

inches to 1.375 inches. The size of the wire used in the production of carton-closing staples varies from 0.029 to 0.064 inch (nominal thickness) by 0.064 to 0.100 inch (nominal width).

Carton-closing staples subject to this investigation are currently classifiable under subheadings 8305.20.00.00 and 7317.00.65.60 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States ("HTSUS"). While the HTSUS subheadings and ASTM specification are provided for convenience and for customs purposes, the written description of the subject merchandise is dispositive.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

International Trade Administration

[C-549-834]

Citric Acid and Certain Citrate Salts From Thailand: Preliminary Negative Countervailing Duty Determination, Preliminary Negative Critical Circumstances Determination and Alignment of Final Determination With Final Antidumping Duty Determination

AGENCY: Enforcement and Compliance, International Trade Administration, Department of Commerce.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce (the Department) preliminarily determines that countervailable subsidies are not being provided to producers and exporters of citric acid and certain citrate salts from Thailand. The period of investigation is January 1, 2016, through December 31, 2016.

DATES: Applicable November 3, 2017.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Conniff or Jolanta Lawska, AD/CVD Operations, Office III, Enforcement and Compliance, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230; telephone 202-482-1009 or 202-482-8362, respectively.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

This preliminary determination is made in accordance with section 703(b) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (the Act). The Department published the notice of initiation of this investigation on June 30, 2017.¹ On August 15, 2017, the Department postponed the preliminary determination of this investigation and the revised deadline is now October 30, 2017.² For a complete description of the events that followed the initiation of this investigation, see the Preliminary Decision Memorandum.³ A list of topics discussed in the Preliminary Decision Memorandum is included as an Appendix to this notice. The Preliminary Decision Memorandum is a public document and is on file electronically via Enforcement and Compliance's Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Centralized Electronic Service System (ACCESS). ACCESS is available to registered users at <https://access.trade.gov>, and is available to all parties in the Central Records Unit, room B8024 of the main Department of Commerce building. In addition, a complete version of the Preliminary Decision Memorandum can be accessed directly at <http://enforcement.trade.gov/frn/>. The signed and electronic versions of the Preliminary Decision Memorandum are identical in content.

Scope of the Investigation

The merchandise covered by this investigation includes all grades and granulation sizes of citric acid, sodium

citrate, and potassium citrate in their unblended forms, whether dry or in solution, and regardless of packaging type. The scope also includes blends of citric acid, sodium citrate, and potassium citrate; as well as blends with other ingredients, such as sugar, where the unblended form(s) of citric acid, sodium citrate, and potassium citrate constitute 40 percent or more, by weight, of the blend.

The scope also includes all forms of crude calcium citrate, including dicalcium citrate monohydrate, and tricalcium citrate tetrahydrate, which are intermediate products in the production of citric acid, sodium citrate, and potassium citrate.

The scope includes the hydrous and anhydrous forms of citric acid, the dihydrate and anhydrous forms of sodium citrate, otherwise known as citric acid sodium salt, and the monohydrate and monopotassium forms of potassium citrate. Sodium citrate also includes both trisodium citrate and monosodium citrate which are also known as citric acid trisodium salt and citric acid monosodium salt, respectively.

The scope does not include calcium citrate that satisfies the standards set forth in the United States Pharmacopeia and has been mixed with a functional excipient, such as dextrose or starch, where the excipient constitutes at least 2 percent, by weight, of the product.

Citric acid and sodium citrate are classifiable under 2918.14.0000 and 2918.15.1000 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTSUS), respectively. Potassium citrate and crude calcium citrate are classifiable under 2918.15.5000 and, if included in a mixture or blend, 3824.99.9295 of the HTSUS. Blends that include citric acid, sodium citrate, and potassium citrate are classifiable under 3824.99.9295 of the HTSUS. Although the HTSUS subheadings are provided for convenience and customs purposes, the written description of the merchandise is dispositive.

Scope Comments

In accordance with the preamble to the Department's regulations,⁴ the *Initiation Notice* set aside a period for parties to raise issues regarding product coverage (*i.e.*, scope).⁵ Certain interested parties commented on the scope of this investigation as it appeared in the *Initiation Notice*.

The Department intends to issue its preliminary decision regarding

⁴ See *Antidumping Duties; Countervailing Duties*, 62 FR 27296, 27323 (May 19, 1997) (*Preamble*).

⁵ See *Initiation Notice*, 82 FR at 29836.

¹ See *Citric Acid and Certain Citrate Salts from Thailand: Initiation of Countervailing Duty Investigation*, 82 FR 29836 (June 30, 2017) (*Initiation Notice*) and accompanying Initiation Checklist.

² See *Notice of Postponement of Preliminary Determination in the Countervailing Duty Investigation*, 82 FR 38670 (August 15, 2017) (*Preliminary Postponement Notice*).

