

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

USApple, Industry Urge Swift End to Port Dispute

Concerned that the West Coast port labor dispute is stranding U.S. apple exports, costing the industry millions of dollars in lost sales, the U.S. Apple Association (USApple) joined other agricultural groups earlier this month to encourage the Bush administration to keep ports open while labor talks continue.

In a letter drafted by USApple President Nancy Foster and sent Oct. 2, a broad coalition of agricul-

tural groups urged President George W. Bush, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta and Labor Secretary Elaine Chao to immediately reopen ports closed by the labor dispute. Foster spoke with senior White House and Agriculture Department officials to personally convey the urgent need to reopen the ports so that apple

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PUBLIC RELATIONS

Apples May Lower Disease Risk

A newly-released study is reporting that nutrients found in apples may keep the doctor away by reducing the risk of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, breast cancer, stroke, type 2 diabetes and asthma.

Researchers at the National Public Health Institute in Helsinki, Finland, reported their findings in the September *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Their conclusions were based on ongoing research of 10,054 Finnish men and women that began in 1966.

Dr. Paul Knekt and his colleagues pointed to the flavonoid quercetin, found in highest quantities in apples, onions, tea and red wine, as the likely health-promoting agent.

“Of all the main flavonoid sources, apple intake was associated with [a reduced risk of] almost all of the chronic diseases considered,” the authors wrote.

Quercetin is found in fresh apples, as well as apple juice – suggesting that “apple a day” can be eaten or drunk, industry experts say.

For more information, contact USApple Vice President of Public Relations Julia Daly by telephone at (800) 781-4443 or via e-mail at jdaly@usapple.org. ■

Hill Voices Support for Antidumping Case

Industry representatives including TreeTop Inc.'s Ray Dilschneider (center) and Tom Hurson (right) met recently with members of Congress including Sen. Patty Murray (left, D-Wash.) to seek their support of the industry's antidumping case against below-cost producers of apple juice concentrate from China. See story, page 3.



2002 Disaster Aid Sought

AMLAP II Closes, AMLAP III Opens

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) took action recently on two apple market loss assistance programs, as the industry also awaits Congress' consideration of a disaster aid package for 2001 and 2002 crop losses.

USDA closed the sign-up period for its \$75 million market loss assistance program, dubbed AMLAP II, on Sept. 26. AMLAP II, approved as part of the fiscal 2002 agriculture appropriations bill, provides assistance to apple growers suffering market losses to their 2000 crop.

According to USDA, AMLAP II payments are expected to be distributed in this month.

Days later, the agency opened

the sign-up period for its \$94 million AMLAP III on Oct. 1. Applications for AMLAP III, which provides additional assistance for market losses to the 2000 crop, are due by Nov. 8. AMLAP III was passed as part of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Growers are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency office immediately to sign up for AMLAP III benefits. Growers who signed up for the AMLAP II will not be automatically considered for AMLAP III aid.

Disaster Aid Being Debated

Meanwhile, the Senate approved a disaster assistance measure Sept. 10 intended to deliver

\$5.9 billion in disaster assistance to farmers, including apple growers. The measure, which was attached to the fiscal 2002 Interior appropriations bill, provides disaster assistance for both 2001 and 2002 crop losses. It passed by a vote of 79 to 16.

USApple, which had been lobbying influential members of Congress in recent weeks to gain disaster assistance for apple growers, applauded the Senate's move. Several major U.S. apple-growing areas suffered approximately \$152 million in weather related losses, including areas in New York, New England, Idaho, Utah, Michigan and Washington state.

Under the Senate measure, apple growers and other farmers would be eligible to participate if their losses exceed 35 percent of an average crop, and they would receive 60 percent of the market value of losses exceeding the first 35 percent. Payments are limited to \$80,000 per person, and no one with an annual gross income of \$2.5 million or more in the previous tax year is eligible.

It remains to be seen whether a disaster assistance measure will gain approval before the end of this congressional session, which will occur when Congress reconvenes after the November elections.

The House of Representative's Interior appropriations bill, approved by that chamber July 17, did not include a disaster assistance package. And because of other priorities, and White House opposition to the measure's emergency disaster designation, the House has been reluctant to take up the disaster assistance issue. An option for passage may be in a year-end omnibus appropriations bill.

For more information, contact USApple Vice President Nancy Foster by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via e-mail at nfoster@usapple.org. ■

Industry Works to Reopen Western Ports

PORTS (from page 1)

exports could resume.

President Bush intervened Oct. 8, pledging his support in keeping U.S. exports moving.

The apple industry felt the port lockout's effects immediately. Approximately 70 percent of U.S. apple exports ship through West Coast ports, affecting apple shipments from California and Washington state.

The California Apple Commission reported Oct. 2 that 50 loads of Fujis, valued at \$1.6 million had been delayed on California docks.

USApple is coordinating its efforts on this issue with the California Apple Commission, and in Washington state with organizations including with the Washington Apple Commission, Northwest Horticultural Council and other apple interests. These

organizations also communicated with the administration on the severity of the situation.

USApple staff is continuing to monitor the situation, to evaluate the effects of backlogs and to help ensure the ports remain open as talks continue.

