

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20436

**MEMORANDUM ON PROPOSED TARIFF LEGISLATION  
of the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress<sup>1</sup>**

[Date approved: July 26, 2005]<sup>2</sup>

**Bill No. and sponsor:** H.R. 1699 (Rep. Pascrell); 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.

**Proponent name, location:** Association of Food Industries, Inc.  
3301 RT 66, Ste. 205, Bldg. C  
Neptune, NJ 07753

**Other bills on product (109<sup>th</sup> Congress only):** H.R. 1701 and H.R. 1702 (Rep. Pascrell).

**Nature of bill:** Temporary duty suspension through December 31, 2008.

**Retroactive effect:** None.

**Suggested article description(s) for enactment (including appropriate HTS subheading(s)):**

Pepperoncini, prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar, not frozen (provided for in subheading 2005.90.55).

**Check one:**  Same as that in bill as introduced  
 Different from that in bill as introduced (explain differences in Technical comments section)

**Product information, including uses/applications and source(s) of imports:**

Pepperoncini peppers are among the many types of peppers classified under the botanical category *Capsicum annuum* and are known as chile peppers rather than sweet peppers. They are also known as Tuscan peppers, sweet Italian peppers, or golden Greek peppers.<sup>3</sup> These vegetables are stubby, 2 to 5 inch long, red ripening peppers with a very mild, spicy flavor. Upon ripening, the peppers develop wrinkled skin and taper to a blunt, lobed end.<sup>4</sup> They have a slightly sweet, medium to medium-hot flavor and a crunchy, salty taste.<sup>5</sup> The subject goods may be dried (by the sun or by roasting) or may be dry salted or brined. Pepperoncini are commonly used in Italian and Greek cuisine;<sup>6</sup> they are most often sold pickled to retailers, food service customers, and institutional users.

<sup>1</sup> Industry analyst preparing report: Renee Johnson (202-205-3313); Tariff Affairs contact: Jan Summers (202-205-2605).

<sup>2</sup> A copy of this memorandum is available at [www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/other/rel\\_doc/bill\\_reports/index.htm](http://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/other/rel_doc/bill_reports/index.htm).

<sup>3</sup> "Questions and Answers" available at <http://whatscookingamerica.net/Q-A/pepperoncini.htm> and retrieved on Sept. 28, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> "Pepperoncini" available at [http://www.tradewindsfruit.com/vegetables/pepperoncini\\_pepper.htm](http://www.tradewindsfruit.com/vegetables/pepperoncini_pepper.htm) and retrieved on Sept. 28, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> "Cooking Dictionary" available at <http://www.cooksrecipes.com/cooking-dictionary/P-search-results.html> and retrieved on Sept. 29, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> "A Plethora of Peppers" available at <http://www.plantations.cornell.edu/collections/botanical/peppers.cfm> and retrieved on Sept. 29, 2004.

Separate data on worldwide production and processing of pepperoncini peppers are not available. For all types of peppers, a reported 23.2 million metric tons (mt) were produced worldwide in 2003.<sup>7</sup> Given the large number of different pepper types, pepperoncini likely accounts for a very small share of this overall total. Likewise, no separate U.S. import data exist for prepared and preserved pepperoncini products. Imports under the four possible tariff classifications totaled \$210 million in 2004.<sup>8</sup> The share attributable to pepperoncini products is not known, but likely is small.

**Estimated effect on customs revenue:**

For this analysis, it is assumed that the subject dutiable imports are imported primarily from Italy, Greece, and Spain. These three countries account for about 20 percent of total volume imports under HTS subheading 2005.90.55. Dutiable imports are estimated assuming that all imports from these three countries under statistical reporting number 2005.90.5590 approximate total U.S. pepperoncini imports under this HTS subheading.

<b>HTS subheading: 2005.90.5590</b>					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Col. 1-General rate of duty (AVE) <u>1/</u>	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%	14.9%
Estimated value <i>dutiable</i> imports <u>2/</u>	\$2,250,000	\$2,350,000	\$2,500,000	\$2,700,000	\$3,000,000
Customs revenue loss <u>3/</u>	\$335,250	\$350,150	\$372,500	\$402,300	\$447,000

1/ The AVE is the ad valorem equivalent of a specific or compound duty rate expressed as a percent, using the most recent import data available. The rate shown is the “general” or normal trade relations rate. Other preferential rates may apply to eligible products of countries entitled to “special” tariff treatment under negotiated free trade arrangements, the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA), and the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA).