³ See Memorandum, "Decision Memorandum for the Preliminary Negative Countervailing Duty Determination, Preliminary Negative Critical Circumstances Determination and Alignment of Final Determination With Final Antidumping Duty Determination of Citric Acid and Certain Citrate Salts from Thailand," dated concurrently with, and hereby adopted by, this notice (Preliminary Decision Memorandum).

comments concerning the scope of the antidumping duty (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) investigations in the preliminary determination of the companion AD investigations.

Methodology

The Department is conducting this investigation in accordance with section 701 of the Act. For each of the subsidy programs found countervailable, the Department preliminarily determines that there is a subsidy, *i.e.*, a financial contribution by an “authority” that gives rise to a benefit to the recipient, and that the subsidy is specific.⁶

Preliminary Negative Determination of Critical Circumstances

The Department preliminarily determines that critical circumstances do not exist. For a full description of the methodology and results of the Department’s analysis, *see* the Preliminary Decision Memorandum.

Alignment

As noted in the Preliminary Decision Memorandum, in accordance with section 705(a)(1) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.210(b)(4), the Department is aligning the final CVD determination in this investigation with the final determination in the companion AD investigation of citric acid and certain citrate salts based on a request made by the petitioners.⁷ Consequently, the final CVD determination will be issued on the same date as the final AD determination, which is currently scheduled to be issued no later than March 14, 2018, unless postponed.

Preliminary Determination

For this preliminary determination, the Department calculated *de minimis* estimated countervailable subsidies for all individually examined producers/exporters of the subject merchandise. Consistent with section 703(b)(4)(A) of the Act, the Department has disregarded the *de minimis* rates. The Department preliminarily determines that the following estimated countervailable subsidy rates exist:

Company	2016 Ad Valorem rate (% de minimis)
COFCO Biochemical (Thailand) Co., Ltd. (COFCO) ...	0.18
Niran (Thailand) Co., Ltd. (Niran)	0.11
Sunshine Biotech International Co., Ltd. (Sunshine)	0.21

Consistent with section 703(d) of the Act, the Department has not calculated an estimated weighted-average subsidy rate for all other producers/exporters because it has not made an affirmative preliminary determination.

Suspension of Liquidation

Because the Department preliminarily determines that no countervailable subsidies are being provided to the production or exportation of subject merchandise, the Department will not direct U.S. Customs and Border Protection to suspend liquidation of any such entries.

Disclosure

The Department intends to disclose its calculations and analysis performed to interested parties in this preliminary determination within five days of its public announcement, or if there is no public announcement, within five days of the date of this notice in accordance with 19 CFR 351.224(b).

Verification

As provided in section 782(i)(1) of the Act, the Department intends to verify the information relied upon in making its final determination.

Public Comment

Case briefs or other written comments may be submitted to the Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance no later than seven days after the date on which the last verification report is issued in this investigation. Rebuttal briefs, limited to issues raised in case briefs, may be submitted no later than five days after the deadline date for case briefs.⁸ Pursuant to 19 CFR 351.309(c)(2) and (d)(2), parties who submit case briefs or rebuttal briefs in this investigation are encouraged to submit with each argument: (1) A statement of the issue; (2) a brief summary of the argument; and (3) a table of authorities.

Pursuant to 19 CFR 351.310(c), interested parties who wish to request a hearing, limited to issues raised in the

case and rebuttal briefs, must submit a written request to the Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance, U.S. Department of Commerce within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice. Requests should contain the party’s name, address, and telephone number, the number of participants, whether any participant is a foreign national, and a list of the issues to be discussed. If a request for a hearing is made, the Department intends to hold the hearing at the U.S. Department of Commerce, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20230, at a time and date to be determined. Parties should confirm by telephone the date, time, and location of the hearing two days before the scheduled date.

International Trade Commission Notification

In accordance with section 703(f) of the Act, we will notify the International Trade Commission (ITC) of our determination. If the final determination is affirmative, the ITC will make its final determination within 75 days after the Department’s final determination.

Notification to Interested Parties

This determination is issued and published pursuant to sections 703(f) and 777(i) of the Act and 19 CFR 351.205(c).

Dated: October 30, 2017.

Gary Taverman,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty Operations performing the non-exclusive functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for Enforcement and Compliance.

Appendix

List of Topics Discussed in the Preliminary Decision Memorandum

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⁶ See sections 771(5)(B) and (D) of the Act regarding financial contribution; section 771(5)(E) of the Act regarding benefit; and section 771(5A) of the Act regarding specificity.

⁷ The petitioners in this investigation are Archer Daniels Midland Company, Cargill, Incorporated, and Tate & Lyle Ingredients Americas LLC (collectively, the petitioners). See Letter from the petitioners, “Countervailing Duty Investigation of Citric Acid and Certain Citrate Salts from Thailand: Request for Alignment,” dated October 11, 2017.

⁸ See 19 CFR 351.309; *see also* 19 CFR 351.303 (for general filing requirements).