

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 5/31/2011

GAIN Report Number: SP1107

Spain

Post: Madrid

Release of Detained Almond Shipments in Spain

Report Categories:

Export Accomplishments - Other

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Report Highlights:

This report describes incidents which occurred during the first quarter of 2011 where FAS Madrid facilitated the release of three US almond shipments detained at Spanish customs. FAS Madrid support prevented direct losses to U.S. firms of over \$240,000.

General Information:

Spain is highly dependent on imports of almonds originating in the United States and is the main European importer of California almonds. Despite the excellent work of the Almond Board of California and the exporters, due to the high volume of trade and the complexity of the import requirements, FAS Madrid is frequently contacted to assist in securing the release of detained shipments of this product.

Release of Detained Almond Shipment

In January 2011, the Foreign Agricultural Service office (FAS) in Madrid was informed that the Health Authorities had detained a container of California almonds in a Southern port of Spain. The load of almonds was detained because the original phytosanitary certificate (PC) was lost. The authorities indicated that without the original certificate or a certified copy (APHIS will not certify a copy), the load had to be destroyed. FAS, with the assistance of the importer, provided the health authorities with a link where the electronic copy of the PC could be accessed. Inspectors in Spain wouldn't normally accept this type of documents, but they did accept the electronic copy of the certificate and the almonds were immediately released. A container of US almonds represents an estimated value of \$80,000.

Release of Detained Almond Shipment

In January 2011, FAS Madrid was contacted by a California exporter because one of his containers of almonds was stuck at a Spanish port for more than a month waiting for aflatoxin results. FAS Madrid immediately contacted the Ministry of Health (MOH) central authorities in Madrid, claiming that the period was too long, requesting them to find out if there was a problem and how it could be solved. MOH contacted their inspectors in Melilla, who were not aware of such delay. FAS Madrid intervention speeded up the process and resulted in lower demurrage costs and the container being released (the results of the tests were negative). A container of US almonds represents an estimated value of \$80,000.

Release of Detained Almond Shipment

In April 2011, FAS Madrid was contacted by the MOH central authorities in Madrid. A container of US almonds was arriving in Spain in two days. The mistake was detected in the pre-notification document, prior to the arrival of the vessel to the port. The problem was that the address of approved laboratory in the VASP certificate had changed, and was not the same as the address on the official list of approved laboratories. FAS Madrid contacted the Almond Board of California to find out what the problem was. The company had recently moved and they had not been able to change the address in the list. The MOH was happy with the explanation and did not request more information and the container was dispatched at its arrival without any further incidents. A container of US almonds represents an estimated value of \$80,000.