DRIED FIG AND FIG PASTE TARIFF HISTORY

Since early in the 1950's, the California Dried Fig Industry has been seriously affected by low priced imports. The U.S. Tariff Commission quickly recognized the seriousness of this development and its eventual impact upon the domestic industry and in 1952 restored 2 cents of a 2½ cent per pound Dried Fig Tariff Concession previously granted to countries signatory to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This restoration came after our industry submitted a petition pursuant to the "Escape Clause" provisions of the Trade Agreements Act, As Amended. Each year from 1952 through 1962 the U.S. Tariff Commission initiated an annual review and investigation, and in each year reaffirmed its previously granted 2 cents per pound duty restoration. In August 1963, as a direct result of a recommendation made by the U.S. Tariff Commission to the President, pursuant to the provisions of the Customs Simplification Act, the 2 cent duty restoration was made permanent by proclamation by President John F. Kennedy, thereby continuing the duty at a total of 4½ cents per pound.

TABLE 10.—FIGS, DRIED, AND FIG PASTE: U.S. RATES OF DUTY UNDER THE TARIFF ACT OF 1930, 1930–67

Tariff paragraph and description	Statutory rate (cents per pound)	Trade agreement modification	
		Rate (cents per pound)	Effective date and trade agreement
Par 740:			
Figs, dried	5	[1] 3	May 5, 1939; Turkey.
		3	Mar. 9, 1950; GATT (Annecy).
		2½	Oct. 17, 1951; GATT (Torquay).
		4½	Aug. 30, 1952.[2]
		4½	Aug. 15, 1963.[3]
Fig paste	5		

[1] If valued at 7 cents or more per pound.
[2] Rate increased as a result of escape clause modification of GATT concession.
[3] Pursuant to provisions of the Customs Simplification Act, the 2-cent duty restoration was made permanent by proclamation of President John F. Kennedy.

Fig Paste has never been the subject of a tariff concession and, therefore, not eligible for "Escape Clause" relief. However, in reviewing various annual reports of the United States Tariff Commission, they have repeatedly referred to a logical price relationship between Dried Figs and Fig Paste of ½ cent per pound as being a true relationship between Paste and Dried Figs, therefore, resulting in a continuance of a tariff rate of 4½ cents per pound on Dried Figs and 5 cents on Fig Paste.

Basically, Dried Figs and Fig Paste are the same physical commodity, except that Paste is merely ground Figs. However, all Figs suitable for Paste do not make desirable package Figs, whereas, all Figs desirable for packing are equally desirable for Fig Paste and merely require grinding. Therefore, the duties on Figs and Fig Paste are largely responsible for the form of imports and these items should, therefore, be given joint consideration. As an illustration; if the duty on Whole Dried Figs was lowered and the duty on Paste remained unchanged, more Figs would come in whole and be ground here, whereas, if the duty on Paste is ever lowered, more Figs would be ground abroad and come in as Paste.

DRIED FIG AND FIG PASTE IMPORTS

In the past 20 years total United States consumption of Dried Figs and Fig Paste has averaged approximately 26,300 tons, of which California supplied approximately 70%; during the last 10 year period, Dried Fig and Fig Paste consumption has averaged 28,220 tons, of which California supplied approximately 62%; in the past 5 years California supplied less than 60%. It is, therefore, apparent that imports of Dried Figs and Fig Paste are taking over a larger share of the domestic market.