2/ Source of estimated dutiable import data: U.S. Government statistics for 2004 with small growth factor for “other” peppers from the 3 countries named above under HTS statistical reporting number 2005.90.5590, which does not include sweet bell-type peppers of 2005.90.5510).

3/ Assumes that tariffs are suspended on imported product for the calendar years 2005 through 2009. Rounded to the nearest ten thousand.

<sup>7</sup> FAOSTAT data, 2004, last updated February 2004. Includes production under the category of “Chillies & Peppers, green” but does not include production under the category of “Peppers, White, long, black.”

<sup>8</sup> Commission estimates from official U.S. Government statistics. Includes total imports under HTS statistical reporting numbers 2005.90.5510, 2005.90.5590, 2001.90.3800, and 2005.90.9700.

### **Contacts with domestic firms/organizations (including the proponent):**

Precise information on pepperoncini production in the United States is not available. Across all types of peppers, an estimated 15,000 acres are used to grow pickling peppers, including pepperoncini, in the United States.<sup>9</sup> Seed companies supplying pepperoncini do exist.<sup>10</sup> Limited information suggests that pepperoncini peppers may be grown in Michigan and New Jersey, in conjunction with production of cherry peppers.<sup>11</sup> However, there is no known commercial production of pepperoncini for use in domestic processing.<sup>12</sup> In the past, efforts were made to grow pepperoncini for processing in the United States, but the color and taste did not meet purchaser product specifications; also, the climate conditions were not suitable and labor costs were high.<sup>13</sup>

Pepperoncini peppers may be imported to the United States in bulk containers for sale to food service firms and to food processors for remanufacturing.<sup>14</sup> Mt. Olive, the nation's second largest pickle company, repackages imported pepperoncini under its private label.<sup>15</sup> Other domestic private label packers, such as Vlasic and Dean Foods, may use imported preserved pepperoncini that are not suitable for immediate consumption and further process them in the United States.<sup>16</sup> Because pepperoncini also are imported in retail-size containers, a few food processors repackaging imported pepperoncini under a private label may be affected by a suspension of duties on imports intended for retail sale.<sup>17</sup>

The table lists the industry representatives contacted by the Commission and the submissions received in 2004, in response to similar bills of the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress. (See H.R. 5019, H.R. 5020 and H.R. 5021 (108<sup>th</sup> Congress, Rep. Garrett) available at the Commission's website.<sup>18</sup>) All submissions received by the Commission are attached in the appendices to this report.

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<sup>9</sup> "Pickles and Pickled Pepper Fact Sheet" by the Pickle Packers International, Inc. available at <http://www.ilovepickles.org/articles/factsheet.html> and retrieved Oct. 1, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Telephone interview with Richard Henshel, Pickle Packers International Inc. on Oct. 1, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> Telephone interview with Paul Basland, New Mexico State University, on Oct. 1, 2004. The Commission was not able to confirm production in these states.

<sup>12</sup> Telephone interview with staff at Guiliano Brand (Sept. 29, 2004) and Russo Importers (Sept. 30, 2004), Paul Basland, New Mexico State University (Oct. 1, 2004), Richard Henshel, Pickle Packers International (Oct. 1, 2004), Lou Rosenmayer, M. J. Rosenmayer Co. (Oct. 4, 2004), and Dave Dewitt, Fiery-Foods (Oct. 5, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Telephone interview with Richard Henshel, Pickle Packers International Inc. (Oct. 1, 2004) and Louis Rosenmayer, M. J. Rosenmayer Company (Oct. 4, 2004). Written submission by Richard Henshel, Pickle Packers International Inc., received by the Commission on Oct. 12, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Telephone interview with Louis J. Rosenmayer, M. J. Rosenmayer Company on Oct. 4, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> See Mt. Olive's product line at <http://www.mtolivepickles.com/ProductLine/Products4.html>.

<sup>16</sup> Telephone interview with Louis J. Rosenmayer, M. J. Rosenmayer Company (Oct. 4, 2004) and Gary Tritt, Dean Foods (Oct. 6, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Recently, U.S. imports of pepperoncini for retail sale have been shipped from Turkey.