"In the short term, every container of apples on those docks is an export sale that's lost forever," said USApple Vice President Jim Cranney.

"If this drags on for long and we have to market apples earmarked for export here at home, the ripple effect could put downward pressure on domestic prices," Cranney said.

For more information, contact USApple's Foster by telephone at (800) 781-4443 or via e-mail at nfoster@usapple.org. ■

Commerce Considers Dumping Case Changes

The U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) is revisiting elements of its decision in the U.S. apple industry's antidumping case against below-cost producers of concentrate from China, with rulings pending that may determine the case's future.

As a result of an appeal brought in June 2002 by Chinese exporters, DOC was directed by the U.S. Court of International Trade to reconsider aspects of its June 2000 antidumping decision that had resulted in tariffs from 9 percent to 52 percent on 11 Chinese exporters. DOC is currently reconsidering a number of issues regarding its decision, including its choice of market-economy surrogate country used to estimate Chinese production costs.

Earlier this month, representatives of the USApple-administered Coalition for Fair Apple-Juice Concentrate Trade (FACT) visited with mem-

bers of both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives to request their support of the industry's antidumping case. Representatives included Tree Top Inc.'s Ray Dilschneider and Tom Hurson, and USApple President Nancy Foster and Vice President Jim Cranney.

At the industry's request, members of both the Senate and the House wrote to Commerce Secretary Donald Evans, urging his department's support for antidumping duties that are "critical to restoring a competitive U.S. juice apple market." Twenty-one senators and 32 representatives signed onto letters from both chambers to Evans.

For more information, contact USApple Vice President Jim Cranney by telephone at (800) 781-4443, or via e-mail at jcranney@usapple.org. ■



Right: Tree Top's Dilschneider and Hurson meet with Rep. George Nethercutt (R-Wash.).

Below (L to R): Dilschneider, USApple's Jim Cranney, Hurson and USApple's Nancy Foster meet with Sen. Maria Cantwell (center, D-Wash.).



Mexican Trade Dispute Aid Sought

USApple is urging members of Congress to intervene in a trade dispute with Mexico that is threatening shipments to the U.S. apple industry's largest export market.

At the association's request, members of the U.S. Senate wrote Mexican Ambassador to the United States Juan Jose Bremer Martino, urging the ambassador to work with his government and the U.S. government to resolve the dispute quickly.

Twelve senators signed the letter: Patty Murray (D-Wash.), whose office organized the letter-writing campaign; Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.); Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.); George Allen (R-Va.); Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.); John Warner (R-Va.); Carl Levin (D-Mich.); Mike Crapo (R-Idaho); Larry Craig (R-Idaho); Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.); Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.); and Gordon Smith (R-Ore.).

A similar letter from the House of Representatives is now being organized. USApple members are urged to immediately contact their representatives, to ask them to add their signatures to the letter being organized by Rep. Doc Hasting's (R-Wash.) office.

The Mexican government alleged in 1997 that Washington state shippers were dumping apples in the Mexican market, and threatened to bring an antidumping suit against the Washington apple industry. Negotiations between the Washington industry and the Mexican industry led to an antidumping suspension agreement in 1998, which established a minimum price for all Red and Golden Delicious exports to Mexico.

However, that suspension agreement was terminated this August, when the Mexican govern-

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2002 Contest Is Underway

The 2002 National Apple Month retail display promotion is now in full swing! Through the end of November, retailers coast to coast will be building bigger, more appealing apple displays, in hopes of winning national honors and cash prizes in the National Apple Month display contest.

More than 20,000 supermarkets received promotional materials this year. A full-page advertisement announcing the upcoming display contest in *Produce Business*

magazine in August also drew retailers to the promotion.

This year's National Apple Month promotion has received plenty of attention from the trade press in recent weeks. *The Packer* profiled this year's program in its July 29 edition. *Produce Business* highlighted the National Apple Month promotion in an article on fall merchandising in the September

issue, while *The Produce News* spotlighted the promotion in its Sept. 9 edition.

Many of the country's top retail chains have reported they plan to support National Apple Month this year, including WalMart Super Centers, SuperValu, Safeway, Dominick's, Albertson's and Wegmans. Contest entries are due in December.

The 2002 National Apple Month promotion is sponsored by Litehouse Dressings,

Dips and Sauces, the National Peanut Board, and the Produce for Better Health Foundation and its 5 A Day program.

It's not too late to participate in this year's program! For more information, contact National Apple Month Program Director Kay Swartz Rentzel by telephone at (717) 432-0090, or via e-mail at ksrentzel@aol.com. ■



NATIONAL APPLE
MONTH

Mexican Trade Aid Sought

MEXICO (from page 3)

ment imposed a 46.58 percent antidumping duty on shipments of those varieties, creating the current crisis.

The tariff is expected to effectively shut U.S. Red Delicious and Golden Delicious apples out of the Mexican market, and will create significant pressure on the U.S. domestic market if apples that are traditionally exported to Mexico must be marketed here.

Michigan and Virginia were recently approved to ship 2002-crop apples to Mexico, provided shippers could meet Mexico's phytosanitary regulations.

For more information, contact USApple President Nancy Foster by telephone at (800) 781-4443 or via e-mail at nfoster@usapple.org. ■

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