

NHC NEWS

A Monthly Bulletin of the Northwest Horticultural Council

China

Trading relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States were the subject of high level meetings between the two governments last month in Washington, D.C. A formerly low profile group -- the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade -- met for two days in a meeting co-chaired on the American side by Secretary Evans of Commerce and USTR Ambassador Zoellick. With agricultural issues also on the table, Secretary Veneman of USDA also joined the discussions.

With indications that China had requested that access for apples and pears be added to the meeting's agenda, the Northwest Horticultural Council along with its colleague organizations, the U.S. Apple Association and the Tree Fruit Technical Advisory Council (TreeTAC), became extremely interested and devoted much time in April to this issue. The basic concern was that political leaders might trade one technical trade problem for another and that apples and pears might be sacrificed in order to ensure access to Mainland China's market for other agricultural exports from the United States.

To give this issue some context, one should be aware that U.S. wheat sales to China are now valued at almost \$500 million per year compared to \$17 million in sales in 2001. China is the single most important cotton market for the U.S., buying 23 percent of all U.S. cotton exports in 2003. \$2.9 billion in soybeans went to China last year, representing 36 percent of America's exports of that product. Technical issues involving biotechnology and diseases, such as BSE with meat, are current problems in the bilateral relationship.

At the conclusion of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade meeting in Washington, D.C., Secretary Veneman on April 22 agreed with China's Minister for the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine to establish a consultative mechanism on food safety in animal and plant health issues. The goal is to strengthened technical cooperation and exchanges in the fields of food safety and animal and plant health. Secretary Veneman stated that "as our agricultural trade continues to grow and thrive, we must make every effort to quickly identify and address differences to maintain trade."

The NHC, working primarily through TreeTAC, will closely follow both the efforts of the new "consultative mechanism" between China and USDA while working to ensure that the pests and disease risks associated with the possible importation of apples and pears from the People's Republic of China are handled in a deliberate and scientific manner by U.S. officials, without regard to other unrelated technical trade issues between the two countries.



TASC Grant

In late April, the NHC utilized the USDA FAS Quick Response Process to obtain a Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops program grant in the amount of \$9,400. This federal money will help send an NHC representative (Jim Archer of the Northwest Fruit Exporters) to Geneva, Switzerland for the May 10-14 meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) 50th Session of the Specialized Section on the Standardization of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. The main agenda item in Geneva is

apple uniformity and maturity standards. Mr. Archer will accompany USDA AMS International Standards Coordinator Dorian LaFond who is the official U.S. representative to this UNECE process.

The NHC earlier had been requested by our government to send an industry expert to attend this important session involving international standards for fresh apples.

Travel

May 20 – NHC’s Science Advisory Committee meeting, Yakima, Washington.

May 25 – NHC’s Foreign Trade Committee meeting, Yakima, Washington.

Chris Schlect

May 4 – Washington Apple Education Foundation board meeting, Wenatchee, Washington.

May 11 – Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar on Exempt Organizations and Charitable Activities in Washington, Seattle, Washington.

Mark Powers

May 4-8 – Congressional and USDA office visits and Washington State Society’s annual Potlatch dinner, Washington, D.C.

May 11 – Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service’s marketing committee, Yakima, Washington.

In March, his field hands began to plow the fields and spread them with manure, to plant red clover, and to begin to bottle cider, a favorite drink, which they had laid up in large wooden casks the previous fall. In April and May, Jefferson kept an anxious eye on his apple and peach orchards, lest the early frost deprive him of a desirable harvest.

R. B. Bernstein
Thomas Jefferson

The Northwest Horticultural Council represents the deciduous tree fruit industry of Idaho, Oregon and Washington on national and international policy matters of interest to growers and shippers. Its members are:

- *Fruit Growers League*
- *Hood River Grower-Shipper Assn.*
- *Idaho Apple Commission*
- *Oregon Bartlett Pear Commission*
- *Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*
- *Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service*
- *Washington Apple Commission*
- *Washington State Fruit Commission*
- *Wenatchee Valley Traffic Assn.*
- *Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Assn.*

The NHC also advises the Winter Pear Control Committee (Portland) on certain issues related to food safety, crises control and international trade.



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