<sup>18</sup> Access to electronic copies of these memos is available at [http://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/other/rel\\_doc/bill\\_reports/108c.htm](http://www.usitc.gov/tata/hts/other/rel_doc/bill_reports/108c.htm).

Name of firm/organization	Date contacted	US production of same or competitive product claimed?	Submission attached?	Opposition noted?
		(Yes/No)		
Steve Hofmann, Sandler, Travis & Rosenberg, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., Ste 400, Washington, DC 20004, Ph: 202-216-9307 <u>Representing:</u> Association of Food Industries, Inc., 301 RT 66, Ste. 205, Bldg. C, Neptune, NJ 07753, Ph: 732-922-3008	9/28/2004	No	Yes	No
Louis J. Rosenmayer, M. J. Rosenmayer Co., 449 South Beverly Dr., Ste. 213, Beverly Hills, CA 90212, Ph: 310-551-1357.	9/28/2004	No	Yes	No
John Fressie, Bascom Sales, LLP, 495 River St., Paterson, NJ 07524, Ph: 973-345-1802.	10/ 12/2004	No	Yes	No
Jerry Hensley, Saticoy Foods Corp. P.O. Box 4547, Saticoy, CA 93007, Ph: 805-647-5266	9/30/2004	No	No	No
Gary Tritt, Dean Foods, 3600 N. River Rd., Franklin Park, IL 60131, Ph: 920-497-7131.	10/6/2004	Yes	No	No
Jim Tersky, Vlastic Pickles (Pinnacle Foods Corp., 6 Executive Campus, Ste. 100, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002), PH: 810-724-3006.	10/6/2004	Yes	No	No
Richard Henshel, Pickle Packers International P.O. Box 606, One Pickle and Pepper Plaza, St. Charles, IL 60174, Ph: 630-584-8950.	9/29/2004	No	Yes	No
Paul Basland, New Mexico State University (Chili Pepper Institute). P.O. Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003, Ph: 505-646-5171.	10/1/2004	No	No	No
Dave Dewitt, Fiery-Foods, 3825 Beall Ct. Albuquerque, NM 87105, Ph: 505-873-8680.	10/5/2004	No	No	No
Russo Importers, 628 Columbia Ave., Sinking Spring, PA 19608, Ph: 610-678-6160	9/30/2004	No	No	No
Guiliano Brand, 256.11 Hillside Ave., Floral Park, NY 11001, Ph: 718-347-4071	9/29/2004	No	No	No
Lynn Williams, Mt. Olive Pickle Co., Inc. 812 N. Chestnut St., P.O. Box 609, Mt. Olive, NC 28365, Ph: 919-658-2535	10/1/2004	Yes	No	No

Gary Nelson, California Ag Statistics Service, 650 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, CA 95814, Sacramento, CA 95812, Ph: (916) 498-5161	9/29/2004	No	No	No
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**Technical comments:**<sup>19</sup>

It is suggested that the article description read as shown on page one. The addition of “not frozen” to the article description of the proposed duty suspension provision would make it track the scope of the permanent tariff category and would clarify the provision for importers. Omitting the reference to acetic acid would accord with Food and Drug regulations that do not allow acetic acid to be used on products intended for consumption as food.

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<sup>19</sup> The Commission may express an opinion on the HTS classification of a product to facilitate consideration of the bill. However, by law, only the U.S. Customs Service is authorized to issue a binding ruling on this matter. The Commission believes that the U.S. Customs Service should be consulted prior to enactment of the bill.

109TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1699

To suspend temporarily the duty on certain pepperoncini prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar or acetic acid.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 19, 2005

Mr. PASCRELL introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To suspend temporarily the duty on certain pepperoncini prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar or acetic acid.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. CERTAIN PEPPERONCINI PREPARED OR PRE-**  
4 **SERVED OTHERWISE THAN BY VINEGAR OR**  
5 **ACETIC ACID.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 99 of  
7 the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States is  
8 amended by inserting in numerical sequence the following  
9 new heading:

“	9902.20.06	Pepperoncini, prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar or acetic acid (provided for in subheading 2005.90.55) .....	Free	No change	No change	On or before 12/31/2008	”.
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1           (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by  
 2 subsection (a) applies to articles entered, or withdrawn  
 3 from warehouse for consumption, on or after the 15th day  
 4 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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