

In February, 21 U.S. companies exhibited in the USA Pavilion at the BioFach show in Germany, the world's largest organic products trade show. U.S. participants project \$4.6 million in sales over the next 12 months. Products represented included sugar, dried fruits and nuts, wines, processed foods and specialty foods, ingredients for processing, soybeans and grains.

Japan Eases Chemical Residue Restrictions on Imports of U.S. Citrus

Japan's MHLW (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare) increased the MRL (maximum residue level) for chlorpyrifos on citrus fruit, effective Feb. 25, 2004. Chlorpyrifos is one of the most widely used organophosphate insecticides in the United States. It is currently used on more than 40 different agricultural crops, including citrus. The new MRL level, which is the same as that in the United States, applies to oranges, grapefruit and lemons. Concurrently with the MRL revision, MHLW removed its testing-by-order (100 percent hold and test) imposed on certain fresh U.S. oranges since April 3, 2003. MHLW will return to normal monitoring procedures involving random inspections.

FAS Backs Health Food Show in the Netherlands

FAS will support a USA Food Pavilion Nov. 16-18, 2004, at the Health Ingredients Europe 2004 trade show in Amsterdam. Health Ingredients Europe is the only exhibition and conference in Europe this year solely dedicated to the health food ingredients industry. Worldwide interest in health and natural foods, diet foods and food supplements has triggered an explosion of demand for natural aromas, colorings, spices, plant extracts, vitamins, minerals and fat and sugar substitutes. The show will offer seminars on different segments of the health ingredients business. For further information on exhibiting products at the USA Pavilion at Health Ingredients Europe 2004, or for information on other USDA-supported shows, contact Sharon Cook at: Tel.: (202) 720-3425; Fax: (202) 690-4374; E-mail: Sharon.Cook@usda.gov