

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary - Public

Date: 5/3/2019

GAIN Report Number: FR1916

France

Post: Paris

France continues ban on U.S. cherries over dimethoate use

Report Categories:

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Stone Fruit

SP2 - Prevent or Resolve Barriers to Trade that Hinder U.S. Food and Agricultural Exports

Approved By:

Kate Snipes

Prepared By:

Xavier Audran

Report Highlights:

On April 18, France published its fourth emergency decree banning fresh cherry imports from countries where the use of the chemical dimethoate is permitted in cherry production. As a result, the United States cannot export fresh cherries to France. French cherry production continues to fall because of the government's ban on dimethoate use. Fruit importers and traders fear that France may implement similar domestic use and import bans for other EU-approved pesticides as this would further disrupt the free movement of EU and third-country fruits and vegetables into France.

General Information:

On April 3, France requested that the European Commission take urgent measures to ban the use of dimethoate on cherry trees and ban fresh cherries treated with the product throughout the European Union. On April 18, France reinstated the ban on fresh cherry imports from countries where use of chemical product dimethoate is permitted in cherry production. The ban will continue until April 17, 2020. This reinstates the safeguard measure of [2018](#), [2017](#) and [2016](#). The countries most impacted are Austria, Croatia, Romania, Czech Republic, Canada and the United States. Organic and frozen cherries are not impacted by this ban.

France justifies this exception to the EU regulation allowing its use by implementing a safeguard measure as allowed for in Article 54 of [EU Regulation 178/2002](#). France's decision followed the 2016 ban of dimethoate use in domestic production based on environmental concerns. Dimethoate was used to control *Drosophila suzukii*, an Asian fruit fly which causes considerable damage in cherry orchards. France claims it is also dangerous to human health. France imports roughly one fifth of its cherry consumption, the majority coming from EU countries such as Spain and Germany that have both already banned dimethoate use.

The United States exported about \$1 million in cherries to France annually before the ban began in 2016. As France's production declines and production costs rise because France's producers no longer have access to dimethoate, French cherries continue to be scarcer and more expensive. This creates opportunities for competitors in traditional French export markets such as the United Kingdom. In 2017 the French Ministry of Agriculture instituted a €5 million (6.1 million USD) program to subsidize the income of French cherry producers impacted by *Drosophila suzukii*-related losses.

As in 2018, the 2019 ban excludes Turkey from the list of country prohibited from shipping fresh cherries to France, angering French cherry producers who claim Turkish producers use the chemical and therefore have an unfair advantage in production. Turkey was banned from the French export market in 2016 and 2017, although Turkey does not permit the use of dimethoate for cherry production. France is an important export market for Turkish cherry producers. The French Ministry of Agriculture responded that Turkey provided France with extensive documentation including thousands of residue tests demonstrating the absence of any dimethoate residue on Turkish cherries.