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CBP Increasing Use of Manifest Holds for Late ISFs

CBP is telling the trade community it will put manifest holds on any cargo at the Port of Los Angeles/Long Beach that does not have an Importer Security Filing (ISF) 48 hours before arrival. The new "enforcement posture" was effective Jan. 20, CBP told the Los Angeles Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association. The ISF program requires advance cargo information submission to CBP within 24 hours before the cargo is loaded onto an ocean vessel going to the U.S.

According to CBP, once an ISF is filed on cargo held due to a missing ISF, it will review the hold 72 hours or more after vessel arrival to see if they match. After the ISF is matched to the manifest, CBP will do its review for possible exam to see if the ISF information submitted warrants additional enforcement actions, including Non-Intrusive Inspection (NII) and/or a warehouse examination, it said. The agency will continue to follow these procedures to allow for the move of containers with consolidated cargo on ISF hold on any particular house bill of lading to its designated Container Freight Station (CFS) once a hold on the offending house bill(s) of lading has been coordinated with the CFS, said CBP.

FDA Proposes New Requirements for Food Shippers

The Food and Drug Administration released its [proposed regulations](#) on the transportation of food under the Food Safety Modernization Act. The "sanitary transportation" proposal would set food safety requirements for shippers, carriers, and receivers of food by truck or rail in the United States. It would also apply to Canadian and Mexican shipments of food to the U.S. by road and rail, as well as international shippers of food to the U.S. by air and ocean carrier if the shipper arranges for the container to be transferred intact to a truck or railcar.

The proposed rule would establish [criteria](#) for sanitary transportation practices, such as properly refrigerating food, adequately cleaning vehicles between loads, and properly protecting food during transportation, it said. It would also set recordkeeping and training requirements, and provide for waivers from the rule's requirements.

AMS Sets \$0.35/Ton Fee on Paper Imports

The Agricultural Marketing Service will, beginning March 1, assess a fee of \$0.35 per ton on imported and domestic paper and paper-based packaging, under a [final rule](#) to establish a marketing order. AMS will use the fees to educate consumers and expand markets, it said. The paper industry approved the new fees in a referendum held in late October and early November. The program will cover four types of paper and paper-based packaging: printing and writing (used to make products for printing, writing and other communication purposes); kraft packaging paper (used for products like grocery bags and sacks); containerboard (used to make corrugated boxes, shipping containers and related products); and paperboard (used for food and beverage packaging, tubes and other products).

China Announces Changes to Valuation Regs, Tariffs

The China General Administration of Customs recently announced major changes to its valuation regulations that will take effect Feb. 1, according to reports from [Ernst & Young](#) and [Baker & McKenzie](#). The update is the first major overhaul of China's valuation procedures since 2006, said Ernst & Young. China Customs also separately announced changes to tariff levels for 2014 that include reduction in tariff rates on more than 760 products such as piston aircraft engines and cell phone and tablet computer cameras, [said Chinese government-sponsored website E-to-China.com](#). The tariff changes took effect Jan. 1.

DHS Issues Agenda, Plans ISF Final Rule for 2014

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published its fall 2013 regulatory agenda for CBP, which lists no new trade-related rulemakings. A Jan. 7 [Federal Register notice](#) mentions two CBP agenda items "likely to have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities." Those items are final rules on Importer Security Filing (ISF) and a Guam visa waiver program. The ISF proposed rule is meant to increase the accuracy and reliability of the advance information submitted as part of ISF, said CBP. Both were listed as agenda items in last year's edition. The ISF program is currently operating under an interim final rule.

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Import/Export Regulatory Plans Outlined by FDA, USDA, EPA

Several agencies with a hand in import/export regulation issued their plans for new regulations in the Fall 2013 [Unified Agenda](#). The Food and Drug Administration is planning to issue proposed and final rules on food and drug facility registrations and sanitary transport of food in 2014. The Agriculture Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is set to propose a fee hike for agricultural quarantine and inspection services at ports of entry. The Environmental Protection Agency will propose changes to its regulations on import and export of hazardous materials, and will finalize regulations on composite wood formaldehyde emissions and exports of cathode ray tubes.

USTR Requests Comments on US AD Duties on Chinese Products

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative is [requesting comments](#) by Feb. 14 on U.S. antidumping duties on a host of Chinese products. China [initiated](#) World Trade Organization consultations in the dispute on Dec. 3, 2013. The products include coated paper suitable for high-quality print graphics using sheet-fed presses, oil country tubular goods, high pressure steel cylinders, polyethylene terephthalate film, sheet, and strip, aluminum extrusions, frozen and canned warmwater shrimp, new pneumatic off-the-road tires, crystalline silicon photovoltaic cells, whether or not assembled into modules, diamond sawblades and parts thereof, multilayered wood flooring, narrow woven ribbons with woven selvedge, polyethylene retail carrier bags, and wooden bedroom furniture.

CBP Highlights Update to 2014 HTS Statistical Note

CBP reminded importers of a change to General Statistical Note 3(c) within the 2014 Harmonized Tariff Schedule in a [CSMS message](#). GSN 3(c) was updated in the 2014 HTS to indicate that goods imported under the Civil Aircraft Agreement, Pharmaceutical Agreement and Intermediate Chemicals for Dyes Agreement (SPI "C," "K," and "L," respectively) that are the product of a country with which the U.S. has a free trade agreement is exempt from merchandise processing fee, can be imported free of MPF using SPI C#, K#, and L#, even if the FTA's more stringent origin rules and imported directly rules are not met, the agency said. This applies to all FTAs that provide the MPF exemption (NAFTA, Chile, Singapore, Australia, Israel, Bahrain, Oman, CAFTA, Peru, Korea, Colombia and Panama), it said.

World Economic Forum Bloc Announces Initiative to Eliminate Environmental Goods Tariffs

The U.S., along with 13 other nations and the European Union (EU), announced on Jan. 24 an initiative that targets comprehensive elimination of tariffs on environmental "green" goods, according to a joint statement released during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation [pledged in 2012](#) to reduce to 5 percent or less tariffs on 54 environmental products. The decision reached at Davos aims to build off that list to reach the broader World Trade Organization (WTO) community, said the joint statement.

Importers Push for Immediate, Retroactive GSP Renewal

The absence of General System of Preferences (GSP) tariff cuts has continued to take a significant toll on the revenues of U.S. importers across the commercial spectrum since the program's July 2013 expiration, said 463 companies in a Jan. 28 [letter addressed to House lawmakers](#) and published by Renew GSP Today. "Over the past five and a half months, American companies like ours -- and our members -- have paid nearly \$2 million per day in higher taxes while waiting for Congress to renew the program," said the letter. "Most importantly, we use the GSP program to lower costs and remain competitive, and therefore need Congress to pass a retroactive renewal bill immediately."

Cold Temperatures, Winter Weather Causing Major Cargo Delays in Chicago, Northern States

The recent cold snap across much of the U.S. is causing delays to cargo operations, according to alerts issued by several major railroads. Extremely cold temperatures have been interfering with the operation of equipment in Canada and the Northern U.S., and safety concerns have prevented railroad workers from clearing snow and ice off tracks, said an [alert from BNSF](#). Chicago has been particularly affected, with intermodal operations in that region facing major delays, according to [Union Pacific](#).

CBP Updates Statistics on C-TPAT

CBP completed 2,111 total Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT) validations, including 569 initial validations and 1,542 revalidations for 2013 as of Jan. 2, it said in an [update on program statistics](#). Validations continue to be down compared to previous years. There has also been a total of 1,768 suspensions and 1,280 C-TPAT removals.

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