

BRIEFINGS

PHARMACEUTICAL APPENDIX

Pharmaceutical clients are reminded that the deadline for submitting new products for inclusion in the Pharmaceutical Appendix has been extended at least through the end of January. Prospects for a quick update to the Appendix are uncertain.

ENTRY REVISION

Customs has posted to its Electronic Bulletin Board (CEBB) a notice outlining a new proposal for improving the import entry process to make it more efficient, business-realistic, and less burdensome for all parties involved. Customs is proposing; 4 track entry process, "credit card" duty payment system, replacement of Supplemental Information Letters (SIL), and elimination of the liquidation process. This is a restatement of concepts discussed for years. Expect no immediate action. [CEBB ENTRY.EXE \(Dec. 14, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

WTO

The President's report on the cost and benefits of U.S. participation in the WTO is due on March 1, 2000. After this report is issued to Congress, any Senator or Representative may introduce a joint resolution to withdraw the U.S. from the WTO. Congress has a 90-day window after receiving the report to act on any proposed joint resolution.

IMPORT CONFIDENTIALITY

Clients are reminded that vessel manifest data is publicly accessible unless confidentiality is asserted. Under [19 CFR 103.31](#), importers and consignees may request a certification for confidential treatment for vessel manifest information on the CF1302 form. The request must be made every two years at least 60 days before expiration. Access "What's New" on our website.

FQA

The National Institute of Standards has issued proposed regulations to implement the significantly revised Fastener Quality Act that was signed into law in June 1999. The comment period has been extended to January 28, 2000. [64 Fed. Reg. 69969 \(Dec. 15, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

ITA

Effective January 1, 2000, the final stage of [duty eliminations](#) under the WTO's Information Technology Agreement (ITA) has been implemented by the U.S. Access "What's New" on our website.

CUSTOMS VALUE

Customs issued in December, 1999, a revised [Informed Compliance publication](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

EU-MEXICO FTA

- A free trade agreement between Mexico and the European Union has been reached and is expected to take effect by July if approved by EU member states and the Mexican Senate. This will be a major strategic blow to the U.S. and Canada. It is reported that 47% of EU industrial products would be free of Mexican tariffs when the agreement becomes effective; 60% by 2005. Nearly 82% of Mexican exports to the EU will receive immediate duty-free status. The remaining exports will be duty free by 2003.
- The agreement is favorable to the automobile production industry. Since November, six automakers have announced investments in Mexico that will amount to \$2.1 billion. Manufacturers in Mexico will be able to qualify under the rules of origin for Europe and NAFTA countries simultaneously.
- Labor and environment provisions are not part of the trade agreement although the parties have pledged to cooperate.
- A public version of the agreement is due out in March.

RE-EXPORTS

The Bureau of Export Administration (BXA) has [posted](#) guidance for exporters on re-exports on its Web page. Access "What's New" on our website.

HTS CHANGES

- The ITC has instituted an [investigation](#) on proposed modifications to the HTS. The modifications would conform the HTSUS with changes to the HTS nomenclature that have been adopted by the World Customs Organization for institution in January 2002. Access "What's New" on our website.
- The 484 Committee has made statistical changes to the 2000 HTSUSA. Items subject to change include Patagonian toothfish, mushrooms, crabs, coke, fiberboard, warp knit elastic fabric, ferrochromium, and circuit boards. Changes were also made to Chapter 61, Statistical Note 6, Chapter 62, Statistical Note 4, and the Outward Processing Program under 9802.0080. [CEBB T-TARF7.TXT \(Dec. 20, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

AUTO PACT

The WTO has ruled the Canada-U.S. Auto Pact violates WTO rules. The Auto Pact allowed duty-free access to Canada of certain cars made by the Big 3 U.S. automakers.

USTR

- Public comments are requested to identify countries that deny adequate and effective protection of intellectual property rights, or those that deny equitable market access to US persons who rely on IP protection. Comments must be received by noon on Feb. 8. [65 Fed. Reg. 1424 \(1/10/00\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.
- Public comments are requested regarding the operation and effectiveness of various telecommunications trade agreements. Comments are due by noon on Feb. 1. [65 Fed. Reg. 1220 \(1/7/00\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

GSP RENEWAL

- Effective December 17, 1999, GSP was renewed retroactively until September 30, 2001. Retroactive renewal assures importers that commodities that were entered or liquidated during the lapse period of July 1, 1999 - December 17, 1999 are eligible for liquidation at a duty rate of free.
- Customs restored its Special Program Indicator (SPI) for entry summaries on Dec. 17. As of Jan. 7, Customs will process duty refunds on entries filed through ABI that used SPI "A" in the period GSP was lapsed. Interest will be paid on refunds from the date the duties were deposited. Interest on corporate refunds will be 7% and non-corporate refunds will be 8%. (P.L.) 106-170. [CEBB T-GSP22.TXT \(Dec. 22, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

APHIS

APHIS has finalized the document that is to accompany shipments to China that use SWPM. The form and instructions for filing the form can be found at www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/chinaswp/hotbutton. APHIS has requested comments from the public regarding the Chinese regulations. Comments are due February 25. [64 Fed. Reg. 72262 \(Dec. 27, 1999\)](#).

CUSTOMS INFORMATION

Customs has made available on its website two important lists of information; a [list](#) of Customs Brokers by Port; and a [list](#) of ABI participants and software vendors. Access "What's New" on our website.

SCHEDULE B

The year 2000 [Schedule B](#) Export Codes is available at the Census Website. Access "What's New" on our website.

ENCRYPTION RULES

An interim final rule effective Jan. 14, 2000 amends the Export Administration Regulations which allows the export and reexport of encryption commodity and software. Restrictions on terrorist supporting countries still apply. Comments are due May 15, 2000. [65 Fed. Reg. 2491 \(Jan. 14, 2000\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

WEAPONS CONVENTION

The Bureau of Export Administration (BXA) has issued an interim rule which amends BXA Regulations, effective December 30, 1999, which implements the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Written comments regarding the interim rule are due by January 31, 2000. [64 Fed. Reg. 73744 \(Dec. 30, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

RECONCILIATION

The Automated Commercial System (ACS) Reconciliation Prototype test was modified effective December 29, 1999 to include making the filing of NAFTA Reconciliations optional and announcing a liquidated damages process for late-filed and non-filed Reconciliations. [64 Fed. Reg. 73121 \(Dec. 29, 1999\)](#). Access "What's New" on our website.

EPA/TSCA

EPA has [posted](#) to its website a guidance document on TSCA material imports. Access "What's New" on our website.

FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES BOARD ACTIVITY AS OF 1/15/00		
	APPROVED	PENDING
ZONES	232	7
SUBZONES	417	36
MISCELLANEOUS		23
AVERAGE PROCESSING TIME (MONTHS)		
ZONES	14	
SUBZONES	13	