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FAS Bucharest helps clearing U.S. almond shipment

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Other

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Report Highlights:

In the spring of 2014, FAS Bucharest worked jointly with the California Almond Board to clarify with Romanian Food Safety authorities the rules governing U.S. almond imports into the European Union. As a result of this collaboration, an almond shipment smoothly passed the import process.

General Information:

In the spring of 2014 the California Almond Board contacted FAS Bucharest concerning a shipment of almonds threatened to be detained at the Romanian border due to improper documentation.

FAS Bucharest contacted the U.S. exporter's Romanian partner in an effort to learn more details about the status of the import. According to the importer, there were two reasons why the shipment was held by the Romanian authorities: the absence of a health certificate issued by USDA/APHIS per the provisions of the EU regulation 1152/2009 November 2009 (VASP certificate being considered insufficient) and the absence of an additional statement on the VASP certificate.

Based on this information, FAS Bucharest wrote a letter to the headquarter of the Food Safety Authority and its border office providing the EU provisions regulating U.S. almond exports, including the *Guidance document for competent authorities for the control of compliance with EU legislation on aflatoxins* issued by the EU Commission. According to these provisions, U.S. almonds are to be imported into the EU solely based on the VASP certificate.

As a result of this communication, the Food Safety Border office agreed to base their verification process in the future on these import requirements for U.S. almond shipments and to take into account the provisions of the guidance document, asking for no additional statement on the certificate.

Following the FAS Bucharest action in collaboration with the California Almond Board, the risk of detaining the almond shipment was eliminated, inducing confidence that verification process on almond shipments will continue smoothly.