

# EXACT NEWS

## EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER

MARCH 15, 2009 - VOLUME 1, No. 4



**Trade Commissioner**  
Ilisoni Vuidreketi



**Trade Officer**  
Colin King

We will be entering the second quarter of 2009 and with much depressing economic news surrounding us, it is apparent that the import export industry has also been affected by the slowdown in business activity. However, it is exactly during these times, that we intend to be more pro-active and provide the much-needed assistance to our Fiji exporters.

Many of you have been in contact with us with your individual export-related issues and I encourage you to continue to reach out to us. As far as it is practical, we will assist in expanding the growing role of Fiji exports with a keen eye on regulatory compliance balanced with marketing tips and ideas.

### **Country of Origin Labeling Rule to Take Effect March 16**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that its January 15 final rule on mandatory country of origin labeling will go into effect as scheduled March 16. Under the COOL (Country of Origin Labeling) regulation, muscle cuts and ground beef, pork, lamb, goat, chicken, wild and farm-raised fish and shellfish, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, nuts, ginseng and kava must be labeled at retail to indicate their country of origin.

- processors should include information about what production steps occurred in each country when multiple countries appear on the label (e.g., "Born in Country X and Raised and Slaughtered in Country Y")
- COOL labeling is appropriate even if products are subject to curing, smoking, broiling, grilling or steaming
- the final rule allows labels for ground meat to bear the name of a country even if product from that country was not in the processor's inventory for up to 60 days, but this time allowance should be reduced to 10 days

For more information, please see: <http://www.countryoforiginlabel.org/>

### **USDA Meeting on Food Labeling**

The Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration are sponsoring a public meeting April 7 in Washington, D.C., to provide information and receive public comments on agenda items and draft U.S. positions that will be discussed at the 37th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labeling, which will be held in Calgary, Canada, May 4-8. This committee drafts provisions on labeling applicable to all foods and besides their other responsibilities, studies problems associated with the advertisement of food with particular reference to claims and misleading descriptions.

The following items on the agenda for the 37th Session of the CCFL will be discussed during the public meeting:

- consideration of labeling provisions in draft Codex standards
- implementation of the World Health Organization Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
- guidelines for the production, processing, labeling and marketing of organically produced foods
- labeling of foods and food ingredients obtained through certain techniques of genetic modification and genetic engineering

We encourage those of you that export food products to the U.S. to pass this information to your trade partners in the U.S. and in Fiji to consider participating in the meeting to raise any concerns you may have. Alternatively, your comments could be submitted electronically to the following e-mail address: [ccfl@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:ccfl@fda.hhs.gov).

For further information about this public meeting, contact:  
Paulo Almeida, U.S. Codex Office, Food Safety and Inspection Service  
Room 4861, South Building  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250  
Phone (202) 205-7760  
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<http://www.codexalimentarius.net/current.asp>.

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*EXACT News* is a monthly journal published by the Fiji Trade Commission, Los Angeles, providing regulatory and market information to the Fiji-U.S. import export trade community.

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### Trade and Supply Chain Security

As many of you are already aware, the U.S. has initiated several security-related programs and U.S. Customs are the prime enforcers of these. It is important here to reiterate that all trade entities in Fiji should pay special attention while getting ready to ship your products by air or by sea and while preparing international trade documents. Many of these functions are automated and you will find that data integrity is of prime importance. Information relating to your shipments should be collected way ahead of shipment date. We understand that the requirements will be different for exporters, manufacturers, customs brokers, freight forwarders, shipping companies and airlines. Please feel free to contact us with any special questions you may have regarding:

C-TPAT - Customs and Trade Partnership Against Terrorism

CSI – Container Security Initiative

ISF - Importer Security Filing

AMS – Automated Manifest System

In addition to this we shall also try to assist you with other import related regulations such as Product Classification, Invoice Valuation, Country of Origin Rules, GSP, and FDA and so on.

Since Fiji is a member of several international trade bodies and a contracting party to many treaties such as WTO, WCO, GATT, CITES and OCO, we remain secure in the knowledge that good trade practices lead to positive results and higher revenues. Fiji being an early member of the WTO, and hosting the DOHA negotiations in Nadi in August '08, has always been in favor of the promotion, accountability, consistency, transparency and simplification of the processes of trade. Being a small country, we nevertheless are able to operate on a level playing field because of these international negotiations that eventually help our sectors of fisheries, agriculture, farming, lumber and textiles.

### German National Arrested for Smuggling Coral into U.S.

A German national, was charged with smuggling protected coral into Portland, OR and for violating the Lacey Act and the Endangered Species Act.

The exporter tried to ship a container loaded with fragments of endangered coral from reefs off the Philippine coast to Portland. After this initial shipment, agents subsequently seized two full containers of endangered coral shipped to a customer in Portland. These two shipments made up a total of over 40 tons of coral. Due to the threat of extinction, stony corals, such as those seized in this case are protected by international law. Moreover, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) bars importation of the coral.

The U.S.'s environmental enforcement efforts cover both domestic and international activities in protecting coral reefs and preventing their further decline. This is of paramount importance in preserving the world's marine environment and fisheries.

As we had mentioned in our earlier newsletter, the Lacey Act prohibits import, export, transportation, sale, receipt, acquisition or purchase of fish, wildlife, or plants. You may read the full text of the case at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2009/February/09-enrd-125.html>.

### Fiji-USA Trade, January 2009

Exports to the US in January totaled US\$10.14 million, an increase of 39 percent compared to January 2008. The main increases were Tuna loins, up by 184 percent to US\$4.26 million, and mineral water, increased 6 percent to US\$3.34 million. Decreases were recorded for Fish (-7 percent) to US\$545,000; Timber/mahogany (-56 percent) to US\$168,000; Taro, cassava and agro produce (-22 percent) to US\$108,700.

Fiji's imports from the US totaled US\$2.32 million, which was approximately same as that of January 2008. The main import items were machinery, electrical equipment processed food items and pharmaceutical products.

More next month and looking forward to your feedback as usual!

Sincerely,  
Trade Commissioner



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